

I Am Supreme

Chapter 16: Ximen Wandai! Time to Reel in the Net...

At that point, the guard came forward to put his head close to the young master's ear and whispered.

The young master blinked, raised his head to look at Yun Yang, and let out a smile, "Well, well, looks like we have a notable character in our midst. Young Master Yun, a pleasure to meet your acquaintance."

Yun Yang surprise was unfeigned, "Eh?"

The man in blue retained his knowing look as he spoke, "Heaven Marquis Xiaoyao's young master, a famed name in Tiantang City... Since Young Master Yun's reputation is of such stellar quality, I need not worry about the stake of this bet."

Yun Yang stared at him. "You made inquiries about me?"

"Let's not call it an inquiry; success is all about knowing your enemy." The man in blue continued, "I wonder what the young master of Marquis Yun would use as a bet?"

Yun Yang frowned, and for the first time, seemed hesitant.

The man in blue smirked, "Since Young Master Yun has suggested the wagers... are you not able to suggest the stakes?"

Yun Yang spoke with caution, "Perhaps we could throw in our money..."

The other party laughed mockingly, "Young master, we are both practitioners from the world of martial arts; what joy does gold and silver hold for us? Please, choose something else."

The other two young masters beside him laughed in amusement as well; the young master in blue had scored a point in this bout. It was always amusing to see him back his opponent into a corner and force him or her to submit. Obviously, it was happening right now to this young master of Tiantang City.

Yun Yang pretended to hesitate and summoned up an air of false bravado, "If I were to announce my bet which would be of a sizeable sum, it might upset some of those present here... Perhaps we should just let this go?"

At this juncture, the young master in blue was not about to let anything go; after all, who lets go of a giant fish that he has gutted? His face grew upset and his voice turned cold, "Does Young Master Yun look down on my capabilities? Were you not the one who asked to place this bet? Will you also be the one to back out of it? Even if Young Master Yun is an influential figure in the Empire of Yutang, you have no right to manipulate people like this."

His eyes narrowed with malice, and he said slowly and distinctly, "Besides... I, Ximen Wandai, am not someone Young Master Yun can make a fool of."

Ximen Wandai.

Finally, he had revealed his own name. Yun Yang nodded, nonchalant about the revelation. "So it's Young Master Ximen. Is Young Master Ximen still adamant on betting?"

Inwardly, he was pleasantly stunned. One of the top eight influential families bore the name Ximen. Could this Ximen Wandai be from that family?

As Yun Yang was pondering upon this, Ximen Wandai answered with a sneer, "It's too late to walk away now, even if you wanted to!" How could he loosen his grip when Yun Yang was already half dead in his hands?

Ximen Wandai could not help but feel pleased with himself for his sheer brilliance. Initially, he had been the one at fault, the boorish lord who had caused a ruckus just as the other party had been about to make a legitimate purchase. As the events unfolded, however, he realized that he was adroit enough to turn the escalating situation in his favor, and reap a significant amount of profit in the process.

Waving his hands mockingly, he cried out, "Could it be that Young Master Yun is unable to finance his part of the wager?" The insinuation hung clearly in the air. "You threw the gauntlet, and I accepted. Are you going to turn your tail and flee?"

Yun Yang's face flushed an angry red as he retorted, "Who are you accusing of being unable to afford the bet? Name your stakes, and I'll do one better!"

"Now, you've walked right into my trap!" Ximen Wandai was thrilled, and using Yun Yang's own words against him, he said, "I can bet a seventh grade mystical pill, a hundred mystical stones, and the treasured saber, Phoenix's Cry. The saber is one of the Seven Swords and Three Sabers forged by the Greatest Weaponsmith Ou Hunzi a millennia ago... Now, I would like to hear what Young Master Yun has to offer to match these stakes!"

A murmur of awe rippled across the bystanders who had gathered to listen to the drama that was unfolding in front of the shop.

If one were to pay with gold for a mystical pill from a seventh grade mystical beast, one would easily need to pony up easily a million units, it was that priceless! Mystical stones, on the other hand, were practically reservoirs of power for mystical cultivation; the amount of energy contained within a mystical stone could be absorbed over a span of three days, and yield the same result as a year of closed door cultivation!

Ou Hunzi's Seven Swords and Three Sabers were also globally renowned weapons. One of them, the treasured sword Merak¹, was a national treasure of the Empire of Dongxuan – the value of these master-forged items were unfathomable! Most individuals would never even see any of these legendary weapons in their lifetime.

What could Yun Yang possibly use as part of his wager? Somewhat astonished by how high the stakes had gone, Yun Yang couldn't help but think to himself that this was a total windfall! Triumphantly, he decided to jump in with wild abandon.

Ximen Wandai was extremely pleased with his own cleverness, and mistook Yun Yang's hesitation for worry.

"What does Young Master Yun think?" His tone was casual and light, "It would be fine by me if Young Master Yun were to hedge any of these with similar items as well."

Yun Yang took a deep breath, and shook his head, "These are not sufficient."

Ximen Wandai and his two friends were dumbfounded. Insufficient? What gem could you possibly bring to the table as a mere marquis' son in this secular country?

Yun Yang looked hesitant before he answered, "I shall match your stakes with a ninth level mystical beast's offspring. Its singular value is beyond all the treasures you have proposed, combined!"

A ninth level mystical beast's offspring! Even Ximen Wandai recoiled with shock..

Whether it was wandering in the wild or ensconced in human society, these legendary ninth level mystical beasts would at the top of the pecking order, the cream of the cream!

"You... own an offspring of a ninth level mystical beast?" Ximen Wandai's voice shook slightly in amazement. His eyes shone feverishly with barely contained greed.

"But of course!" Yun Yang managed to sound regretful, "If you dare not bet, however..."

"I'll bet!" Ximen Wandai cut him off abruptly, his avarice getting the better of him. "Where is your ninth level mystical beast's offspring?" Even if it were the least gifted ninth level mystical beast, such a creature would not have gone undetected for long with human experts present.

Yun Yang was sorely tempted to laugh and say, “Why, right in front of you of course,” while pointing at the kittens.

These poor critters had somehow fallen from high places to this mean estate, and were weakened severely in the process. Their guardians had placed seals on their bodies before they arrived, effectively hiding their true nature.

“When they come to me, I will restore them to their rightful glory within a night, to the invaluable ninth level mystical beast’s offspring that they truly are.”

“We will only bet if Young Master Ximen trusts me,” Yun Yang said vaguely. “As I do not make a practice of carrying around the offspring of ninth level mystical beasts in my pocket, it is not with me. However, there is one when I say there is one.”

He lifted his head in a knowing smile. “In any case, I wouldn’t be able to escape the wrath of the Ximen family if I were to be caught lying.”

Ximen Wandai’s eyes brightened with cold certainty. “Then it is a good thing that you are aware of that!” He believed Yun Yang’s words but it was now his turn to be worried. What would be on par value with a young ninth level mystical beast? It was obvious that the seventh grade mystical pill, a hundred mystical stones and a saber were extremely lacking now.

