

## The Eternal 171

### Chapter 171: A Work of Art

Zhu Jin looked at the direction where Yunxiao's chariot had disappeared into, which led to the Supreme Palace.

"Are they really from Supreme Palace?" While frowning, he thought for a moment and then murmured to himself, "The energy leaking from that boy just now was indeed the type of extreme cold, and so did the lightning they attracted. Moreover, among the newly established sects over recent years, only the Supreme Palace has such strength. But..."

He pondered again, but he could not find an answer. "Why does Supreme Palace want to start a feud with the Xingyang family?"

"Hehe! Old Freak Zhu, I can see you have just cheated something good from those juniors!" Suddenly, a voice came through the void.

Zhu Jin's face flickered, and he snorted angrily and said, "This is none of your business, Ao Dijia! Get the hell out of here!"

"Hehe! That lightning-attracting array is at least a sixth-tier treasure, but you only paid three hundred thousand superior-grade Primordial Stones to get it. Tsk, tsk, where can I find such a good deal?" Ao Dijia continued to mock.

"Go away!" Zhu Jin held up a middle finger and snapped, "If you utter any more nonsense, I'll come over and pluck your tongue now!"

"What? Can't I..." Ao Dijia's voice halted abruptly.

That gave Zhu Jin a pause, and he thought, 'Have I really scared that old freak? How is this possible?'

Just as he was puzzled, a sheet of white light suddenly broke out in the distance sky over the capital, immediately followed by a blue light that devoured everything, almost enveloping the whole Shangyang. And that direction was where the Xingyang family was situated.

“That is...” Zhu Jin sucked in a cold breath. The huge blue light brought him an extremely cold chill. What kind of power could spread so far and even make him, a Martial Emperor, palpitate?

Whoosh!

His face turned serious as he flew in that direction immediately.

With Zhu Jin’s speed, it took him less than a breath to travel such a short distance. Meanwhile, he felt a few other powerful auras flying over at great speed as well, one of whom was Ao Dijia, while the rest were old freaks like him who rarely showed up in public. Although they were all in the capital, they did not see each other often.

Several figures reached over the Xingyang family almost at the same time. Due to their high speed, they almost could not stop themselves and had to glide a dozen meters in the air before coming to a complete stop. In the next instant, what they saw stunned them completely; their faces were blank and their eyes widened in shock.

All the buildings of the Xingyang family were gone, and there was a huge ice sculpture standing tall in front of them right at the site where the mansion once stood.

What terrified these old freaks who stood at the pinnacle of the Firecrow Empire was that all the people of the Xingyang family were frozen inside the ice sculpture: The expression on each face was lifelike, mostly afraid and aghast. The few elders of the family in the air were locked in postures of unleashing some powerful attacks, with anger and fear in their eyes that shocked anyone who looked at them!

All the people of the Xingyang family were frozen, including even their family head—Xingyang Yi!

Although each of them looked lifelike, it was impossible that they could still be alive under the extreme cold energy. In other words, all the members of the Xingyang family, as long as they were in the mansion, were dead. Even the fowl and livestock they kept were frozen in the same posture as the moment they died.

It was absolutely a work of art that these old freaks had never seen before. In fact, its beauty was suffocating!

But, none of them had the mood to admire it. They only felt chills in their hearts, which could not be blocked even with their powerful Primordial Qi, and their faces had turned livid. For a moment, they were so shocked that they did not know what to do next.

In a flash, in just a flash, an aristocratic family that had stood for centuries in the Firecrow Empire, was completely wiped out, turning into a work of art.

“What...What the hell is going on here!” One of the old freaks could not bear it anymore, so he swallowed hard and asked.

Ao Dijia’s face was livid as he said in a deep voice, “This cold air is extremely evil resulting from some sort of abnormal detonation. In Firecrow Empire, the people who are experts in such energy...”

“Supreme Palace!” Zhu Jin blurted out.

Staring at him, Ao Dijia snorted coldly and said, “Old Freak Zhu, you saw those people just now, so you are the most suitable person to tell us more about this.”

All eyes turned to Zhu Jin immediately, which made him very uncomfortable. While fuming, he said, “What do you mean, Old Freak Ao? Are you suspecting that I am related to those people?”

Ao Dijia folded his arms over his chest and sneered, “Don’t be so nervous! I’m not interested in exposing your nasty business. It’s just that what happened to the Xingyang family is a serious matter. Who among us here dares to say he can withstand the power of this explosion? A power that can threaten even Martial Emperors...hehe...”

Everyone was shocked, and there was a flicker of enthusiasm flashing through their eyes. If such power was obtained by any sect, its strength would definitely experience a qualitative leap!

One of them said in a cold voice, “Zhu Jin, are those people really from Supreme Palace?”

Zhu Jin seemed afraid of this person, as he slightly released his Primordial Qi to defend against the menacing aura emanating from the latter. “It is just one of my speculations. Apart from the Supreme Palace, who in Firecrow Empire can cultivate such lethal cold energy?”

The man with a dark, unsmiling face glanced coldly at the shocking work of art, his chest heaving with excitement. Then, he snorted coldly and said, “That Supreme Palace is nothing, but it seems to have some kind of connection with a super sect in the north. What I fear is that after we hit the hare, we will attract the wolves!”

Ao Dijia’s face was flickering as well. “There are already many powers in the Heavenly Martial Realm eyeing up the resources held by the three empires in the south. Do you think this is their work?” he said worriedly. “As far as I know, the Supreme Palace doesn’t have much contact with the Xingyang family, so why would it want to wipe out the whole family?”

“Hmph! With the iron rule announced by the Divine City of the Holy Realm, who in the other three regions dares to reach their hands into the south!” Zhu Jin sneered disdainfully. “At most, they would do it for a personal feud. And, even if we give them the key of Mount Meru, do they dare to take it?”

Ao Dijia gave him a scornful look and scolded, “You know nothing! Yes, the Divine City of the Holy Realm had announced the rule, but so what? Many superpowers do not listen to them. Many years ago, after Gu Feiyang slaughtered everything within eight thousand miles in the East Sea, the sovereign of the Four Seas—the Bo family—had besieged the Holy Realm with hundreds of Nine Heavens experts from the sea clan, demanding the Holy Realm to hand him over. But, those fellows in the Divine City simply activated an array and hid behind the doors, not even daring to say a word!”

Zhu Jin flew into a rage. “Old codger Ao, you mean to pick on me, don’t you? The Martial Sovereign Vanquisher, Gu Feiyang, and the sovereign of the Four Seas—the Bo family—who are those people? They are all existences who can annihilate the various powers in the south with just a finger! Damn you! Why don’t you mention Martial Sovereign Tyrant, Ao Changkong, who has an indestructible body? Or the three Saints of the Divine City? Fu\*k!”

Ao Dijia said calmly in a cold voice, “Hmph! Can the Holy Realm hold down the other superpowers like the Shenxiao Temple, Redmoon City, Beiming Dark Palace, or Long family of Skyridge?” When he saw Zhu Jin about to scold him again, he quickly turned and said, “Tell us what you think, Xin Pi. Firecrow Empire belongs to your family.”

Xin Pi thought for a moment and said, "Let's not make wild guesses. The first thing we need to do is to find out who did this. Zhu Jin, since you've seen them before, you will find out who is behind them." He slapped his forehead and said, "This is going to be troublesome. It looks like I need to go to Jutian Sect. But, how am I going to tell Xingyang Huo about this?"

"At the beginning, you all just wait for the mayhem to ensue, as if it is not your business," Zhu Jin sneered. "Look what has happened now? His whole family is gone! I'm sure Xingyang Huo will go crazy this time. None of you will have a good time when he goes berserk!"

Xin Pi said angrily, "Are you not bashful while saying that? As the Grand Elder of the Temple of Revered Elders, you did not do your duty of keeping the empire safe! Look at the extreme cold energy down there, it is still spreading out in all directions! Soon, the area several miles around the Xingyang family will be affected and become inhabitable. If this were to continue, the whole Shangyang will be finished!"

Zhu Jin shook his head and said, "You're exaggerating! We just need to seal these extreme cold energies by laying down an array together. How could I know they would cause such a big mess, when the strongest people among them were just one-star Martial Grandmasters?"

"One-star Martial Grandmasters? Could the Supreme Palace really be behind this?" Xin Pi murmured to himself, his eyes filled with disbelief. Then, he sighed helplessly and said, "Let's put that aside for now and seal up the place together first. Otherwise, the capital is really finished."

Under his arrangement, the few people spread out and surrounded the giant ice sculpture. Each of them emanated extremely a strong Primordial Qi, forming a circle around the ice sculpture. At that moment, Xin Pi locked his hands in an incantation gesture and intoned something under his breath. A moment later, a huge seal flew out of his hands, hovering over the sculpture, and then turned into a sphere and spread out. Meanwhile, an ancient-looking character of 'seal' appeared in the center of the sphere, glowing with a golden light as it fell down gradually.

Everyone quickly poured Primordial Qi into the seal, causing it to burst into a golden light before fading away in the air.

"It's done. There will be no problem here for the time being. You may go back, and from now on, watch out for any suspicious people entering Shangyang." When he had finished, Xin Pi disappeared from the sky.

The people here were all supreme figures of the various aristocratic families. They shook their heads and left, but at the same time, each of them was palpitating. An aristocratic family with hundreds of years of history was wiped out just like that. It was so unexpected and ridiculous! They all felt sad for the misfortune of the Xingyang family.

When Zhu Jin saw Ao Dijia staring at him with a strange smile, he snorted angrily as he turned and flew away.

Soon, the incident of the Xingyang family was learned by everyone in the capital. Many people even purposely came to have a look and were stunned by the huge ice sculpture. There was a restrictive spell jointly laid by Xin Pi and the others about ten meters away from the sculpture, which prevented anyone from getting closer.

As it was too crowded, many people were trampled to death. Seeing that, the imperial family quickly sent the imperial guards to lock down the area, and only then did the crowd leave. But, all kinds of rumors had already spread throughout the whole Shangyang, most of which said that the Xingyang family was wiped out by Heaven with lightning because they had committed too many evils.

#### Chapter 172: Speculation

The various aristocratic families in Shangyang raised their defense to the highest level, calling back their experts carrying out tasks outside and sending their heirs and gifted juniors away, lest they met with the same misfortune as the Xingyang family.

At that moment, almost all eyes were focused on the Supreme Palace, because after the people who attended the banquet returned, everyone was told about the feud between the Supreme Palace and Xingyang family. Together with the effect of the extreme cold energy, the culprit had been on every tongue.

Ding Ling'er of the Tianyuan Trading Company was the only one who had guessed the truth.

“What? You said Li Yunxiao did this? Impossible! I’ve gone to the Xingyang family, and I’m certain that all of them were killed in a flash. If Li Yunxiao had such strength, he would have reigned supreme over Firecrow Empire and not been hiding in a mere Yanwu.” Yu Rong looked incredulous as he shook his head repeatedly. Although Ding Ling'er was rarely wrong with her speculations, it was too ridiculous so time that he could not believe at all.

Ding Ling'er sighed and said, "You are not the only one. Even I find it hard to believe. But, I'm certain that it must be Li Yunxiao. Ma Tianhe is the strongest man in the Supreme Palace, but he is just a three-stars Martial Grandmaster, and there are only four Martial Grandmasters in his sect. Even if he combines the strength of his entire sect, he is still no match for the Xingyang family."

Yu Rong said, "If the Supreme Palace can't do it, then Yanwu is even worse. The city's strongest man is a nine-stars Martial King, so how can they wipe out the Xingyang family? Miss, this is the funniest joke you've ever told."

Ding Ling'er paid no mind to Yu Rong's words. Instead, a strong look of doubt came over her face as she murmured, "How did they do it? This Li Yunxiao is too mysterious. None of the information we've come out with is useful, and I'm sure there must be a missing piece...but what is it?"

"You think too much, Miss," Yu Rong smiled. "This cannot be done by Li Yunxiao and his people. Our investigation organization can be ranked in the top ten on the Heavenly Martial Continent, and he is just a prodigal son from a small state. If we want, we can even find out how many times he had wet his bed when he was small. We won't miss anything."

Ding Ling'er did not say anything but just paced back and forth in the hall. At length, she shook her head helplessly and said, "I can't think of anything. Sir Yu, from today on, Yanwu will enjoy first-class treatment from me. No matter what they want, as long as we can do it, we will support them fully!"

Yu Rong sucked in a cold breath and said shockingly, "First-class treatment? Miss, do you have any idea what you are doing?"

He had never doubted any of Ding Ling'er's decisions, but he really could not help but question her this time.

Ding Ling'er gave him a sweet smile and said, "Of course! This could be the biggest and most successful investment of my life!"

Yu Rong paused a moment as he frowned, and then asked doubtfully, "Miss, you didn't fall in love with that Li Yunxiao, did you? Yes, he is handsome and has an elegant bearing, but his status and..."

“Sir Yu!” Ding Ling’er snapped shyly, “What nonsense are you talking about!” Then, she stamped her foot and chased Yu Rong out of the hall. A moment later, she heard Yu Rong’s voice coming through the door, “Aye, a grown girl can’t be kept at home.” That only angered her further.

After brooding over that for some moment, she suddenly burst into laughter, feeling amused by her own embarrassed look.

Meanwhile, at the Cheng family in Shangyang...

Inside a grand mansion, the present family head of the Cheng family, Cheng Feng, was studying an incomplete Go game with a zither playing in the background and an incense burning on the side. Across him sat an old man with white hair and a ruddy complexion, who had a smile in his eyes and was not speaking.

Cheng Feng held a white stone in his fingers and hesitated about what move to make. After a long time, he finally put down the stone and sighed. “Master Baili’s game is so mysterious. I’ve been pondering over it for half a month, and yet not only am I still unable to solve it, but when I focus on it, my heart is filled with a faint sense of horror. It is too profound for me to understand. Please enlighten me, Master!”

Baili Gongjin stroked his beard and smiled. “I can’t solve this incomplete Go game either.”

Cheng Feng was stunned, and he said in bewilderment, “Even Master Baili can’t solve it? Then this game...”

Baili Gongjin made a gesture as he smiled wryly and said, “You’ve studied it for half a month, but it has been half a year for me. This incomplete Go game is created by Martial Sovereign Throne, Teng Guang, and is called the ‘Game of Heaven and Earth’. It contains his ultimate insight into the Dao of Arrays. Anyone who knows how to solve it can inherit his eight hundred scrolls of the Dao of Arrays and become a Master of Arrays.”

As the family head of one of the four major aristocratic families in Firecrow Empire, Cheng Feng was a deep man who rarely showed his true emotions. Even so, he was visibly shocked when he heard that, and he sucked in a cold breath with a terrified look on his face. “Do you mean the Grandmaster of Go,



Martial Sovereign Teng Guang, who was given the title of Throne by the Holy Realm and is ranked seventh on the Heaven and Earth Power Chart?”

Baili Gongjin chuckled and nodded.

Cheng Feng glanced at the game in horror and asked doubtfully, “From where did Master Baili get such a precious treasure?”

Baili Gongjin laughed when he saw the nervous look on Cheng Feng’s face. “Don’t be so cautious, Brother Cheng. This is already known to everyone in the Holy Realm, and there are at least thousands, if not tens of thousands of people studying it now. I haven’t heard of anyone who could gain insight into the Dao of Arrays in it though. Still, many people have comprehended higher-level martial essence from it, which improved their cultivation base significantly. It’s a pity that I am not an expert in martial arts, so I can’t gain anything out of it. You are much stronger than me, Brother Cheng, and I think perhaps you can learn something if you put in more effort to study the game.”

Cheng Feng was somewhat surprised. With a wry smile, he said, “It gave me a fright. If this game had only one copy, the Cheng family would be pushed to the teeth of the storm and be wiped out at any time.”

As the saying went, a man’s wealth was his own ruin by attracting others’ greed. The Cheng family was powerful in Firecrow Empire, but it was merely an ant in the whole Heavenly Martial Continent. Such an amazing treasure was not something they could have laid a hand on.

“Haha!” Baili Gongjin laughed. “If this were the only copy, I would have been killed and my body would have been thrown somewhere unknown. This Martial Sovereign Throne wanted to take in disciples, but none of those who went to him was gifted enough, which is why he had come out with this idea. Anyone who can fully understand the mystery in the game can become his disciple and inherit his Dao of Arrays. In my opinion, even if we can’t fully solve it, we will still benefit a lot by learning just a part of it.”

Cheng Feng was slightly amazed, but then he said in a somewhat disappointed voice, “I don’t think I can fully solve it when all the other geniuses on the continent have failed to do so.”

Baili Gongjin smiled and said, "It's not easy, indeed, but sometimes, it's all about a fated chance. Perhaps someone in the Cheng family is fated to solve it. If so, your family will be able to move up another level and no longer have to stay in a small empire in the south."

That tempted Cheng Feng. If anyone of his family could inherit Martial Sovereign Throne's legacy, then no one in all three empires south of the continent would be his match, and he could even trample the Jutian Sect. At that moment, he decided to call upon all the family members later and give each a copy of the game to study.

"It occurred to me that someone might try it," Baili Gongjin said suddenly.

"Who?"

"We all know that Lord Yang Di had left behind a painting in Tianshui and said that he would do anything for the person who could solve its mystery. Both you and I had seen that painting, and we couldn't find anything out of it. But, some time ago, a young man in Tianshui solved the mystery. It proves that he has a very high level of comprehension, so we can make him try."

A look of displeasure flashed across Cheng Feng's face. He snorted coldly and said, "I've heard that, too, and the fool had given the amazing gift to the Wang family to save the princess of Tianshui!" He ground his teeth as a glimmer of disdain flickered in his eyes. "That fool was just lucky to have guessed the answer. It is said that the answer is a hidden poem Gu Feiyang wrote to scold Yang Di."

"Luck is also part of strength, and Yuan Hao has a very high opinion about the young man," said Baili Gongjin noncommittally. "You might want to find him and make him try, Brother Cheng!"

"Hmph! I've already planned to send someone to find this guy even before this." Cheng Feng's eyes flickered as he said, "He is now the City Lord of Yanwu, and his name is Li Yunxiao. In the last Thousand Treasures Trade Fair, he had killed a junior member of my family and Xingyang Jie, the heir of his family. I thought the Xingyang family would finish him, so I didn't pay him any mind. Little did I expect that the Xingyang family would be struck with such a catastrophic disaster."

Baili Gongjin's eyelids twitched suddenly as an absurd thought came to him. "Brother, do you think what happened to the Xingyang family is related to Yanwu or Li Yunxiao?"

Cheng Feng paused a moment before bursting into laughter. “Haha! You are too imaginative, Master Baili! Yes, there is an unresolvable feud between them, but Yanwu is just a small city of Tianshui while the Xingyang family is so strong that it cannot be annihilated even with the strength of the whole Tianshui. Besides, you have seen the ice sculpture, and you know that even a Martial Emperor of the Seven Constellations realm would not be able to escape that power.”

Baili Gongjin nodded slightly in agreement. “There is something very strange about this incident. Everyone agrees that the Supreme Palace did it. It was said that Xingyang Ming had robbed the Supreme Palace’s treasury during Ma Feibai’s banquet and killed many people before fleeing, and more than a dozen people had seen it with their eyes. They said it was an act of revenge, which I find reasonable. It’s just that I didn’t expect the Supreme Palace to have such a mighty power that could wipe out the Xingyang family in a flash.”

Cheng Feng’s face grew serious as he said worriedly, “The Supreme Palace has only been established for a little over a hundred years, and its Palace Master—Ma Tianhe—is only a three-stars Martial Grandmaster. Had it not been because of its mysterious origin, which seems to be related to some super sect in the north, it would have been wiped out by the others. But now, it seems that this is not the case at all!

“Their real strength is far above what they have shown us! I even begin to wonder if they are deliberately sent here by the sect in the north?”

#### Chapter 173: The Zhou Family

Baili Gongjin’s face grew serious as well, and he said in a deep voice, “I remember when Supreme Palace was just established, the imperial Temple of Revered Elders had sent someone to the north to investigate, but to no avail. The only valuable piece of information was that Supreme Palace and Beiming Dark Palace in the north seem to be inextricably linked. In the beginning, everybody thought Beiming Dark Palace was eyeing Mount Meru. However, they did not make any move for the one hundred years that followed, and therefore the various major powers in Firecrow Empire allowed it to develop further.”

“That’s right!” said Cheng Feng, “Beiming Dark Palace is one of the few superpowers on the continent, so who dares to touch Supreme Palace? But, they are showing their tails now. I just don’t understand why the Xingyang family would want to steal from their treasury? Such an act is intolerable by any power. That sly old fox Xingyang Yi had been in charge of his family for over thirty years, and I knew him quite well. He was not a fool who would do that. I’m sure there must be something we don’t know!”

“It is no longer important whether there is a secret,” Baili Gongjin sighed. “The Xingyang family is completely gone, and Xingyang Huo is the last man of the family. I reckon he will attack Supreme Palace as soon as he learns about what happened to his family. That’s good, for we can take the opportunity to find out Supreme Palace’s strength. Xingyang Huo is already a peak nine-stars Martial Grandmaster, isn’t he?”

Cheng Feng said coldly, “Mount Meru is about to open, and various powers are stirring. I fear the incident of the Xingyang family is not as simple as we thought. But, everything will be clear in a few months.”