Yes, these items could allow one to improve immensely but that was about it – insignificant treasure in comparison to a ninth level mystical beast! His very own Ximen family had only become one of the top eight most influential families because their ancestor had the great fortune of owning an eighth level pinnacle mystical beast as a combat partner. It was the foundation of Ximen family’s meteoric rise to power, and was nearing 1,500 years of age!

That being said, an eighth level pinnacle mystical beasts could not compare to this ninth level mystical creature, even if it is an infant.

This was how the classes worked; the laws of nature could not be changed. If he were to get his hands on a young ninth level mystical beast, not only would his position in the family be sealed, the entire Ximen family would also leapfrog towards being the chief of the top eight families and their capabilities would increase tenfold!

Ximen Wandai’s mind was awash with possibilities. The two young masters beside him, however, were shaken. How could they not know the importance of acquiring such a beast when they were of the same status?

If Ximen Wandai got his hands on the beast...

Their gaze towards Yun Yang turned menacing.

“I’ll bet two seventh grade mystical pills!” Ximen Wandai cried, “Five hundred mystical stones, thirty mystical crystals, the Phoenix’s Cry of the Seven Swords and Three Sabers and... an eternal promise to guarantee the safety and continuity of the Yun family! Should I win or lose, I swear by the Heavens and Earth that this will be done!”

He had doubled the mystical pills, quadrupled the mystical stones, and thrown in an additional thirty mystical crystals; a mystical crystal’s value was worth that of a hundred mystical stones!

Young Master Ximen Wandai had truly given his all. However, even Ji Ling who was hiding in the dark was impressed with what he had said. This young master was not without brains after all.

Yun Yang had inadvertently exposed his ninth level mystical beast under Ximen Wandai’s goading, so the next issue in line would obviously be safety. Like Ximen Wandai had said, nothing could compare to the value of such a beast, thus adding the promise to guarantee the Yun family’s safety was the perfect touch to sweeten the deal. Despite his all-encompassing greed, Ximen Wandai was still sharp enough to think a few steps ahead in the game.

Ji Ling sighed. “It’s still hopeless for you though. The more you bet, the more Yun Yang gets to bring home.”

It was just that, where would Yun Yang get this ninth level mystical beast?

Ji Ling was certain that Yun Yang could breathe easy now.

Indeed, Yun Yang took in a deep breath and his face beamed in triumph.

“Deal!”

He had put at stake a prize that was impossible to resist. In addition to convincing his opponent to throw in an inordinate amount of priceless treasures as part of the wager, he had also secured the means to attain his additional goals.

He had cast the net, it was now time to reel it in...

Translator’s Note:

1 Merak (天璇 tiān xuán) : a star in the northern circumpolar constellation of Ursa Major; [/wiki/Beta_Ursae_Majoris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Ursae_Majoris)

Chapter 17: Your Trap, My Scheme

The assembled crowd would never have thought that a wager with such high stakes would have taken place in this small, mystical beast market! In full view of all the dumbfounded spectators, both the contestants took three steps forward and sealed the deal with a loud clasp of hands.

The wager was now official.

The spectator's attention shifted towards the large bamboo basket that lay on the ground between the two men. They were only common Lightning Cats, but the fate of this amazing wager lay in their little paws!

The entire ordeal was absurd; those watching at the sidelines were caught by surprise at the suddenness and speed at which it had escalated. It could rightfully be said that it was Yun Yang's doing, as he was the one who had first suggested the wager. It had to be pointed out however, that he did try to make an exit when the stakes rose, but he was pressured by Ximen Wandai. He could not be blamed for being backed into a corner.

Perhaps the fault was with Ximen Wandai, but that wasn't entirely true either. He started off trying to intimidate the other party, but who would have known that the wager would involve the offspring of a ninth level mystical beast? All the young masters looked at Ximen Wandai with envy and jealousy. How could this young master be so fortuitous? Furthermore, they would be betting on the obedience of a beast! How could a mere marquis' son from the Empire of Yutang end up as an opponent of the Ximen family, one of the eight greatest families, in a marketplace wager?

It was as if fate had decided to hand Ximen Wandai the keys to his family's ascent up the ladder of greatness.

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A ray of light pierced the sky as silhouettes began to appear, swift as flight. The members of the Ximen family had arrived. Ximen Wandai let his guard down, glanced at his two companions encouragingly and called out to Yun Yang with a raised chin, "Let us begin."

Yun Yang inhaled deeply, silently looking at Ximen Wandai with an uncertain gaze.

Ximen Wandai frowned in consternation, "Hmm?" His aura of haughtiness was palpable – if you pull out now, I'll see you dead!

Yun Yang threw his arms up in apparent helplessness, "Alright, begin then! Let us see who shall prevail." He put on a great show of worry by speaking through gritted teeth.

Ji Ling who was still hidden in the shadowy alcove almost laughed out loud.

You've almost claimed his entire wealth, and still you play the part of the helpless fool.

The shopkeeper was obviously distressed, his legs quivering as he moved the large bamboo basket. An elder with a hooked nose who had just arrived and was standing behind Ximen Wandai slowly spread his hands apart. An invisible circle of energy stretched out and expanded, forcibly moving the crowd away and leaving a large open area in its centre.

Ximen Wandai suggested that, the bamboo basket should be toppled over in the middle of the space, and the two of them would begin the challenge of luring the kittens from ten feet away. After pretending to give it some thought, Yun Yang nodded in agreement, further delighting Ximen Wandai.

A collective sigh could be heard coming from the gathered crowd, "Fool, if you carry nothing, it clearly means you are unprepared; Young Master Ximen has come for the mystical beasts tournament, he would not have come empty-handed. By agreeing to this, you will lose, nine times out of ten!"

The shopkeeper held on to the basket with all the kittens in the middle, waiting for the order.

Yun Yang was already seated with his legs folded, ten feet away as stipulated. Directly across from him, Ximen Wandai had produced a pile of snow-white pills and a compact bell in his hands. His smile was one of utmost confidence.

"Oh dear, the Yun fool is going to lose for sure!" someone groaned.

"That is almost definite. Ximen Wandai has beast pills of the highest grade in his hands. Might I add, he also carries on him a Mystical Beast's Spirit Bell, the ultimate weapon in controlling these creatures! How Yun is going to compete with him, I have no clue. This

would be another feather in the cap of the Ximen family," another young master sighed in resignation.

These people had initially hoped for Yun Yang to be a dark horse, and act to prevent the ninth level mystical beast from falling into the Ximen family's hands. Their hopes quickly turned to ash as they witnessed his apparent lack of readiness.

"We can begin by using our own methods." Ximen Wandai said calmly, "We shall start attracting the creatures and see if they would come over to me or you."

Yun Yang put on a display of outrage, "Young Master Ximen, seeing as to how you have those items, would this not be unfair?"

Ximen Wandai was triumphant as he said, "I would not deem this to be unfair. I am still me and you're still you. I have not resorted to using any external forces to influence the

challenge, and neither did you. We are using only our wit and skill; exactly as Young Master Yun suggested. I believe this to be a fair and just challenge, devoid of trickery.” Ximen Wandai said with a straight face, “Under such circumstances, I shall admit my defeat if I lose.”