Baili Gongjin looked thoughtful. With his eyebrows frowned tightly, he said, “I suddenly feel that Yanwu’s inexplicable rise is not so simple. They had not only offended the Xingyang family, Cheng family, and Zhou family, but also had ties with the Wang family. I heard they even fought against the crown prince during the auction. Tsk, tsk, the Zhou family lost their Cauldron of Five Elements after the auction. Do you think Yanwu is the one who took it?”

“In this chaotic situation, the only way to protect oneself is to plan before action,” Cheng Feng sneered. “By standing in the center of the storm, Yanwu is either a group of fools or a pawn pushed to the front by some major power to observe the tide. As the most prosperous city of Tianshui, it is no doubt the best choice for that.”

Baili Gongjin said softly, “It’s said that Myriad Treasures Store is the power behind Yanwu...”

Cheng Feng was silent. He pondered for a long time, and only then did he say, “I’ve asked Myriad Treasures Store about this, and the answer they gave me is negative. But, at this juncture, I don’t know if they are telling the truth. In any case, both Beiming Dark Palace and Myriad Treasures Store are existences we can’t afford to offend, so we can only wait and see.”

After talking for a while more, they turned their attention back to the ‘Game of Heaven and Earth’.

At the same time, a group of senior members of the Zhou family was also discussing and analyzing the destruction of the Xingyang family.

The family head, Zhou Yangbiao, said softly, “It is a herald of chaos that such a serious incident happened at this time. Supreme Palace is not necessarily the culprit, and it might be the power behind

them. We must not get involved in the storm. Mount Meru is nothing when compared to Yushan, and we can't let anything happen to him at this critical moment."

One of the elders, Zhou Chu, frowned and said, "But, our men are still trying to find out who robbed the Cauldron of Five Elements from us. It is said that someone saw the City Lord of Yanwu use it, but that has not been confirmed. Do we need to send someone to verify this?"

Zhou Yangbiao's face grew cold as he said, "This City Lord of Yanwu, Li Yunxiao, is the same person who has a bet with Yushan. Yes, he does have the motive to rob the cauldron, but he doesn't have the strength. I suspect he is a puppet pushed forward by some major power. Everything from the bet with Yushan to the robbery of the cauldron was premeditated, and the purpose is to lure us into action so they can do what they want."

Another elder, Zhou Xing, said with shock, "Who are they? How dare they openly provoke us?"

Zhou Yangbiao said coldly, "I don't know who they are yet, but this Li Yunxiao had not only offended us, but also killed Cheng Feiche from the Cheng family and Xingyang Jie from the Xingyang family. Putting aside the fact whether he had the strength to do so, just the courage alone is not something that an ordinary city lord could have. There must certainly be someone behind him!"

"Could it be that Li Yunxiao was also involved in the destruction of the Xingyang family?" said Zhou Chu, aghast.

Zhou Yangbiao frowned as he pondered for a moment and said, "It's hard to say. Supreme Palace is more likely the one who did that, but we can't rule out the involvement of Li Yunxiao either. Maybe the two of them were working together. There are also rumors that Myriad Treasures Store is behind Yanwu, but I don't think that's likely. As the number one trading company on the continent, Myriad Treasures Store's power is not weaker than any of the superpowers. However, they never took part in any disputes, and they would never cultivate such a pawn force."

Zhou Chu's face was dark as he said angrily, "What annoyed me the most is that this Li Yunxiao managed to solve the mystery of the painting left behind by Yang Di, but in the end, he gave the reward to the Wang family for the sake of a girl! It is like Yushan delivered a great gift right to the doorstep of the Wang family! Why don't we just make that girl Yushan's concubine now? By doing so, the Wang family would have failed to fulfill what they had promised Li Yunxiao, and they would not get the reward promised by Yang Di."

“No!” Zhou Yangbiao narrowed his eyes and said in a cold voice, “At least half of Wang family’s experts are hanging around us every day, and hundreds of divine senses are sweeping back and forth through our mansion in every moment. They know everything about us, and by watching us so openly, it proves that they are determined to fulfill their promise. If we do anything to Qin Ruxue, I’m sure they will rush in to save her in the next moment. Yushan is cultivating in seclusion now, and it is a sensitive time whence we can’t afford for anything to go wrong!”

“That’s right! And the Wang family is only responsible for protecting the girl for three months. After that, we will drag her out and play as we please. Let’s see what that Li Yunxiao can do to us then!” Zhou Xing sneered. “But, what should we do about the Cauldron of Five Elements? If we continue the investigation, we might drag ourselves into troubled waters. But, if we stop, what about Yushan?”

Zhou Yangbiao drummed his fingers on the table and said calmly, “I’ve found two cultivation vessels for him, so the Cauldron of Five Elements is no longer vital.”

That startled everyone and filled their hearts with chills.

What he meant was he had found two experts to forcibly transfer their Primordial Qi to Yushan. In that way, Yushan could gain a significant improvement in a short time. However, the strength obtained through such a method was not only limited, but a large part of it was hollow, and how much he could get in the end depended entirely on himself.

For someone poorly gifted, even if the method pushed him up one major realm, he might end up with an improvement of less than a star after stabilizing his cultivation base. Moreover, the cultivation base of the vessels must be at least two realms higher than the receiver, and the vessels would become cripples, with their Primordial Qi completely gone after that.

Zhou Yushan was a Martial Lord, so only Martial Grandmasters or above could be his cultivation vessels. And after they gave him their Primordial Qi, they would be crippled completely, no matter how much his strength had improved. In the southern region of Heavenly Martial Continent, a Martial Grandmaster could already establish his own sect and rule a land, and yet two experts of such level were wasted just to improve the strength of a junior. Only the four major aristocratic families had the reserves to do this.

No one could tell anything from Zhou Yangbiao’s face, but they guessed he did not feel any pain over the great cost. After all, it was to improve the strength of his son, and he was most likely overjoyed in his

heart. "Still, we can't just drop the matter, but we can't be trapped in it either," he said in a flat tone. "I think we will send two elders to investigate, one to Yanwu and the other to Supreme Palace. Remember, you must not attack them, and report back immediately if there is any news. The opening of Mount Meru this time may be riskier than any previous one. Apart from great strength, the reason why our family could survive for thousands of years was caution. We will rather miss a good opportunity than take the wrong step. Zhou Chu, Zhou Xing, I will have to trouble you this time."

"Understood, my lord!"

Both men stood up hurriedly and answered. Zhou Yangbiao waved, and the two elders took their leave under the complicated glances of the others, heading toward Yanwu and Supreme Palace respectively.

...

Yunxiao drove the chariot in the direction of Supreme Palace and made a large round before stealthily returning to Yanwu.

"Although we fooled that old man, I wonder if we can deceive those aristocratic families." Xiao Qingwang said worriedly. "Also, the Xingyang family has a patriarch who is an elder in Jutian Sect, and his cultivation base is unfathomable. We will be in huge trouble if he found out that we are the culprits."

Yunxiao said calmly, "Even if we can deceive them, it is only temporary. If it weren't for Uncle Chen's death, I wouldn't have attacked the Xingyang family so early. You don't have to be too worried though. The most important thing for us now is to improve our strength. The destruction of the Xingyang family will at least slightly deter those aristocratic families who think they are so noble, and no one would harbor any ill intention against Yanwu for the time being. We need to take this period to improve everyone's cultivation base."

Afterward, everyone was brought into the Divine Realm Tablet. The newly recruited warriors were completely stunned; the disciples of Dhyana Sect, who had their own base, were awestruck when they were brought into the boundless independent space with Primordial Qi several times richer than the outside world. Meanwhile, the members of Dubhe, who were also the students of Jialan Academy, had never seen such an amazing place before, and each of them glanced around blankly like idiots.

Neng Feichen said excitedly, “No wonder Yanwu could become so strong in such a short time! It turns out you have such an amazing thing! An independent space with spirituality! Young Master Yun, this mystic artifact must be of high level, right?”

Yunxiao smiled and nodded. “Sect Leader Neng, are you satisfied with what I’ve promised you?”

Neng Feichen laughed and said, “Satisfied? I could not be more satisfied! With this mystic artifact and the Primordial Qi endlessly supplied by the Nine Dragons Energy Absorbing Array, the treatment is much better than what you’d promised! I believe that with these resources, Yanwu will become a superpower in Firecrow Empire sooner or later.”

#### Chapter 174: Unlimited Supply

Yunxiao chuckled and did not comment on that. Firecrow Empire was nothing to him, if truth be told. He waved a hand, sending a gust of breeze to wake the several thousand warriors from their shock.

“From today on, you will cultivate in this pill pagoda. I’ve prepared four regions with tenfold, one-hundredfold, one-thousandfold, and ten-thousandfold gravitational force for warriors of the Original realm, Two Forces realm, Three Powers realm, and Four Quadrants realm respectively. In the region for Martial Lords, what awaits you is not only a ten-thousandfold gravitational force, but also a surprise. Hehe...”

Thousands of warriors all gasped at the same time. A tenfold gravitational force was just right for warriors, and one-hundredfold was already a very heavy burden for Martial Masters. One-thousandfold was almost like an extreme torture for even Great Martial Masters, while for a Martial Lord to cultivate under ten-thousandfold gravitational force was almost like killing him. Moreover, there was even a surprise...The members of Dubhe who had tasted the surprise all trembled when they heard that.

Yunxiao saw everyone’s expression, and he said in a loud voice, “Walking down the path of martial arts is like sailing against the currents. Why is it harder to break through as you get to the higher level? It is not because the difficulty has increased, but your training cannot keep up!”

He sneered. “You are a Great Martial Master, but you still train under one-hundredfold gravitational force. You are a Martial Lord, but you still train under one-thousandfold gravitational force. And you still want to break through? Are you not ashamed of yourself? Let me be honest with you, the reason you can’t break through your current realm is that you can’t break through your own limits! It is not because of lack of resources or talent, but entirely because you lack courage, determination, and perseverance!”



The people present were all tough warriors with certain success in martial arts, not some ignorant newbies. Yunxiao's words immediately removed their dullness of perception like an epiphany. 'He's right! The reason I can't break through is that I don't have enough pressure. If I train under a hundredfold or even a thousandfold gravitational force, I will be forced to break through even if I don't want to. It looks like I've not suffered enough!'

Yunxiao went on, his voice as cold as ice, "I've once said that if you follow me, I'll provide an endless supply of cultivation resources for you. In this pill pagoda, as long as you are willing to put in the effort, you will have medicinal pills, Primordial Stones, mystic weapons, and martial techniques. Before training, each of you can claim medicinal pills and Primordial Stones required for you to break through to the next realm. I'll not impose any limit; you can claim as many as you want, and I don't care if you want to take them as your daily meals. But, there's one thing you need to remember: medicinal pills are only supplements, and you can't rely on them entirely. Also, all the resources in the pill pagoda are provided only for your training. If anyone dares to bring them out, I will kill him without question!"

That caused a sudden commotion to break out among the warriors while Xiao Qingwang and the others were so shocked that they were left speechless.

It was impossible for any other power on the continent to let its people claim as many medicinal pills and Primordial Stones as they wanted. It meant that they no longer had to worry about cultivation resources, and they could focus all their energy on training.

The members of Merak were the most deeply touched. They were all lone warriors before this, and what they lacked the most were cultivation resources. It was very common for them to fight to the death just for a medicinal pill or half a piece of Primordial Stone. Therefore, when they heard they would be provided with an endless supply of cultivation resources, they felt like they were dreaming, and they all looked at each other in disbelief.

Neng Feichen was completely struck dumb as well. If Dhyana Sect could be so rich, it would not have stayed in Mount Qiyun for thousands of years and depended on others for a living.

Even Qian Duoduo was speechless, with his mouth left hanging open. He was born in a superpower, and he had seen all kinds of resources. Apart from those ninth-tier medicinal pills, there was nothing that could surprise him. But now, he was completely shocked by Yunxiao's generous offer.

It was such a heaven-defying offer!

Yunxiao looked at everyone's dumbfounded expression with satisfaction. That was exactly the effect he wanted.

It was only after getting the resources and Primordial Stones from Tianyuan Trading Company and Myriad Treasures Store, taking away part of the saving Dhyana Sect had accumulated for thousands of years, robbing everything from Supreme Palace's treasury, and most importantly, with the full support of Zhang Qingfan and dozens of alchemists, that Yunxiao could activate the training mode with an unlimited supply.

Even so, he also knew that it would not last long. Otherwise, Yanwu would soon become one of the top powers on the Heavenly Martial Continent, not to mention the number one power in Firecrow Empire.

The reason why those superpowers on the continent were so fearful was that in addition to their great fighting strength, they had resources that they had accumulated for thousands or even tens of thousands of years. If they wanted, they could double or even multiply the strength of their sects in a short period. The immeasurable resource advantage was even more frightening than the apparent fighting strength.

And the reason why the Sea of Soul Formation could become an existence beyond the Holy Realm was that it brought together the best alchemists in the whole continent, who constantly created all kinds of top resources that attracted the strongest warriors to trade there. The cultivation of warriors mainly depended on innate talents and fated chances, but the existence and continuation of those superpowers depended entirely on the accumulation of various resources.

It was only when a sect was in a crisis that it would resort to the method of providing unlimited cultivation resources like Yunxiao did just now, and what he did now was a prelude to the rapid rise of Yanwu in the short term.

Li Chunyang said worriedly, "The consumption is so tremendous that I don't think we can last for too long. What should we do if we run out of resources?" He was a seasoned general, so he naturally knew the importance of wealth. Resources were what war was all about after all!

Yunxiao chuckled and said, "Where do you think our resources came from? We borrowed, we robbed. When we are stronger, we will borrow and rob again."

His words sent everyone into a stupor. Looking at the unimpressed expression on the faces around him, Yunxiao said coldly, "Do you think I'm just talking nonsense? Tell me then, which of the major powers did not rob the rivers and mountains they have occupied? Are those rivers and mountains distributed according to needs? No! It is all about natural selection, and only the fittest can survive!"

Everyone fell silent immediately. Although what Yunxiao said sounded exaggerated, it was the fact, and they knew it. Why could those major powers enjoy various natural resources while they had to risk their lives everywhere just to earn a living?

"So, work hard, each one of you! Resources are fixed, and the more you consume, the more you will get. For those who fail to make progress, I'm sorry, but Yanwu doesn't keep cripples."

After saying that, Yunxiao vanished directly from where he stood and came to the cavern beneath Mount Inch.

The following tasks were handed over to Neng Feichen and Hong Bing. Everything was arranged properly, and they just had to follow the plan. As for Dubhe, it was originally under the command of Chen Dasheng, and after he died, Yunxiao intended to let Luo Yunshang take over the command. But, she rejected that offer, so he gave it to Yian.

Meng Wu was still lying quietly in the array of life. Life force was rushing endlessly into her body, and it looked as if she were asleep, serene, and quiet, but she would never wake up.

After examining her with divine sense, Yunxiao sighed and murmured to himself, "The Soul Nourishing Wood is produced by Kunwu Divine Tree through gathering a large amount of life force and energy essence in the Four Seas. It is a precious treasure of the sea clan, and only the four imperial families and the Bo family have some in their reserves. Asking is certainly useless...unless I can restore the peak strength of my previous life and rob it from them."

His eyes gleamed fiercely, but they dimmed down in the next instant. Even he had no idea when he could restore the peak strength of his previous life, and Meng Wu might not make it to that day. Yunxiao felt a stab of pain in his heart as he looked at her young, delicate face, which was gentle and graceful

under the blanket of blue Primordial Qi with a hint of a smile. He turned away and dared not to look at her again.

Darkthunder was still sleeping outside the array. It had not woken up since taking the Nine Orifices pill, but the demonic aura emanating with its breaths was growing stronger. Yunxiao patted its forehead and said softly, "Whether you can break through this barrier depends on your luck."

There was a strict lineage in the world of demon beasts. For example, Darkthunder was a fifth-tier demon beast, and it would stay as a fifth-tier demon beast its whole life. At most, it could climb up to the peak of the fifth-tier, and it was all due to the bloodline. Although demon beasts were powerful, they lacked the hope to advance to higher levels when compared to human beings.

But, there were some special cases, such as taking rare herbs or having some mutations, which allowed demon beasts to break through the restriction of bloodline and reach higher levels. But, these cases were extremely rare. Darkthunder's current aura was stuck right at the peak of the fifth-tier, and as it breathed, it was slowly accumulating power, as if about to break through at any time.

"Eh? What is this smell?"

Yunxiao lifted his head suddenly, his eyes flashed with a shocked look. With a blink, he disappeared from beside Darkthunder instantly and reached somewhere deep in the cavern. Wisps of green aura drifted out of a hollow about the size of a room, which was slowly corroding and dissolving the surrounding walls, causing them to produce a nasty smell.

"Fu\*k! I can't believe this boy ate the whole poisonous egg in one go!" Yunxiao cursed and made Primordial Qi hover around him to form a barrier, then walked into the hollow.

Meng Bai had turned green all over and was sitting cross-legged in the center. Covered with tiny blisters, his skin began to rot, and foul-smelling green fluid was seeping out from the parts that had festered. Beside him lay a broken eggshell, and its contents were all gone.

"Not bad, eating raw is more nutritious. The purpose of the poisonous ferret is to trigger the natural toxicity in you, but judging from what I see, it is going to take a very long time. Well, let me go and find you a stronger catalyst!"

While frowning, Yunxiao paced back and forth in the cavern. After pondering for a moment, he left the Divine Realm Tablet and headed toward Firecrow Empire alone.

Within tens of thousands of miles around Yanwu, the best place to provide materials was naturally the place where the strongest alchemists of the empire gathered—the Alchemist Association of the Firecrow Empire.

#### Chapter 175: A Lecture

After the incident of the Xingyang family, the atmosphere in Firecrow Empire became tense and strange. Yunxiao completely restrained his divine sense and pretended to be a young master on a journey as he entered the city along with common people. People were coming and going in the city, and it looked peaceful.

He saw an old man selling sweet potatoes, a young master toying with his pet bird, an old man and his granddaughter busking in the teahouse, and a lazy beggar. Everything seemed so peaceful and normal.

But, it was too normal.

Shangyang City was a gathering place of all the warriors in Firecrow Empire. However, Yunxiao could not find even a single warrior on the streets. All he saw were common people. Moreover, countless divine senses were sweeping back and forth over the city, watching everyone's movements. The whole imperial city seemed to have entered a state of high tension; various powers reduced their activities to the minimum, but carried out intelligence work at full capacity.

Yunxiao sneered disdainfully. He had restrained his divine sense, and even though there was some people in the Firecrow Empire who could see through him, they were not among these people who were sent out to monitor the people. So, he swaggered directly toward the Alchemist Association like a rich young master who was going to ask for medicinal pills or mystic weapons.

The Firecrow's Alchemist Association was a third-grade branch, and it was presided over by a sixth-tier Alchemy Grandmaster. Its strength was far beyond that of the branch in Tianshui. A third-tier alchemist was already a mighty figure in Tianshui's Alchemist Association, but the same alchemist would be a nobody here.

There was not a warrior on the streets, and even the front door of the Alchemist Association was almost deserted, with one or two visitors coming and going occasionally. Puzzled, Yunxiao walked in, and was immediately shocked by how quiet it was. If he had not seen a beautiful and sexy girl writing something at the front desk, he would have thought he had entered a haunted mansion.

“This is...”

A quick glance at the great hall beside him made him understand what had happened. It was packed with people, but not a sound could be heard. Everyone was staring attentively at a glowing white array disc. A green sword embryo floated over the disc, which was being refined.

“Shh...” The beautiful girl hastily pulled Yunxiao to the side and whispered into his ear, “Master Bi Qianjin had just advanced to the third-tier, and he is giving a lecture. What can I do for you?”

It was the tradition of the Alchemist Association. Whenever an alchemist advanced to the next tier, he or she would give a lecture, telling everyone his or her insight of the alchemy and the experience of breaking through. When Luo Yunshang brought Yunxiao to find a master, they had run into one such lecture, which was given by Jia Rong.

Yunxiao felt the girl’s lips almost touching his ear, and her breath was sweet. He smiled and said, “Pretty girl, may I know your name?”

“Don’t be so rude!”

The girl scolded, but she did not look angry at all as she studied Yunxiao. In her line of work, a pair of sharp eyes was the most important asset. With just one glance, she judged him to be a young master from some lesser aristocratic family who was here to ask for medicinal pills or mystic weapons.

“Young Master, are you here to buy medicinal pills or mystic weapons? Please fill in a form here. Make sure you state clearly your requirements and the remuneration you are willing to pay. I will paste it up a moment later and see if anyone wants to take it.” The girl pulled out a form from the front desk and placed it in front of Yunxiao.

Yunxiao chuckled as he picked up a pen and began to write on the paper. Very quickly, he handed the paper to the girl.

She glanced at it, and then said in surprise, “The poisonous blood of a demon beast above the fourth-tier? The price will be negotiated face to face?” She studied Yunxiao once again. While frowning, she said dubiously, “So, you are here to look for materials. This is a rare thing, and only by luck can you find some. Moreover, it is very expensive. If you don’t put any price here, I fear it will be very difficult for you to get it.”

Yunxiao frowned as well. In a place like Firecrow Empire, demon beasts above the fourth-tier were rare, not to mention one with poisonous blood. It was indeed very difficult to find it. He actually wanted to see the president, because only the higher-ups of the association would know about such a rare material.

“Wait, this smell...”

Yunxiao sniffed, then looked doubtfully into the great hall. He sensed a faint fluctuation spreading out, and he immediately caught the frequency. Astounded, he said, “It is almost taking shape...What a pity!”