Yun Yang was seemingly quivering with rage, “You!”

Ximen Wandai frowned, “Our bet has been sealed, and was witnessed by the heaven and earth! Unless... Young Master Yun wishes to renege on it?”

Yun Yang pretended to clamp down on his anger, “If so, I shall concede my defeat if I lose as well, and consider it the price of making a new friend.”

Ximen Wandai laughed, “Great! Let us begin then.”

Yun Yang said with the straightest of faces, “Agreed, and God shall decide our fate.”

The official command to start was given amidst Ximen Wandai’s pleased chortle. The shopkeeper tipped the bamboo basket over, and nine, month-old kittens appeared, mewling timidly while taking in their surroundings.

On one side, Ximen Wandai had already scattered a generous number of beast pills on the ground. His left hand began to trace patterns in the air as he casted skill to generate a wind-like force strong enough to blow the aroma of those pills towards the kittens.

His right hand was also moving furiously, casting a skill that passed through the ground soundlessly in an attempt to block Yun Yang from executing the same tactics. At the same time, the Mystical Beast’s Spirit Bell under his arm began ringing. The jingling that emanated from it had a strangely haunting melody.

He had simultaneously executed all three ultimate tricks at once! Ximen Wandai was clearly eager to emerge as the victor in this challenge.

Yun Yang was still sitting with his legs folded, frowning as if displeased at being cheated but the Endless Divine Art was already flowing at full force within his body. The leaves of the Lotus of Endless Fate started swaying, rapidly exuding a strong air of vitality.

On the surface, Yun Yang put on a facade of anxiety. His eyes bored deep into the nine kittens as he called out nervously, “Kittens... Quick, come over here... Come, come... I will take care of all of you...”

There were guffaws all around.

How naive you are!

Do you really think those kittens can understand your words?

The heavy scent of Ximen Wandai's beast pills permeated the surroundings as the kittens squeezed together, hesitant on the direction in which they would take.

Ximen Wandai's smile grew wider when he noticed an increasing number of the kittens casting timid glances his way. Sighs of disappointment could be heard from somewhere behind him. He kept his face still, but his eyes were actively seeking out the culprits. They were clearly individuals who did not wish to see the Ximen family obtain a ninth level mystical beast. They had called each other brothers, but who knew what hidden agenda each of them held in their hearts? He would have to reconsider who he would continue to call 'brothers' after this challenge had ended.

Gasps of surprise rose up from crowd. Startled, Ximen Wandai turned back to look.

Among the nine kittens that had stumbled out of the basket, two of them had begun moving slowly towards him. Two small steps, and then they stopped in confusion. Their fluffy tails swished frantically, their weak mewling filled with indecision.

Ximen Wandai was almost giddy with anxiety.

All these temptations and you critters are still pondering? What are you even pondering about! Come over quickly!

Yun Yang was still wasting his energy calling out to the kittens on the other side, "Kittens come, come kittens..."

Miraculously, and with the highest improbability, the two kittens began to turn – towards Yun Yang and his laughable efforts.

The observing crowd was stunned.

"Come back!" Ximen Wandai shouted in panic, sweat dripping from his face.

It could be said that it was his shout that frightened the cats into action, as both kittens immediately raced over to Yun Yang instead! As they ran in stumbling, ungainly steps, the ten feet separating them from Yun Yang was quickly covered. Two pairs of front paws came up to hug Yun Yang's legs and they mewed pitifully as if begging, "Kind man, please keep us safe! That lunatic over there frightens us!"

Yun Yang, feigning surprise, elatedly picked the kittens up and stroked them in a friendly and intimate manner. The two kittens snuggled in deeper, doing all they could to pander to the man. Their tiny feline faces were pleased as they took in Yun Yang's scent greedily.

The crowd looked on with eyes wide enough that they were in danger of falling right out of their faces.

How did this happen?

How is it that the one who has prepared everything is losing while Young Master Yun of Tiantang City, the one without much cultivation base, tactics, pills, and without equipment of any sort, is the one winning?

Two kittens had chosen their owner. The tension was at an all time high now. Nearly hundreds of people were gathered, but no one dared to make a sound.

Ximen Wandai circulated his mystical Qi to fully spread out the aroma of the pills, nervous sweat dripping down his face.

Only two had gone over. Not all is lost!

There was still hope!

“Come over quickly...” Ximen Wandai prayed.

As always, things never happen the way one wishes them to.

Another white kitten began to move, its paw waving about in hesitation for only a moment before it made a graceful turn – towards Yun Yang.

The audience blinked in indescribable shock as the cat turned towards him.

This kitten was even faster, snuggling into Yun Yang’s embrace within the blink of an eye, mewling happily.

Ximen Wandai’s expression was as dark as ink.

That was the third one, and he still had nothing!

The spectators continued to watch, eyes bulging and mouths agape.

This is utterly ridiculous!

What I’ve just seen can’t be real!

How could such impossibilities take place?

“Young master, do not fret so. There are still six of them.” The elder from the Ximen family tried to comfort the young master, despite becoming increasingly worried himself. “We still have hope!” Ximen Wandai nodded nervously; the palms of his hands were drenched in sweat.

At the very next moment, all six remaining kittens exploded into action.

The three earlier kittens were those that Yun Yang really wanted, while these six were real Lightning Cats. Although they were only of the third level, they were still mystical beasts nonetheless! Their reactions were slower, but they could still sense goodness in the world, and recognize what was best for them.

The six kittens mewed and turned as one, barrelling towards Yun Yang gracefully with increasing haste. Their eyes glimmered with joy; bushy tails swishing wildly with delight.

Ximen Wandai's face turned a pasty white.

He had lost!

Chapter 18: I'll Pick a Better One for You!

"Damn it!" Ximen Wandai growled as he stood up fiercely, flinging his palm up in a frenzied strike. A ray of gold flashed across the clearing, followed by weak cries of pain. The six Lightning Cats that had been running gleefully towards Yun Yang were flung bodily aside by the attack, their blood spraying like tiny raindrops drizzling from the sky.

"Stop it!" Yun Yang screamed as he rushed out into the open space. Fast as he was, his cultivation base was still miles away from Ximen Wandai's. He only managed to catch one of the kittens before the devastating mystical Qi enveloped him as well, wracking him with pain.

Cough!

Trembling, Yun Yang spat saliva flecked with blood, his face pale as a sheet. Even as he stood swaying, his eyes sent razor-sharp daggers in the direction of his opponent, "Young Master Ximen, can't you accept defeat?"

Ximen Wandai literally shook with fury, his eyes glaring at Yun Yang with rage of equal intensity. He was reluctant to accept the outcome of the challenge, but their wager had been witnessed by heaven, earth and the many people who had gathered to watch. There was simply no way he could get himself out of this.

"If it's laid, it's played!" Ximen Wandai's expression was as vicious as a vengeful ghost, "These things... are all yours!"