“What did you say?” The girl paused and followed Yunxiao’s gaze. The hall was still quiet, and everyone was watching nervously as Bi Qianjin refined the sword. There was nothing unusual.

“Ah, it’s nothing. Go further away later, lest the explosion there injures you. I’ll have a look inside.”

When he had finished, he turned and walked toward the hall. He rested his eyes on the little green sword in front while an amused smile brushed his lips.

The girl stared blankly at his back and was a little confused by what he said. ‘Could he be a madman? But, he doesn’t look like one,’ she thought to herself. After pasting Yunxiao’s form, she returned to the front desk and continued her work. As for what Yunxiao told her, she did not put it to heart.

“He had just advanced to the third-tier and now he is already forcing himself to refine a third-tier mystic weapon. The courage is laudable, but it’s a pity that the strength is lacking!”

Yunxiao folded his arms over his chest as he stood behind the crowd and said in a soft voice while shaking his head. His voice was not loud, but it was heard by many people. Stunned, they all turned back, but when they saw he was just a green boy, they gave him disgusted and angry looks. Then, they flicked their sleeves and turned back to continue watching.

“Boy, how do you know he lacks the strength? I can see his refinement is going well, and the sword is almost taking shape.” A playful voice rang out from his side. “Don’t utter nonsense when you don’t have the ability, or it will bring you trouble.”

Yunxiao turned around. At the back of the hall, an old man leaned against the wall lazily, watching the refinement at the front while picking his nose with a finger.

What he heard just now was sent into his ear by this old man with a voice transmission. After all, everyone was watching the refinement attentively, and talking loudly would only attract glares and angry stares, just like what happened to him just now.

When Yunxiao’s gaze fell on the old man, his pupils constricted, but they quickly returned to normal. Then, he sent a voice transmission over, “Why don’t we make a bet?”

“A bet?” The old man’s eyes lit up, as if his interest were aroused. He pulled his finger out of his nostril as he smiled and asked, “What’s the bet?” Meanwhile, he was slightly suspicious inside and thought, ‘This boy’s eyes seemed to be flickering when he first saw me. Is it because he can sense my strength? No, that’s impossible. I think too much.’

“If you lose, you will run errands for me for a year. If I lose, I will run errands for you for a year as well,” Yunxiao said calmly.

“Run errands for you for a year?” The old man’s body straightened up immediately. He frowned and sunk in thought, wordless. ‘Could he really have discovered my strength? But, how’s that possible?’ He waved his hand repeatedly and said with a voice transmission, “No, no. Although I don’t think I will lose, accidents do happen. My old bones will fall apart if I were to run errands for you for a year.”

There was a look of disdain in Yunxiao’s eyes as he sneered, “Are you scared? Well, tell me what you want to bet then. I will accept it no matter what it is.”



The old man looked at his confident face, then turned to look suspiciously at Bi Qianjin, who was refining at the front. The alchemist was pale and covered with sweat, but his movement was calm and did not look like he was going to have a problem. "Scared? Hah! Let's bet then that the loser will run errands for the winner for a year! But...would your parents come to me if you lose the bet?" He saw that Yunxiao was only fifteen years old but already had the cultivation base of a Great Martial Master, which meant that he must not be the son of some common family, and was definitely supported by a decent sect.

Yunxiao grinned and his face lit up instantly, as if he had found a great bargain. "Even if my family comes to you, why should you be afraid? You are a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster!"

"You!"

The old man trembled, and his eyes went wide in horror. He had used a mystic art on himself, which prevented common people from sensing his cultivation base. Even those with extremely strong divine sense could at most sense his cultivation base of a Martial Master or a Great Martial Master. However, this fifteen-year-old boy managed to tell his strength of a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster at a glance!

"Who exactly are you, boy?" The old man could not bear it anymore and asked in a deep voice. Looking at Yunxiao's cocksure face, he suddenly had a very bad feeling.

"Haha! Take it easy, old man! I'm not a bad guy." Yunxiao was in a good mood. Just like that, he had found himself another seven-stars Martial Grandmaster. It was a great help to Yanwu, which was on the teeth of a storm now.

The old man said angrily, "Don't celebrate too early! It is not certain yet who will win or lose!" Although he said those words, the confidence in his heart began to gradually melt under the smile on the corner of Yunxiao's lips, especially when he saw Bi Qianjin's face grow uglier and uglier. Finally...

Buzz! Buzz!

After Bi Qianjin sent another incantation seal into the small green sword, it suddenly became extremely violent and produced a buzzing noise, which made everyone's head reel and ear ring. The old man's face turned extremely unsightly in an instant. Even he, a layman of alchemy, could sense that the aura emanated from the sword was extremely unstable and violent.

Terrified, the faces of all the alchemists and apprentices fell. It was the prelude of an artifact explosion. Many of them had experienced it before, but they were all the explosions of common mystic weapons, so the damage was limited. But now it was a third-tier mystic weapon, and that too in such a confined space. If it were to explode, the consequences would be beyond imagination!

Some alchemists at the back of the hall turned their heads in shock, staring at Yunxiao, who was calm and with a smile on his face. Their heads were filled with questions, wondering how this young man knew it was going to explode, and how did he know it so early?

“Don’t panic, brother Qianjin! Continue the refinement. As long as it takes shape, you can suppress the violent power. I will give you a hand!”

A middle-aged man jumped out of the crowd. Soul power surged from him as he sent out a few incantation seals, stabilizing the little green sword in an instant. It spun constantly over the array disc, and the buzzing noise came under control as well.

#### Chapter 176: Explosion?

Everyone breathed a heavy sigh of relief. But then, their eyes gleamed; saving a violent mystic weapon during the refining process was even rarer, and they all widened their eyes to watch, fearing they might miss anything.

Bi Qianjin’s face lit up, and he exclaimed, “I’m sure everything will be fine with Brother Zhang Hua’s help!”

With a modest smile, Zhang Hua said, “You’re flattering me, Brother Qianjin! Now is not the time to chat. Although I’ve forcibly suppressed the sword with my soul power, it doesn’t show any sign of relief. Let’s use the transformation technique together to stabilize the violent power in it. Only then we can try to fix its shape!”

“Alright!” Bi Qianjin answered in a deep voice. Seeming to have recovered some strength, he began to use the transformation technique. Both men performed almost identical incantation gestures, sending various complex hand seals into the sword over the array, as if they were trying to forcibly refine and fix its shape.

The old man breathed a long sigh of relief when he saw that. He gave Yunxiao a triumphant look as he laughed and said, "Haha! What a plot twist! Haha!"

"A plot twist?" Yunxiao smiled mockingly. "In fact, its violent power can be negated with just a few simple hand seals, and then the refinement can be continued. However, that fool forcibly suppressed the sword with his soul power, and now they even joined hands to use the transformation technique. In ten breaths, the mystic weapon will explode with several times more violent power than just now."

Yunxiao's cocksure face and his confident voice gave the old man a pause and turned his face serious again. Although he was somewhat doubtful of that, he was already deeply convinced by the strength of Yunxiao's divine sense and judgment. Feeling anxious, he turned to look at the front of the hall and began to pray in his heart, hoping that the other was wrong.

Yunxiao had said that openly without using a voice transmission, and his words immediately turned all heads around and attracted all kinds of disdainful snorts and angry curses. However, those alchemists who had heard him previously were anxious and doubtful.

"One!"

Paying no mind to the angry curses and gazes, he clasped his hands behind his back and stared coldly at the small sword as he began counting leisurely.

"Two!"

"Three!"

"Four!"

His unbridled counting immediately provoked general rage. A second-tier alchemist stood up and pointed at him while snapping, "Who are you, boy? How could you make a groundless comment about the refinement of a third-tier alchemist? Who are the seniors of your family?"

The old man looked at Yunxiao. He, too, wanted to know who were the seniors of this boy's family. But, Yunxiao paid them no heed, and just continued to count as if there were no other people around.  
"Five!"

His behavior immediately angered the crowd, and many stood up to scold him. "Whose son is this? Throw him out of here now!"

"Throw him out? I think we better keep him in captivity and wait for his senior to come and ransom him!"

"Yes, let me do it, I'll keep him in my house!"

"Brother Ximen, I don't think that's a good idea. You're known for molesting boys."

"Brother Shangguan, what you said is incorrect. I'm just romantic, but not obscene."

"..."

Yunxiao turned a deaf ear to that. "Six!"

Even as his voice faded, Bi Qianjin and Zhang Hua's faces fell at the same time, as if they had found something incredible, and their eyes were full of shock.

"How? Why is this happening?" For a moment, Zhang Hua was struck dumb, and he stared blankly at the little green sword. A violent aura gradually emanated on the mystic weapon, growing stronger and stronger, and the suppression of their soul power was rendered completely useless.

"Arrest him, arrest this boy who spread fallacies to deceive people!" The alchemist who was called Shangguan looked excited as he licked his lips and rushed out of the crowd toward Yunxiao.

"Seven!" A hint of a smile appeared on the corner of Yunxiao's lips; everything was under his control.

The old man was startled. When he saw the changes in Zhang Hua and Bi Qianjin's expressions, he knew he was losing the bet. He turned to look at Yunxiao in shock with a storm raging in his heart.

At the front of the hall were two third-tier alchemists, and yet they had failed to suppress a third-tier sword embryo together. And how did Yunxiao find out about that so early?

Just when Shangguan rushed in front of Yunxiao, Zhang Hua suddenly roared. His voice was so loud that it shook everyone and almost threw them off their feet.

"Run! The sword embryo is about to explode!"

"What!" The crowd was stunned, and everyone gave Yunxiao a horrified look. A dead silence fell over the hall for a brief moment, and then the people began to rush crazily toward the exit, pushing and stepping over others. Curses and shrieks could be heard coming from all over the place.

"Everyone stops and let second-tier alchemists leave first!"

"First my ass! If you push me one more time, I'll turn you into a cripple here and now! Get out of my way!"

As Shangguan was at the foremost, he was pushed to the ground by the people rushing up from behind. Countless feet stamped across his body, and he screamed a few times before going silent completely. No one knew if he were still alive or not.

"Eight!" Yunxiao announced softly. Then, he turned to look at the old man, whose face was ashen, as he smiled and said, "How's that? Are you convinced now?"

Sensing the energy fluctuation coming from the sword and looking at Bi Qianjin and Zhang Hua's panicked expressions, the old man knew they were unable to save the situation anymore. With a dejected look, he sighed and said, "How did you know it was going to explode?"

"It's good that you admit defeat." Yunxiao chuckled, then pushed through the crowd and walked toward the front. "There are still two breaths left, and the sword can actually be saved," his faint voice rang out.

Zhang Hua was trying his best to control the violent sword, buying more time for the people to run for their lives. When he saw Yunxiao walk over calmly, he cried out in shock, "You should not be here! I don't know how you found out it is going to explode, but the structure of the sword embryo is completely damaged now, and we can't do anything to save the situation! The explosion of a third-tier mystic weapon will kill you! Go now!"