Everyone present was still in a daze at the totally unexpected outcome. Ximen Wandai thought about the possessions that he had to surrender and his heart trembled with trepidation while his eyes remained dead.

Two seventh grade mystical beast pills, five hundred mystical stones, thirty mystical crystals, and one treasured saber!

Wealthy as the Ximen family was, the loss of these hefty assets would still cause significant damage to their coffers. Other than the blade that had only become his own after much begging to his father, everything else had belonged to the family treasury. He could foresee arduous days ahead of him after giving out these items; it would be impossible to maintain his current status now.

Yun Yang smiled wanly despite his pale face, "Young Master Ximen is indeed credible. Thank you, thank you! And as for the safety of my family, I'll leave it to the Ximen family then..."

Ximen Wandai was tempted to spit a mouthful of blood at the insolent man, and his eyes bored holes into Yun Yang as he said, "Of course, as stated in our wager, I will do my best."

The crowd's gaze towards Yun Yang was that of mixed emotions.

Did he just win?

How? Why?

Ximen Wandai's beast pills remained scattered on the ground, like everyone's doubt. Members of the Ximen family left quickly, and eventually, the crowd dissipated as well. A few young masters observed Yun Yang with undecipherable expressions before they too took their leave.

Yun Yang held a Lightning Cat cradled in his arms, the same one he had saved earlier. It was heavily injured, in a weakened state, and its eyes were closed tightly as it mewled weakly in pain. Yun Yang fed a flow of mystical Qi into its tiny body to help it maintain its tenuous grasp on life.

The other three snowy kittens gathered by his feet as they looked at Yun Yang with tilted heads. Yun Yang grinned, happy for successfully getting hold of them. Beyond his expectations, he had managed to secure four of these kittens!

"Young master, this..." the shopkeeper, however, was not as exhilarated at the outcome.

"Do not worry, I will pay for all of them, including the dead ones." Yun Yang continued, "But I would ask a question of you."

The shopkeeper heaved a sigh of relief. Ximen Wandai had killed his kittens and left without paying for them. He knew that he could not afford to further offend Ximen Wandai and was ready to accept this misfortune. Who would have known that Yun

Yang would be so generous as to cover his losses? He gratefully replied, “Young master, you may ask anything of me.”

In reference to the kittens with exceptionally white fur, Yun Yang asked, “Where did you get those four kittens from?”

The shopkeeper’s face took on a flush of embarrassment, “Well, around half a month ago, someone fainted in front of my door just before dawn. I took him inside and in his arms were these four kittens. Since they were also Lightning Cats, I figured I’d just put them on sale together with the others...” The shopkeeper gave an abashed cough.

Yun Yang became increasingly intrigued, “Where is this man now?”

The shopkeeper sighed, “He’s been unconscious ever since I saved him. I could only force him to consume some soup or water every day to make sure he stays alive. I would have called for a physician to check on him but... I can’t afford the large medical fee. I don’t think he can last much longer though...”

“Bring me to him,” Yun Yang replied.

If his assumptions were correct, a man who could carry four mystical creature’s offspring with him must have returned from the deeper parts of the mystical beast forest and faced unimaginable dangers. This man might have even killed a pair of adult mystical beasts to have been able to bring back the young. An individual with such abilities would definitely be a formidable presence. Ironically, this paragon had fainted outside a mystical beast shop and had to be saved by the shopkeeper who had mistakenly sold off his captured treasures as Lightning Cats.

The shopkeeper led Yun Yang inside.

Yun Yang held the injured Lightning Cat cradled in his arms as the other four kittens obediently tailed him in a beeline while the Thousand Illusion Monkey sat dutifully on his shoulder. The man was beginning to look like a street performer.

Ji Ling had already rejoined him some time ago and was now looking at him with a grin that said “Young master, I’ll need an explanation for all of this when we get home”. It may not have been widely known, but Ji Ling was absolutely certain that Yun Yang had indeed dealt a terrible blow to the Ximen family this time around.

However, she was puzzled about the rationale behind his actions. Yun Yang and Ximen Wandai were from two different worlds. With the status he currently held, why would he want to offend the Ximen family?

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The scent of medicinal herbs greeted them as they entered the room at the back of the mystical beast shop. Inside, a man made only of skin and bones laid down, his breathing shallow and his face ashen.

“He can’t last long but I am truly unable to save him. I wished to let him pass easily without prolonging the pain, but I just couldn’t do it...” The plump shopkeeper was woeful, “I have been full of worries these days.”

Yun Yang stood beside the man to study him. Frowning, he exerted his skill and delivered some air of vitality over to him.

Then, he spoke, “You won’t be able to revive him here. Allow me take him from your hands.”

The shopkeeper was thrilled and incredibly delighted over Yun Yang’s willingness to take over; he had been worrying about this invalid for far too long. “Thank you young master, thank you.”

Yun Yang nodded, “I will let him know that you were the one who saved him when he wakes up.”

“Please, there is no need.” The shopkeeper only wanted to send this ticking time bomb away, he would not need any further payment for that!. “Just tell him that the young master is generous and kind. I have not done anything, and do not dare to take any credit.”

Yun Yang looked at him meaningfully and said, “As you wish.”

The shopkeeper was oblivious to the opportunity he had just lost. Aside from the four ninth level mystical beast’s offspring, the benefits he could reap from the expert owing him a favor alone would have been endless.

However, Yun Yang did not plan to disregard the entire incident, as the shopkeeper was not a bad person. True, he was timid and craven; but he had readily extended his help; he could not do much for the man who was near death but had still tried his best keep him alive. When he settled the bill, Yun Yang added on an additional 1,000 silver taels. He then called for a stretcher to carry the comatose man to the Residence of Yun. Ji Ling followed behind with a smile on her face but remained silent throughout the entire journey.

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“So, you’ve made a fortune today. How do you intend to thank me for it?” Ji Ling came forward to claim her credit after Yun Yang was done settling the man down.

“Thank you?” Yun Yang pursed his lips, in disbelief, “Why should I thank you? You vanished at the first sight of trouble, hid away when I was being bullied, and now you would still seek for my thanks?”

Ji Ling retorted angrily, “Would you have won if it wasn’t for me?”

Yun Yang rolled his eyes, women were indeed unreasonable beings. “Are you saying I wouldn’t have won without you?”

Ji Ling stomped her foot. “You idiot! Those people knew me. If they had seen me, you wouldn’t even have been able to make your bet. This would be the first reason...”

“...and the second?”

“Second, if my Thousand Illusion Monkey had not been sitting on your shoulder, would they have been as civil to you as they were?” Ji Ling grunted.

As Yun Yang thought further about it, she did seem to have a point. The young masters had been eyeing the monkey with uncertainty. Had it all started because of this?

“They were civil to me because, I appear to be of good breeding!” Of course Yun Yang would not admit the truth as he said, “What do you wish to gain, by being so insistent?”

Ji Ling replied, “Give me one of your four kittens. I’ll take that as a token of your gratitude.”

“Absolutely not!” Yun Yang turned down the idea without a hint of hesitation. “Don’t even think about it!”

These were rare young mystical beasts that one could only come across by chance. How could you just simply ask for one? Are we even that close?

Ji Ling fumed at Yun Yang’s rejection. “You, you, you... you’re impossible! You were supposed to join me on a search for a mystical beast to purchase! I didn’t manage to bring even one home, and yet you’ve already taken so many by leveraging on somebody else’s disadvantage. I’m only asking for one puny third level mystical beast’s offspring, and already you display your reluctance.”

“How could you be so petty?” Ji Ling asked with a murderous glare.

Yun Yang smiled humorlessly. “Petty? I can’t afford to be generous about this. If you were my wife, well, I might give you one to protect you, but you aren’t...”

Of course, he knew better than to speak these words out loud.

“It’s not that I do not want to give them to you, but this third level Lightning Cat is too...” Yun Yang mind was racing, “Actually, I’ve been searching for a suitable one for you today and I’ve already found it. It’s certainly much better than this. Opposite the shop earlier, there was a fifth level pinnacle Silvermoon Celestial Wolf. I think that one would be better. If you choose that and also wish to keep this Lightning Cat, isn’t the cat food for the wolf? It wouldn’t make sense.”

Yun Yang was thinking fast on his feet, trying his hardest to persuade Ji Ling.

“Silvermoon Celestial Wolf?” Ji Ling’s ears perked up in intrigue.

“Right, Silvermoon Celestial Wolf. Its fur is a shiny silver coat, and it looks obedient and adorable, harmless enough to become a pet. However, it can also protect its owner when the need arises. Most importantly, a fifth level pinnacle Silvermoon Celestial Wolf can level up if taken care of properly. Once it advances, it has vast potential. It might even possibly continue to level up until the eighth or ninth level. The trick is in how one trains and tames it, and how one invests in it. Besides, I’ve noticed that the young Silvermoon Celestial Wolf is not even a month old. This would be the best time to bring one home.”

Looking at Ji Ling whose eyes had started to shine brighter as he spoke, Yun Yang grew increasingly motivated to continue his attempts at persuasion. “Of course, the resources required to nurture a Silvermoon Celestial Wolf would cost an astronomical figure. Ordinary people would not have such resources but you wouldn’t need to worry about that, would you?”

“Not at all!” Ji Ling’s eyes sparkled with excitement.

“Think about it, if the Silvermoon Celestial Wolf can progressively level up while in your keeping...” Yun Yang left his sentence hanging to allow her imagination to fill it in.

Ji Ling was already filled with eager enthusiasm. She could imagine the pride and honor she would garner by then.

“Of course, if you really want this Lightning Cat, I could just give one to you. I have four of them anyway. One less would be of no consequence...” Yun Yang continued, “Of course, if that’s the case, I’ll have that Silvermoon Celestial Wolf instead.”

“Says you!” Ji Ling shouted, “The Silvermoon Celestial Wolf is mine! I’m going to go buy it now!”

Turning around, she shot out the door.

Yun Yang coughed, wiping the sweat on his brow after making sure the girl was gone.

Buy the Silvermoon Celestial Wolf, and I'll help you train it when you bring it back. Best if I can send this 'great-aunt' away as soon as possible in case she finds out she did nothing with the four ninth level mystical beast offspring right in front of her nose!

"I'll probably be doomed then." Yun Yang pursed his lips then sighed, "Women are so hard to deal with, especially when they're angered. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned..."

"...but that's also in the future. What's important now is... these four little critters are all mine!" Yun Yang looked at the four kittens surrounding him and smiled beatifically.

Chapter 19: Emmie, You Thief!

Finally, he had the little critters all to himself.

Yun Yang consulted Supreme Wind's Illustrated Encyclopedia of All Beasts before he began his examination on the creatures; he pulled their ears, looked at their stomachs, flipped their eyelids, peered into their nostrils, studied their throats, and even directed a small amount of mystical Qi into their small bodies to check. All of the tests matched the characteristics that were laid out in the book.

At last, he had confirmed that these were the cubs of the ninth class beginner mystical beasts, Eclipse Panther!

The Eclipse Panther was as swift as the wind, extremely adept in camouflage and concealment, and blisteringly fast when hunting its prey. It was hardly surprising that it carried the title of "Assassin among the Mystical Beasts". A full-grown Eclipse Panther could consume gold and jade as sustenance, and it would be near-indestructible with skin malleable as bronze, and bones as strong as steel.

Yun Yang was exhilarated.

An undercurrent of curiosity marred the joy he felt for the the discovery. What was the real identity of his eighth brother, Supreme Wind? The Ximen family, being of the top eight, as well as Ximen Wandai's companions are made up young masters of significant status. Even their guards and servants were all experts. They had not suspected a thing while these extremely rare creatures frolicked right under their noses. Each of the families had the wisdom of a thousand years, but that knowledge paled in comparison to a book tossed negligently besides Supreme Wind's pillow!

Even if each field had its own master, this was not something as simple.

Yun Yang tucked the question somewhere in his heart; intent on finding out his eighth brother's identity and completing his brother's unresolved undertakings.

First things first, however. He had to recover from his injuries and elevate his cultivation before he could once again face his enemies head-on!

“Young master, you...” Lao Mei was flabbergasted.

Just a day ago, his young master had gone out and come back with a monkey and a lively young woman in tow. Today, his young master had gone out again, and this time, he brought home five cats... and a dying man.

“Young master, when you next come home, will you bring back a pack of a hundred or a thousand wolves? Or perhaps another large group of men and women?” Lao Mei was torn between amusement and horror at the very thought of it.

“It’s nothing really, just a few pets,” Yun Yang informed his manservant in all seriousness. “Inform Ma and Qin to come over to the Residence of Yun tonight. Tell them there’s something, ahem, good in store for them this time.”

Lao Mei wanted to shake his head.

Inform them?

Do they still dare to come?

Wouldn’t these young masters still be traumatized?

“I am certain they will come, this time,” Yun Yang proclaimed in confidence.

“...” Lao Mei was somewhat confused by Yun Yang’s conviction. Just as he was about to leave, Yun Yang took a small bag out and handed it to him.

“There are some cultivation resources inside, please use them. The sooner you can break through to the sixth peak, the better.”

With a bow, Lao Mei accepted the bag and left. It was only when he had left Yun Yang’s sight that he opened the bag and let out an astonished gasp. His hands shook with such intensity that he almost dropped the bag.

Inside, 50 mystical stones and 10 mystical crystal sparkled with a merry shimmer and radiated spiritual Qi. These were invaluable gems that would greatly accelerate cultivation!

“Where did the young master get these from? There’s so many of them!” Lao Mei wondered, as his heart was flooded with warmth. For a long five years, he had been stuck at the bottleneck of the fifth peak, but with these, there was no doubt that he could advance to the sixth!

“Where did young master get these from? There’s so much of it.” Lao Mei thought, his heart filled with warmth. He had been stuck at the bottleneck of the fifth peak for approximately five years already.