Yunxiao gave them an approving look and said, "Facing danger fearlessly and buying time for the others with your own lives...Tsk, tsk, although your skill in alchemy is not so good, you do have an excellent moral quality."

Under Zhang Hua and Bi Qianjin's stunned gazes, Yunxiao lightly slapped the array disc, causing a beam of light to rise from it and envelop the green sword embryo.

Both men gaped, then Zhang Hua glared at him and bellowed, "Stop it! Do you know what you're doing?!" What shocked them even more was that the soul power they used to suppress the sword embryo was pushed back by another soul power.

"This is insane! You'll..."

Zhang Hua said furiously, but his voice came to a sudden stop, because to his astonishment, he found that the sword's violent aura seemed to grow gentler. Although it was still extremely wild, the frequency gradually became rhythmic.

"This... this is..." Both men's eyes grew wide as they stood there and watched with blank faces.

Yunxiao was already moving; standing where he was with both feet rooted to the ground, his upper body blurred into motion, and his hands moved so fast that it shocked everyone. Incantation seals jumped out of his palms without stopping one after another like the rushing water in a great river, pouring into the air over the array disc and enveloping the little green sword.

There was a flash of shock in the old man's eyes as he stared incredulously at Yunxiao's dreamlike movements. They were as fast and swift as lightning and wind, and that kind of complex movement and some of the skillful maneuvers were by no means something ordinary newbies could do. Only a seasoned alchemist with rich experience could perform them so smoothly and casually!

'Ten breaths have passed, but there is no explosion...' thought the old man. Although he could not see the sword embryo, he could sense the energy fluctuation emanating out of it become calm. It was like a pot of boiling water had suddenly become gentle.

The old man looked dejected. He did not think that he would lose to a strange boy. But, his eyes suddenly lit up, as if he were very excited.

Meanwhile, after waiting for a while without hearing the explosion, some of the bolder alchemists put on their battle suits and carefully went back into the hall to find out what happened. The timid ones waited anxiously for them to come out and report, but no one returned. It was like every alchemist who went inside had disappeared.

"What happened? What the hell is going on inside? Why hasn't it exploded after so long? I thought he said ten breaths? Why did none of those who went inside come out?"

Everyone looked at each other. Occasionally, someone summoned up the courage and walked in, but they also never came out again.

"Could it be that the sword produced a legendary sword spirit and devoured every person who went inside?"

"Devour my ass! It is said that only a mystic weapon beyond the ninth-tier can produce an artifact spirit!"

"Tell me then, what's going on?"

"How would I know? Oh, right, Xiao Fang, go inside and have a look!"

All eyes fell on the beautiful girl who worked at the front desk. She had run out together with everyone just now, and she still could not recover from her shock. When someone pushed her with a hand, she jumped in panic and said, "I...I...I'm just a girl...It will be very dangerous for me to go in alone."

“Hmph! You are just an ordinary girl, so there will be no danger for you. Do you want us, the noble alchemists, to take the risk? If something bad happened to anyone of us, can you bear the responsibility?”

“Brother Shangguan is right. Eh? Brother Shangguan, you are still alive!”

“Fu\*k! Why do you sound like you wished I was dead? I was trampled at least a hundred times just now. Who did that to me?”

“Kof! Kof! Let’s not talk about that now. We need to know what is going on inside! Xiao Fang, each of us here is at least ten thousand times nobler than you. If you don’t go in, who will? Go now and don’t waste our time.”

“Yes. There are dozens of us here, if you waste just one minute, you will waste at least half an hour of our time. Do you know how precious is half an hour for alchemists? What are you crying about? Don’t pretend to be pitiful. Go in quickly!”

Someone pushed Xiao Fang from behind and forced her into the building.

She held her breath in horror, and her face was covered with tears of grievance and fear. She knew she could not afford to offend any of those alchemists, so she chewed her lips and walked carefully toward the great hall.

Chapter 177: The Lecture Continue

Xiao Fang carefully walked toward the great hall. From inside came a young voice, which seemed to be talking about something, but she could not understand it at all.

Very soon, a scene that stunned her appeared in her eyes. The young man, whose name was Li Yunxiao, was talking with confidence and composure at the front while the group of alchemists, who had come in before her, sat humbly beneath and listened attentively. Even Master Zhang Hua and Master Bi Qianjin sat among them with a thirsty and hungry look on their faces.

The little green sword, which was supposed to have exploded, was not only perfectly intact, but seemed to have been completely refined, and was spinning back and forth between Yunxiao’s fingers like a pen.



“Now, is there anything else you don’t understand?” As Yunxiao said that, his eyes fell on the old man, who was smiling wryly.

Zhang Hua swallowed hard and asked respectfully, “Master, I still don’t quite understand why it gave us a reverse effect after we joined hands to suppress the violent aura?”

“It is actually very simple,” Yunxiao said as he tossed the sword onto the table like a toy and sat down on a chair, crossing his legs. “I’m a little thirsty. Do you have water?”

“Ah? Water?” Zhang Hua paused a moment, then he saw Xiao Fang, who was about to go back out and report what she saw to others. “Xiao Fang! Where are you going?” he called out hurriedly. “Bring some water for this Master! Be quick about it!”

“Are you crawling there? Hurry up!”

“Fu\*k! You are quite agile normally, but why are you so slow now? Don’t let Master wait for your water!”

“Why didn’t you prepare water in advance? You don’t want to work here anymore, do you?”

The group of alchemists, who were absorbed in the lecture, turned to glare at Xiao Fang and began to scold her. Some of them were so angry that they even shouted at her to dismiss her from the job. Trembling with fear, she took a cup of water and ran over, almost bursting into tears.

“Ma-Master, please have a cup of water...”

She placed a cup of water before Yunxiao as she bowed and prepared to leave. There was a group of alchemists still waiting for her outside, and she could not afford to offend even one of them.

“Where are you going? Stay here! Perhaps Master has other orders for you later.” Zhang Hua frowned and glared at her, as if he were very dissatisfied with her.

Xiao Fang froze and her face turned glum immediately, but there was nothing she could do or say. So, she lowered her head and stood to the side, not daring to take another step.

Yunxiao saw everything. With a smile in his eyes, he took a sip of water and his face turned dark as he slapped the table and snapped, "What kind of attitude is this?"

That startled Zhang Hua and the others immediately. No one knew why he flew into rage suddenly, and they all exchanged anxious glances.

Yunxiao pointed at Xiao Fang and said, "I can't believe you all have the heart to scold such a beautiful girl in loud voices and order her to do things like she is a maid, and yet someone even shouted her to be dismissed from her job? I really doubt whether you are alchemists or not. As a qualified alchemist, one must first have a compassionate heart. Do you have it? I can't imagine how you will treat common people when you've treated a beautiful girl so badly! None of you deserve to be an alchemist!"

"Ah? This..."

Everyone was struck dumb. Bi Qianjin was the first to come back to his senses. He quickly waved at Xiao Fang and said, "Come and sit here, Xiao Fang! We were indeed too harsh on you in the past, Master is right! How can an alchemist still be an alchemist when he or she doesn't have a compassionate heart?" He took out a storage bag and held it out as he said kindly, "I don't have any gold coins on me. Take these one hundred medial-grade Primordial Stones first as compensation from the association."

"Ah? One hundred medial-grade Primordial Stones!" Xiao Fang's heart raced. How many gold coins were they worth? She felt her head stop working and she could not do the calculation anymore.

Meanwhile, Zhang Hua said, "Master's words have enlightened me as well. I propose a pay rise for Xiao Fang!"

"Yeah, I just remember, Xiao Fang has been working here for years, but she has never received a raise, has she?"

"Heaven! We were too selfish and inhumane in the past! We only thought for ourselves but never cared about the difficulties of others!"

“No wonder we have not made any progress in alchemy for years. It turns out that we lack a compassionate heart!”

“You’re absolutely right! Let us gather signatures and demand the association to give Xiao Fang at least a tenfold raise.”

“Tenfold? Over the past few years, the currency has been over issued to an insane extent! I say we need to give her at least a one-hundredfold raise!”

“That’s right!” Zhang Hua said seriously, “It must be at least a one-hundredfold raise. We will propose it to the deputy president of the branch after this. If the raise doesn’t meet this number, we will put in our own money!”

“Yes, let’s do it!” Every alchemist shouted in agreement, as if they suddenly had a great deal of animosity with the association about the salary system of common people.

Xiao Fang only felt that her mind was completely petrified, causing her to lose her ability to think. She felt as if she were in a dream as she listened to all the concerned words around her. ‘No! I’m indeed in a dream!’ Suddenly, all the wrongs she had suffered over the years came back to her. With tears welling up in her big eyes, she looked gratefully at Yunxiao.

Yunxiao chuckled as he clapped his hands and said, “All right, based on your performance, you’re not hopeless. Let us continue! Where were we just now?”

“We were talking about why it gave us a reverse effect after we joined hands to suppress the violent aura,” Zhang Hua said hurriedly and carefully. The whole great hall quieted down once again.

The old man sat in the back row with his legs crossed. He felt strange and delighted at the same time as he watched these alchemists behave so humbly. ‘Haha! I never thought these arrogant, fastidious, but incompetent alchemists would look like this, sucking up to someone like some lowly people! Damn it! Where is your air of arrogance and dignity? Fu\*k!’

He gave each of them a middle finger in his heart. But at the same time, he was totally aware that the reason these alchemists behaved like this was that they were thoroughly convinced by the boy's strength and knowledge. For example, Martial Grandmasters and Martial Emperors were all lofty figures, but if there was a Martial Supreme or a Martial Sovereign in front of them, they would also wait carefully to the side like some servants.

It filled the old man's heart with curiosity. He wondered which power could cultivate such a young alchemist who could convince even third-tier alchemists. 'What tier is this boy at then? Damn it, he is only fifteen years old, and he is also a one-stars Great Martial Master! Since when did such a genius appear in Firecrow Empire?'

He knew nothing about alchemy, so he could only guess. Meanwhile, every alchemist in front of him listened attentively to the lecture, not daring to think about anything else or even breathe too loud.

After wiping away her tears, Xiao Fang carefully sat to the side, waiting for orders. No matter who this young man was, she knew that she would be treated completely differently from now on because of him. Alchemists were cold and indifferent, but they were proud of themselves, so they would not go back on their own words. Besides, a one-hundredfold pay rise was nothing to these wealthy people.

"Actually, it is very simple. I've told you just now that the reason the refinement failed is due to the overly high proportion of Still Copper Stone. Because Master Bi..."

"Master, please call me Xiao Bi or Xiao Jin, but don't call me Master. I don't deserve it!" Bi Qianjin hurriedly interrupted.