There was a premise for martial artists who wished to cultivate to the level of true experts, “Six innately awakened chakras are incredible, with those, one could step right into the level of a mystic; however the heavens dictate only three parts of your fate, the extrinsic seven parts that could make or break it can only be dictated by you. ”

This meant that only those with six or more innately awakened chakras could be a mystical Qi martial artist. Even then, six innately awakened chakras were only gifts bestowed by God, nothing would come out of it if there were no effort put in.

Only then would the proverb be of relevance... “twelve peaks of skill levels, a heaven’s difference between each”!

The sages once proclaimed, “The cultivation of martial artists is like going up a mountain weighed down with a burden; only by traversing the path to the peak can one see where the next peak lies.”

This age old adage meant that a person will always believe that there is no higher mountain than the one he knows of; before arriving at the first peak, you would never know that there existed a taller mountain in this world than the one you were at. This mystery was more commonly known as a knowledge barrier.

There was then another saying, “To reach the heavens, one must first claim the peak; thereafter, a heaven lies.” It simply meant, “A whole new world awaits those who claim the peak of a mountain.” Therefore, “There are twelve peaks of skill levels with a heaven’s difference between each; conquer all twelve before all else, and brave the ninth heaven thereupon”!

It seemed simple and easy to comprehend, laced with some droll, tasteless humor even, but it was a theoretically progressive maxim indeed!

...

“I’m back!” Ji Ling had a timid tiny silver animal sitting on her shoulder as she charged in excitedly.

“Look, I’ve bought a Silver Moon Celestial Wolf! What do you think? You were talking about this little fellow, were you not?”

Yun Yang stepped forward to have a look and nodded in approval. “Right, right, that’s it! You were lucky it didn’t get snapped up this whole time.”

Ji Ling's eyes were squinted with joy. "This is all thanks to you! The whole market is still talking about your shocking bet and no one has the mood to get back to business..." she graciously admitted.

"Haha..." Yun Yang chuckled loudly and said, "I'll start training your pet tomorrow."

"How about we start now..."

Yun Yang interrupted her request before she could complete it, with an air of disdain.

"There are still many tasks I have left undone this day. Do you not see that there is a critically injured person here?"

"This bastard is certainly unchivalrous. How could he be so rude and uncompromising to a pretty girl?" Ji Ling muttered under her breath and stomped her foot indignantly, pouting as she left.

She didn't speak as softly as she thought she did, so Yun Yang had naturally heard it, the corners of his lips lifting into a dismissive smirk.

What is chivalry? Can it be eaten? Why is it that men have to be chivalrous towards pretty girls? Why do they have to compromise? If this pretty girl will ultimately become this man's wife, perhaps it would be alright to take a step back, but not every woman will become a man's wife. Should I bend over backward just because you are a woman?

I would be digging myself a hole, not practising chivalry!

Yun Yang did not say these out loud. Of course, if Lao Mei had known Yun Yang's thoughts, he would have definitely replied in frustration, "Young master, there's a reason why you're still unattached when you're already 19!"

...

Yun Yang was heading into a room when he felt a vague unease, indicating that something felt off. He couldn't put his finger on where the feeling came from, but it was when he reached the bedside of the critically ill man that he thought about it.

Why is there powder dropping from my stomach?

He instinctively thrust his hand into his robes. Sucking in his breath with a hiss, he immediately extracted a bag that lay within. By all accounts it still looked the same... except that the bag that was rather large earlier had shrunk to less than half its original size.

Yun Yang's eyes widened into the size of two copper bells. What was going on?

Opening the package, he could see that the contents were still the same; the mystical stones, mystical crystals and mystical pills won from today's bet.

The mystical pills are unchanged, still two of them here.

The mystical stones, however... There aren't as many as before. How did two hundred of them go missing? The remaining stones seem to have shrunk in size as well!

The mystical crystals too, there should be thirty of them. I've given five to Lao Mei, there should be another twenty five. Why are there only... thirteen?

Where did the other twelve go?

Besides these items, there were copious amounts of powder in the package

Yun Yang felt slightly giddy as he looked at them.

Have my mystical stones and crystals... all turned into powder?

Yun Yang entered his subconscious in distress and saw that the leaves of the Lotus of Endless Fate were swaying in glee. Although the second lotus leaf had yet to grow, it was apparent that its shade had turned darker and stronger. Crystal clear mist coiled and condensed at the root of the Lotus of Endless Fate. Yun Yang shuddered with heartache as he looked upon it

Is this not the most refined mystical Qi within the mystical crystals and stones?

I was wondering how they turned into a powder...They were actually stolen!

"Despicable thief!" Yun Yang glared at the seedling in rage.

The cultivation resources procured at the cost of offending the Ximen family in a game of chance had actually been depleted by this Lotus of Endless Fate in the blink of an eye!

As if sensing Yun Yang's anger, the small seedling swayed gently, its leaves coiling about as if in guilt. Somehow, it actually managed to appear abashed. It looked much like a misbehaved child who was admitting their mischief in as precocious a manner as possible, "Aww, I know I'm wrong..."

The enchanting sight had Yun Yang's temper dissipating into thin air within an instant.

"Those calming Frost Jade on my neck and arm, under my pillow, and in my study days earlier... did you steal them as well?"

The seedling's leaf curled up even tighter, almost into a ball, as it swayed lightly.

Feeling amused yet inexplicably annoyed, Yun Yang finally understood what was happening.

It seemed like this little thing needed not only the simple air of injustice to grow but also spiritual Qi from heaven and earth, as well as the refined air of treasured materials and gems of the earth.

The only difference was that the air of injustice could increase the growth of its leaf and accelerate the leveling up process, while the spiritual Qi from both heaven and earth, as well as treasured materials and gems, could make it stronger.

“Just like a child who needs to grow tall and strong...” Yun Yang acknowledged. “Alright, don’t sneak around next time, just take it openly. But don’t you touch those I required, otherwise, none for you!”

With a soft ‘wah’ sound, the leaf immediately uncurled itself as the seedling swayed happily, dancing in celebration.

Yun Yang could distinctly feel the pleasure radiating from the seedling and the corners of his lips could not help but lift into an equally happy grin.

A lotus that can understand what I am saying?

Yun Yang felt like laughing even as he thought about it. Who would believe him if he dared to share this revelation openly? Yun Yang watched the seedling tremble before a ray of green light shone through and shot into his meridians, as if in reward. Instantaneously, Yun Yang felt a cooling sensation throughout his body as an indescribable vitality filled his meridians. The injury he had sustained from Ximen Wandai’s strike disappeared, and the pain subsided. At the same time, he felt rejuvenated, his mind awash with clarity once again.

This little fellow can heal me? Yun Yang was delighted as he asked, “Could my cultivation base be restored to how it was a year ago, as soon as possible?” Yun Yang had yearned for his abilities for far too long! Without them, he could not even hope to accomplish anything.

The seedling swayed slowly, and seemed to be shaking its head in despair.

Yun Yang had finally asked and had his doubts answered.

It would seem that his cultivation base could no longer be recovered. After the lotus had merged itself into his blood and meridians, it had utterly devoured his cultivation base, the chance of its rebirth gone up in smoke. When the air of injustice came along, it would then sprout.

Oddly enough, he could sense that the seedling was trying to convey an implicit message, “Your power was utter rubbish... it wouldn’t make any difference if you possessed it or not anyway.”

Yun Yang had ambiguous feelings about this, and resigned himself to the fact that he would just have to start all over again.

“It’s awkward to call you seedling or Lotus of Endless Fate every day. Why not allow me to give you a new name?” Yun Yang asked in parley, “You have the shape of a rattan with flower and leaves; Rattan? Stemmie? Flower? Leafy? Lolo? Emmie1?”

The seedling swayed in disagreement until the last name, ‘Emmie’, came up. It was immobile for a short moment before its sprout nodded slightly in agreement.

Did it just actually respond to this name?

Yun Yang felt a terrible headache approaching. Of all the names, the one he thought was the worst and least acceptable was actually Emmie and that was why he had placed it last.

Who would have known that the name he had discarded for being the worst sounding was actually well accepted?

Emmie...

“Oh no... Emmie...” Yun Yang slapped his forehead, feeling speechless, “What kind of revolting name have I given you?”

In his subconscious, Emmie was undulating merrily, one of its tendrils rolled and twisted into various shapes in celebration that it had finally gotten a name.

“Emmie!” Yun Yang remembered the task at hand, “You have to think of something, that man in my room has to live!”

Emmie seemed to be stunned, but its tendrils quickly resumed waving about.

“No problem!”

Translator’s Note:

Emmie (绿绿lù lù): Lotus of Endless Fate’s nickname given by Yun Yang; literally means light green and light green. Emmie is derived from emerald and attached with suffix –ie to make the nickname sound cute.

Chapter 20: The Game Plan. Shared Profits

Yun Yang looked at the man lying unconscious on the bed. He was a giant of a man, brawny and broad. From the length of the bed that he occupied, it could easily be surmised that he would be a valiant mortal of Herculean strength. Yun Yang performed a thorough inspection, and could not help letting out a deep sigh. For the man to have survived until now was no mean feat.

At least a fifth of his bones had been broken, and a large portion of his internal organs had been damaged. His dantian had shattered; it was obvious that he had received blunt force trauma judging by the dent in his skull. His back was laced with endless scratches, each cut bone-deep. To top it all off, there were two separate sword wounds that had pierced his chest and gone through his back.

“He managed to retain consciousness despite his severe injuries, and only collapsed when he reached Tiantang City...” Yun Yang frowned. “This would make him an expert, in all likelihood on par with Lao Mei, or perhaps higher.”

Placing his hand on the unconscious man’s pulse, he called out softly, “Emmie!”

Instantly, a refined air of vitality gushed out from the Lotus of Endless Fate through his hand and into the man’s body. After the initial torrent, Emmie cut off the supply, like stopping a bottle of gushing wine. Swaying softly, it adamantly refused to deliver more, despite Yun Yang’s cajoling. It could almost be heard saying, “Enough, that’s really enough...”

“Not only are you a thief, you’re a stingy miser as well!” Yun Yang said in disgust.

Admittedly, the air of vitality that poured forth from Emmie was immensely potent. Even though it was only a sliver, Yun Yang could sense the man’s labored breathing had become easier and his pulse strengthen. His pallor had also improved within that short span of time.

While waiting for the man to regain consciousness, Yun Yang cultivated. The Thousand Illusion Monkey and five kittens ambled over to his side while he went through the motions. A monkey, one Lightning Cat, and four higher level mystical beast babies squeezed together, looking for all the world like a united and harmonious family.

It was some time later when the man on the bed asked in a weak voice, “Where... is this?”

Yun Yang stopped his practice and looked over. The man was already awake and had his eyes opened, his gaze moving about with difficulty to take in his surroundings.

“This is my home. You have been heavily injured. Rest well, since you have just woken up,” Yun Yang replied.

“Thank... you!” the man gasped.

“No worries.” Yun Yang stood up. “I perform but a small kindness. Be at ease.”

He then left the room. Although he knew that this person could be an expert, Yun Yang was unwilling to let his guard down before knowing this mysterious individual’s name or background.

...

Under the flower canopy, Yun Yang sipped slowly at his cup of tea.

Lao Mei was cultivating in the room by the side, as mystical Qi could be felt wafting into the air in gentle waves. The sun hung low in the evening sky, the setting ball of light painting the land in brilliant crimson. A gush of wind brought about a fresh fragrance, as Ji Ling’s slim silhouette appeared beside Yun Yang. She looked at him curiously, “Are you brooding all by yourself out here?”

Yun Yang replied, “Yes, because I knew you would seek me out.”

Ji Ling chuckled after a momentary loss of speech at his audacity, “It’s still acceptable if you claimed that you were watching over your manservant who is cultivating. To say that I must be looking for you? Why, Young Master Yun, you’d have to polish up your lying skills.”

Yun Yang remained stoic as he asked, “If you were not looking for me, why are you here at this hour?”

Ji Ling stomped her foot in exasperation, “Fine! I was indeed looking for you.”

Yun Yang’s eyebrow rose. “What is it?”

Ji Ling brows furrowed in confusion as she said, “There are a few things that I don’t quite fathom.”

Yun Yang replied, “Correct me if I am wrong, but is it not true that there are three separate conundrums that you can’t make sense of?”

Ji Ling retorted in disbelief, “Oh? You know what it is that I don’t understand?”

Yun Yang pursed his lips before responding, “First, you are wondering why did I get into a conflict with Ximen Wandai. Based on my acute judgment, experience, and intelligence, it was impossible that I didn’t know who he was before he introduced himself. Why then did I still decide to take him on?”

Despite herself, Ji Ling nodded in agreement. "Exactly! You are certainly not a brash person."

Yun Yang smiled knowingly and continued, "Second, you are wondering why I did not back down, even after Ximen Wandai asserted his identity, and even made matters worse by claiming my prizes and further offending the Ximen family."

Ji Ling was increasingly amazed. "Yes, yes!"

"Lastly, it is obvious that I do not own a ninth level mystical beast offspring, but I said otherwise to Ximen Wandai and got myself into a wager. As a result, plenty of people now think that I possess a ninth level mystical beast and some of these are dangerous men. The Residence of Yun and I might be placed in a situation of extreme danger, at the heart of the maelstrom. You must be curious as to why I did that."

Yun Yang's tone was calm and collected as he rattled off what he knew was on Ji Ling's mind.

"These people who think I own a ninth level mystical beast would definitely think of ways and means to take it away from me, while my abilities are depleted so badly that I would never be able to fight them off if they tried. I may have endangered my entire family, and you would like to know why I would do such a thing." Yun Yang said with a hint of a smile. Under the illumination of the moon, his smile actually looked as untainted as moonbeams.