"Oh! Because Xiao Bi had just advanced to the third-tier and his cultivation base is not stable yet, he used the third-tier material in an excess proportion to increase the success rate, believing that it could improve the probability of success. This is a suicidal move. How can you control a high proportion of third-tier materials when you can't even control a low proportion? As a result, during the refinement process, it greatly destroyed the materials' structure, causing a core instability. As soon as I walked through the door, I sensed that the damage will worsen if you continue, and with Xiao Bi's strength he could never stop it. Therefore, I asked this beautiful girl to move further away, lest she is hurt by the explosion."

Xiao Fang's face turned red slightly, and she lowered her head in embarrassment. In her heart, she scolded herself for being such an ignorant girl and taking Yunxiao as a madman.

All the alchemists were so shocked that they were rendered speechless. 'He can sense to such a fine degree simply through the energy waves coming from the artifact! Heaven! What tier is this Master at?'

"The theory is the same when you joined hands to suppress it with soul power later on. Yes, your joint soul power is strong enough to suppress the violent aura, but it also further destroyed the structure. Unless you could go beyond the level of the materials and completely suppress these structures, they would explode even more violently when they lost control. You should know that the Still Copper Stone is not the only third-tier material in this little sword. At least ten materials had been destroyed by your concerted efforts to suppress the violent aura, so an explosion was inevitable."

Everyone had an enlightened look. Alchemists were a group of people who sought the Dao at the cost of their lives, because many of them were killed by explosions during the refinement process. A new theory learned and experience earned meant a higher chance of survival. Therefore, they were very grateful as they absorbed and digested the knowledge taught by Yunxiao.

The old man in the back could not bear it anymore. "Then, how did you suppress the violent aura? Don't tell me that your soul power is strong enough to completely suppress the power contained in these materials."

Yunxiao glanced at the old man and explained triumphantly, "The basic principle in flood control should be dredging, and not blocking, and it is the same principle I applied here. While I dispersed the violent aura with various incantation gestures, I was constantly fixing the damaged structure in the materials. After I had completely resolved the risk of explosion, I took the opportunity to fix the shape of the sword."

Damaged materials could be repaired?

All alchemists gaped, as that was already beyond their knowledge.

Chapter 178: Duan Yue

An alchemist carefully raised his doubts, "Refinement is an irreversible process, so how can damaged materials be repaired?"

“Of course, they can be repaired!”

Yunxiao glanced at him as if he were an idiot and said, “Resources on the Heavenly Martial Continent are getting lesser and lesser. If every alchemist is as wasteful as you, throwing away everything that is damaged, we will soon run out of materials, especially seventh, eighth, and ninth-tier materials, which are extremely rare. If a damaged mystic artifact can be repaired, damaged materials can be repaired as well. The key is you must have a very deep understanding of the material’s structure. In fact, refining is a process of decomposition and recombination, and once structures that are damaged during the refining process are repaired with reasonable incantation seals, they can be included in the normal refining steps again, and the effect will not be reduced.”

His words made everybody sink in thoughts. In theory, it seemed to work, but it would require a terrifyingly fine control in practice. And when they thought of the complicated incantation gestures he used just now, and how fast he had performed them, their faces turned pale.

These alchemists, who were well-known in Firecrow Empire and proud of themselves, found out for the first time that the process of refinement could be controlled with such subtlety. For them, it was not only a violation of common sense, but also a blow to their minds and a subversion in the theory they had learned.

“Master! I have a question that’s been bothering me for years. Whenever I am refining a third-tier medicinal pill, during the burning step...”

“Master! Every time when I’m using an array, I always feel...”

“Master! When I’m extracting a raw ore, I always...”

For a moment, everyone asked questions that troubled them out loud, fearing the Master could not hear them if their voices were not loud enough. Everyone’s eyes gleamed with enthusiasm. If they missed this opportunity, they did not know when would they get the answers. Soon, the whole great hall was drowned in loud voices.

“All right, that’s enough!” Yunxiao waved his hands and shouted, “Quiet down, all of you!”

His roar immediately shut all mouths. But, everyone's face was still red, the enthusiasm in their eyes not weakening at all. Moreover, the way they looked at him was filled with reverence.

Yunxiao snorted coldly. "Who do you take me for? Someone who can answer all your questions for free? I'm a very busy person!"

His words immediately made everyone distressed and dejected. 'He's right. He's an alchemy master far better than us all, and we were already lucky enough to have him teach us something just now. We have no right to ask him to answer our questions.'

"But, I'm not so unkind. Write down your questions and give them to this beautiful girl," Yunxiao pointed at Xiao Fang. "Each of you cannot submit more than three questions, and I'll only answer fifty questions in total." While smiling, he turned to Xiao Fang, who was gaping, and said, "Pretty girl, you will select and organize the fifty questions. You will decide whose questions are to be submitted to me, and just ignore those whom you don't like. I'll send someone to get the questions from you a few days later, and then I will answer them all at once."

Ah!

Xiao Fang was completely struck dumb. That was tantamount to giving her the right to choose the questions completely, and if these alchemists wished their questions to be answered, they would have to try their best to curry favor with her.

All eyes turned to Xiao Fang at the same time, gleaming like those of hungry wolves and tigers. Meanwhile, the atmosphere in the great hall became tense and silence fell, as if a great storm were about to come. They were so focused on her that no one noticed when Yunxiao left.

BANG!

Suddenly, the door was kicked open. When the group of alchemists waiting outside saw Yunxiao walked out leisurely, they knew it was safe inside, and they rushed through the door immediately. A puzzled look came over their faces when they saw everyone was fine and clustered around Xiao Fang. They did not understand what was going on.

“Bi\*ch! I asked you to find out what happened and report back to us, and yet you just sit here comfortably? Do you think you are a boss now? F\*ck!”

Brother Shangguan flew into a rage when he saw Xiao Fang sitting there, and he walked over and gave her a kick. At that moment, almost everyone’s eyes grew wide as they stared at the leg in horror.

BANG!

The leg hit something, but it was Zhang Hua’s back, who at some point had come between Brother Shangguan and Xiao Fang. A trace of blood ran down the corner of his mouth.

“Master Zhang, you...”

Xiao Fang was overwhelmed with horror, and she felt her head go completely blank. She could not believe that a third-tier alchemist had just blocked an attack for her with his body.

“I’m all right. The kick is nothing. I can protect you even if there are a hundred or a thousand more kicks. Xiao Fang, I only have three simple questions, you must help me submit them to Master. From now on, I will treat you as if you are my sister of the same blood,” Zhang San said slowly in an affectionate tone.

That woke everyone immediately while the people who came in later froze on the spot, their heads seeming to have stopped functioning as they could not figure out what was going on.

Brother Shangguan was petrified as well, with his leg held in mid-air and his eyes widened. ‘I’ve just kicked Master Zhang in the back...and the atmosphere...’

He immediately felt that the people around were looking at him strangely. All of a sudden, someone hit him from the back, and in the next instant, countless punches rained down on him. Before he knew what was going on, he fainted with pain and was thrown to the ground.

“How do you want us to deal with this fellow, Sister Xiao Fang? Do you want him flayed, dismembered, or his whole family killed? Just tell us what you want!”



“Killing his whole family is too light a punishment! I say we should kill all his relatives as well! Sister Xiao Fang, just nod at me and I will go kill all his relatives now!”

“Sister Xiao Fang, you’re not married yet, are you? My cousin came in fourth in the last Super Boy of Firecrow Empire. He’s from a wealthy family and has not yet married.”

“Get out of here! Can his family be wealthier than the four major families? My nephew is a collateral descendant of the Cheng family. He is very young, and has already become a Great Martial Master at the age of sixty-four.”

With so many people crowded around her, Xiao Fang felt she was about to pass out. For a moment, the great hall in the Alchemy Association was as noisy as a wet market.

Yunxiao had long sneaked out of it, and the old man followed closely behind him. They went into an alley and found a random teahouse, ordering two pots of tea.

Yunxiao took a sip of the tea and tasted it carefully. “This is a two years old turquoise tea, middle-grade quality. I think the leaves were picked before the rain in March the year before last.”

The old man was taken aback. He took a sip of his tea and smacked his lips as he said dubiously, “Really? You can taste that?”

Yunxiao gave him a smile instead of an answer. Drumming his fingers on the table, he said triumphantly, “Let me introduce myself. My name is Li Yunxiao, and you just have to address me Young Master Yun. I will pay you one hundred thousand superior-grade Primordial Stones for your service of one year. Do you have any other requests?”

The old man pulled a long face and said incredulously, “You’re not really going to let me serve you for a year, are you? I’m a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster! Don’t you have any respect for the strong and the old?”

Yunxiao’s eyes grew cold. “So, you do know you are a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster. You’re not fu\*king going back on your own words, are you? No more salary for you! I’ll just provide you meals and accommodation!”

“No, no, no!” The old man waved hurriedly and said, “I want the salary, I was just asking!” One hundred thousand superior-grade Primordial Stones were very attractive even to a Martial Grandmaster. “So, what do you want me to do during this one year? It’s not murder and arson, is it? What family are you from, boy?”

The old man asked a few questions in a row, as he was very interested in Yunxiao’s identity. ‘This boy’s skill in alchemy is incredibly strong! If he continues to grow, he will certainly become a famous figure in the future. It will pay to be on good terms with him now...’

Yunxiao held up a finger and said coldly, “I repeat, call me Young Master Yun. As for what family am I from, this is none of your business. You better introduce yourself to me now.”

The snub slightly displeased the old man. He narrowed his eyes and said, “My name is Duan Yue, and you just have to address me Sir Duan.”

“Oh, I’ll call you Little Yue then,” Yunxiao said indifferently. ‘Trying to act like a senior in front of me? You’re not fit!’

“You...”

That gave Duan Yue a pause, but then he sighed dejectedly. He found that it was very difficult for him to gain an upper hand in front of this boy. Suddenly, he smiled enigmatically and said, “You are looking for poisonous blood of a demon beast above the fourth-tier, aren’t you?”

Yunxiao had just taken another sip of tea. His eyes gleamed, but when he saw Duan Yue’s triumphant look, he snorted and slowly put down the teacup, pretending to be indifferent, “It’s just for fun. Why? Do you have it?”

“No, I don’t,” Duan Yue said firmly, but when he saw Yunxiao’s fuming eyes, he quickly smiled and said, “But, I know where you can find it.”

Yunxiao looked at him as if he were an idiot and said in disdain, "Do I need you to tell me? The Land of Demon, the Tiandang Mountains, the Ancient Wasteland, Golden Desert, which of these places doesn't have the demon beast I want?"

Duan Yue almost vomited blood. "Who dares to go to these places? Even Gu Feiyang died in the Tiandang Mountains! What I mean is a place we can go to, and yet the odds of finding one are high!"

"Oh?" Yunxiao's interest was aroused. "Are there one or two poisonous fourth-tier demon beasts in a nearby mountain?"

Duan Yue smiled and said, "Not a demon beast, but something in the sea."