Ji Ling was flabbergasted, "Spot on! You knew all this, and yet you went ahead and did it! How could you defend yourself against the top eight families? Are you a madman who has a death wish?"

Yun Yang only smiled and kept silent.

"Well, why did you do it?" Ji Ling was growing increasingly perplexed; she had always figured that Yun Yang acted with an underlying motive. However, despite wracking her brain to the point of insensibility, she still could not reason out what drove Yun Yang's actions, and how he planned to manage the aftermath. Dignity lost to overwhelming curiosity, and she had come over to find out what she could. Who would have known that this man could be so reticent; she had half a mind to clobber that smug smile off his face!

"If I can't take it, there's still you, isn't there?" Yun Yang smiled.

"I won't care!" Ji Ling eyes were dangerously narrowed, "Stop beating around the bush, speak the truth."

"Do you really wish to know?" Yun Yang finally turned around and gazed at her with brevity.

“Yes!” Ji Ling, yelled in frustration.

“In that case, I won’t be telling you...” Yun Yang beamed affably.

“You!” Ji Ling finally exploded, sending a stone stool flying with a well-placed kick.
“Argh! You are going to be the death of me!”

Yun Yang laughed out loud at her response. To Ji Ling, it was the type of laugh that begged for a strategic blow right between the eyes.

Inwardly, Yun Yang felt helpless too. It was indeed his intention to offend the Ximen family and spread the rumors about his ownership of a ninth level mystical beast.

However, his real motives had to be kept under lock and key for now.

...

“If I wanted to tackle something as titanic as the Four Seasons Tower, I would first have to step up my own game.” Yun Yang had never wavered in this belief. Ever since he had learned of the existence of the Four Seasons Tower, and that his eight hundred subordinates and eight brothers had died as a result of its schemes, Yun Yang had decided on his next course of action.

Facing it head on was out of the question.

Even if the Nine Supremes were resurrected and gathered together to unleash each of their phenomenal powers, they would still be an unworthy opponent to this mysterious Four Seasons Tower. If the whole Empire of Yutang had united to attempt a strike on the Four Seasons Tower, it was still impossible to uproot this mysterious organization. Shrouded in secrecy and mystery, no one knew who belonged to the Four Seasons Tower.

Since then, Yun Yang had settled on his plan.

“My identity as Supreme Cloud can never be exposed. My life as Yun Yang, however, is remarkably peaceful. Therefore, I shall first place myself in a perilous situation.”

“If I were to perish in the stormy waves, so be it.”

“However, if I am able to emerge unscathed, I’d be all the stronger for it. Besides, ‘ninth level mystical beast’ – these four words alone would attract numerous influential families and invoke plenty of mayhem. I would then be able to utilize and manipulate these situations to my advantage!”

“It’s up to me to use them in the best manner possible.”

Yun Yang had a meaningful smile playing on his lips.

“Walking the tightrope is something I do too much of!”

...

On that very same night, seven young masters gathered in Yun Yang’s courtyard. All had shown up with glee in their eyes, and their enthusiasm was unfeigned. It had become common knowledge that Yun Yang had amassed a respectable amount of fortune for himself.

“Brothers, I have called you all here to consider a deal,” Yun Yang smiled and lifted his goblet. “Before we go any further, let us drink to bright future together!”

“Cheers!” All seven young masters roared in unison before draining their cups in a single gulp.

“As you must know, I have just won two seventh-grade mystical pills, five hundred mystical stones, and thirty mystical stones.” Yun Yang counted them off one by one. “I wish to keep three hundred of those mystical stones, so I would naturally require the services of my brothers to trade the remaining two hundred stone. I would also like to keep twenty of the mystical crystals, and that would mean I would need your help with the remaining ten.”

The seven young master’s’ eyes glinted collectively in avarice.

What a windfall indeed!

“For all of these, I only need three million gold taels. The rest of the profit from their sale, well, I suggest that it be divided among my seven brothers here.” Yun Yang smiled ruefully, “In any case, I’ve blackmailed you all several times in the past, it would be about time that I let you in on the cut.”

He didn’t bother to sugarcoat his words, and oddly enough, his directness caused the gathered young masters’ eyes to shine even brighter.

It would be totally worth it to have these things at their own disposal even if they did not manage to sell them off!

The two seventh-grade mystical pills alone would cost millions of gold taels, and that would be a prudent estimation. Two hundred mystical stones could go for ten thousand gold taels a piece, was the word was spread. As for the remaining ten mystical crystals, whatever profit they gained from the sale would be all theirs!

Yun Yang was practically giving each of them an opportunity to earn at least twenty million gold taels each, and that would only be a reserved approximation! When their initial surprise had passed, however, they began to scratch their head in confusion.

In all their years of knowing him, Yun Yang had never been this generous. Why the sudden change?

“Young Master Yun, why do you do this?” Young Master Ling had his mouth agape. “You’ll definitely receive the short end of the stick!”

“Incorrect. We will all profit from this.” Yun Yang smiled warmly, “Is it so surprising that I would wish to give something back, after all the things that I’ve taken from you in the past? There will be no such thing as a shorter end or loss. Of course, besides this, it’d be enough for me if your families’ nexuses could do me a favor when I need it. Would you be agreeable to this?”

The seven young masters looked at each other, all of them knowing what was on the other person’s mind and nodded simultaneously, “Deal!”

Although they all knew that Young Master Yun would never suffer losses in his dealings, this arrangement was still immensely desirable. He had only asked for a favor from their families’ nexuses in return for giving out such a large portion of the pie!

Even if Yun Yang asked for a favor in the future that would far exceed the gain now, they would be true to their word and honor the request when the time came.

Yun Yang smiled in satisfaction.

“It’s simple.” Yun Yang explained “As for these three million taels of gold, there are two methods for you to provide recompense. First, you can give me part of the total and then the remainder of the amount only after you have sold the goods. The second method is simpler; all of your seven families can combine and return to me the full sum. As for how you sell the goods and how much you sell them for, it will no longer be any of my business!”

The seven young masters shared a look again. Yun Yang’s suggestions held an underlying meaning. The first meant that he would be supervising; the second, he would let it all go.

Who would be willing to have someone monitor their every move?

“We choose the second option!” Young Master Ma jumped up, “Young Master Yun, we shall send the gold over to you this very night!”

“Splendid!”

How these seven families divided the resources was none of Yun Yang's concern. His only responsibility was to give them the goods. For the whole night, all seven young masters were engaged in a heated debate, each of them arguing and ultimately shaking hands with each other unwillingly. They then plastered on a simpering smile for Yun Yang and went back home to prepare the gold taels.

All their family guards were already marshaled in front of the Residence of Yun. They didn't dare to keep such valuable gems in their pockets and walk home without any protection. Even if the world was at peace, the seven young masters would not have been able to muster up the courage, so splendid was their newfound wealth.

Before midnight came, three million gold taels had already been delivered to Yun Yang. They were all real gold, not the banknotes that Yun Yang had resolutely refused to accept.

The gold taels formed a large, glittering pile and the Residence of Yun's backyard was illuminated by the shimmering splendor of wealth!