"A sea beast?" Yunxiao's eyes flashed, as if he had thought of something. "Are you talking about the south sea adjacent to the Skyfragrance Empire?"

"Exactly! It really saves time when talking to smart people!" Somewhat excited, Duan Yue said, "The south sea is teeming with various sea beasts, and many of them are fourth-tier and above. It is extremely easy to hunt a poisonous fourth-tier sea beast there!"

#### Chapter 179: A Marine Map

Yunxiao thumped his teacup on the table and sneered, "Do you take me for a fool? The sea is boundless, and sea beasts near the land are at most second-tier. To find a fourth-tier sea beast, we need to venture at least a thousand miles out, but we don't have a marine map. Even if we did, it will only help us in navigating around and not find a poisonous fourth-tier sea beast in the vast water! Not to mention the odds of running into some high-level creatures and get ourselves killed is extremely high!"

Duan Yue found it very difficult to deceive this boy. 'How could he know so much at such a young age? It's like he has been to the sea before...' He knew he had to use another method. So, he took out an old beast skin from his ring and spread it out flat in front of Yunxiao while speaking, "Have a look at this!"

Yunxiao squinted at the skin. A few times thicker than a common demon beast skin and still springy to the touch, it appeared to be the skin of some large sea beast. A marine map was delicately drawn on it, and there was a red triangular symbol at one of the corners, on top of which was written 'Kunwu.'

His pupils constricted abruptly, and his palm clenched unconsciously, grabbing the whole beast skin in his hand as he blurted out in shock, "Kunwu Divine Tree?"

That startled Duan Yue, and he found the young man in front of him more and more mysterious. "You know about the Kunwu Divine Tree as well?"

Yunxiao realized that he had forgotten himself. If he learned the news at another time, he would not care or be so agitated. But, Meng Wu was in deep sleep right now, and she needed a Soul Nourishing Wood, which was the branch of a Kunwu Divine Tree that had absorbed a large amount of sea beasts' life essence.

"I'm an alchemist, and there are few materials in the world I don't know about. Kunwu Divine Tree is just one of the precious plants. What's so strange that I know about it?"

He spread out the map and carefully studied it. "Judging from this map, it should be about a thousand miles out from Skyfragrance's coastline. It is not far, but since there is a Kunwu Divine Tree, there must be some high-level sea beasts guarding the area. The odds of finding a few poisonous ones are indeed high."

After remaining silent for a moment, Yunxiao returned the map to Duan Yue and gave him an indifferent look as he said, "Be frank with me, what do you want me to do? Tell me everything, including all the terms and benefits."

Duan Yue was stunned. He did not expect Yunxiao to guess his intention and be so direct with it. 'This boy is too scary! Did I really find the right person? I won't be conned by him instead, will I?'

"What? Don't play stupid in front of me!" Yunxiao mocked. "There must be something I can do for you. Otherwise, why would you be so kind as to share it with me if you could take the benefits all by yourself? If you don't want to be honest with me, I'll pretend I've never heard of this before."

Gulp!

Duan Yue swallowed hard as he smiled wryly and said, "I wonder if there's a sly old fox hiding inside you. Yes, I need your help. In fact, my visit to the Alchemist Association was to find an alchemist. Initially, I picked Bi Qianjin, but now it seems that he is not strong enough."

Yunxiao sneered, "So, you've picked me, because you think I'm young and my soul power is strong, so I'm easy to deceive and will work very hard for you?"

"This..."

Duan Yue paused a moment, and then he shook his head and said vexedly, "That's what I thought in the beginning, but I am really worried now that I've found the wrong person. Had I known you are so smart, I would have looked for other higher-tier alchemists. It is for fear of being conned that made me look for a younger and less experienced one..."

"Don't worry, I'm only fifteen years old and don't have much experience," said Yunxiao with an honest and sincere look.

"..."

The old man was speechless. If he had not known Yunxiao slightly through their previous conversation, he would have believed that just by looking at his expression. But, he would definitely not believe that statement now, and he began to explain the situation in detail.

The Skyfragrance Empire was adjacent to the South Sea and had an astonishing wealth of sea resources. Near the sea was a town called Qinghai. Small and with not big a population, it was one of the most bustling places in the south of the Heavenly Martial Realm. Its floating population was hundreds to a thousand times more than its permanent residents, all of which were businessmen pouring in from various places.

In addition to normal merchants, these visitors included representatives of various powers and different members of the Commerce Alliance, who had all established their bases in Qinghai for its great wealth of sea resources. There were also numerous hunters coming from different places, hunting sea beasts all years round for a living and in exchange for all kinds of resources.

Duan Yue was one such hunter, and a famous one at that. He was strong, and he always hunted alone. Moreover, he could kill sea beasts of a higher level than other ordinary hunters. That was how he had earned his reputation.

The distribution of beasts in the sea was similar to what Yunxiao described earlier. Within a thousand miles from the coast, second-tier sea beasts were the strongest, which were equivalent to Martial Masters. But, sea beasts had a unique advantage over humans in the water, so if a hunter wished to successfully kill a sea beast, he could only look for one that was one tier lower than himself. In other words, it required a Great Martial Master to hunt a second-tier sea beast.

Generally, with adequate preparation and by avoiding unfamiliar sea areas or going further out into the water, there would not be much danger. But, because of this, sea beasts had almost run out in safe waters. As a result, large numbers of hunting groups risked going into deeper waters for higher yields. People had died because of that, but since the yield was so lucrative, many groups still took the risk.

By chance, Duan Yue rescued a dying hunting group, and to thank him for saving their lives, the leader gave him the marine map as a token of gratitude. He did not take it to heart at first, but the more he looked at it, the more shocked he became, because he found that it was a marine map of a rainbow fog.

The so-called rainbow fog was a very strange phenomenon in the sea. It was a rainbow-colored fog that suddenly appeared over the water, enveloping the sky and the sea. Within it, the visibility was extremely poor, and even divine sense could not travel too far.

There were two types of rainbow fogs: The first one appeared at random, unpredictable locations, and the second type at fixed locations. The only thing they had in common was that once a rainbow fog appeared, the sea area was no longer the same place. The fog could produce a space tunnel effect, transporting those who entered it to another unknown sea area.

A randomly generated rainbow fog would lead to a random sea area while a fixed rainbow fog would lead to a fixed sea area. Therefore, a fixed rainbow fog had great exploration value, and was regarded as a treasure vault. That made a marine map marked with a fixed rainbow fog like this an invaluable treasure, too precious to be priced.

The four seas were vast, at least many times larger than the land. It was impossible for an average warrior to visit all of them even if he spent his whole life trying to achieve that, while the imperial clans of the seas might not know all the details in the territories under their jurisdiction. So, owning a marine map of rainbow fog was like having an independent treasure land. Its value was simply astonishing. Of

course, the risk that came with it was huge as well, because it would be a tragedy if it led to the habitat of some high-level sea beasts.

When he had finished listening, Yunxiao immediately knew what Duan Yue needed from him.

Generally, where a rainbow fog was generated, there would be an accompanying substance called pink crystal dust. It had a pale pink hue, no odor, and was scattered within the fog. The dust was not poisonous, but a person would hallucinate if he inhaled it and eventually die in the sea. It could not be dispersed with Primordial Qi, and the only way to repel it was with strong soul power.

Yunxiao took a sip of tea and said leisurely, "You need me to disperse the pink crystal dust for you?"

Upon hearing that, Duan Yue, who was sipping his tea to moisten his lips, spat out a mouthful and coughed violently. He kept slapping his own chest, and his eyes were filled with shock. "You..."

He was utterly shocked. "Are you really just fifteen years old? Even hunters who hunt all year round in the sea may not know about pink crystal dust, and only experts of a certain level know about its existence. You are just fifteen years old, but you are already a third-tier alchemist and a one-star Great Martial Master, and you even seem to know everything. Tell me, which power has cultivated a monster like you? If I have sons and grandsons in the future, I will send them there to be cultivated."

Yunxiao smiled and said nothing. In fact, not only did he know about rainbow fog, but he had experienced one before.

Legends had it that he slaughtered all the members of the sea clans within eight thousand miles and turned the whole sea blood-red, but it was just rumors spread by humans to make themselves look better. The truth was that he was chased by the sea clans for eight thousand miles. However, he did kill countless of them along the way and turned a large part of the sea blood-red.

When he was forced into a dead end and he thought he was about to be killed, a rainbow fog appeared suddenly and transported him to another sea area, which saved his life.

Yes, he was a mighty warrior, but even if all the top ten experts of the Heaven and Earth Power Chart were there at the same time, they would also be killed by the tens of thousands of experts from the sea

clans, among whom, hundreds were as strong as Martial Sovereigns. After that, the common sovereign of the four seas, the Bo family, failed to find him, and under the pressure of the imperial sea clans, it brought tens of thousands of experts to besiege the Holy Realm. But, even the Divine City dared not to fight them and had put up a board of truce. After besieging for months to no avail, only then did the sea clans leave.

#### Chapter 180: A 50-50 Split

When Yunxiao thought of what happened in those years, he had a feeling that a lifetime had passed since then. He smiled and said, "You are a hunter from Skyfragrance Empire, but you came to Firecrow Empire's Alchemist Association to seek help. And you only look for young, inexperienced alchemists. It can be seen that you are a very cautious and suspicious man. If I work with you, I fear I will be swallowed whole by you."

With a wry smile, Duan Yue said, "The world is a dangerous place. You know how much this marine map is worth. I dare not to work with someone too clever. In fact, I already began to regret finding you. I should be the one afraid of being swallowed whole."

Yunxiao looked at the map and licked his lips. Its value did not concern him. What mattered to him was the Kunwu Divine Tree and poisonous blood of a sea beast. He must get both of them no matter what. "Sir Duan, you are too humble. You are a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster and I'm just a one-star Great Martial Master, so why should you be afraid of me? You can easily kill me with a finger. I should be the one who is afraid. Now tell me, how do we work together? And how will the prizes be split?"

Duan Yue considered a moment, and then he said in a deep voice, "Since you know about pink crystal dust, you should be aware of its power. The first thing I need to know is how sure are you that you can disperse this thing?"

Yunxiao smiled and a confident look came over his face as he drummed his index finger on the table and said, "If it is only for two people to pass, I'm one hundred percent sure."

"One hundred percent!" Duan Yue was taken aback. He would not believe it if that was said by someone else. But, since Yunxiao knew about pink crystal dust, he must have some understanding about it, and that meant his one hundred percent thing was most likely accurate.

"I can't believe your soul power is so strong," he nodded slightly and said. "That's good! We'll move together after passing through the rainbow fog, and whatever we find, we will split as 20-80."



“20-80? You don’t mean you take 80 and I take 20, do you?”

“What else? I’m a seven-stars Martial Grandmaster and you’re just a one-star Great Martial Master, so of course I take 80 and you take 20!”

“Don’t forget that you have to serve me for one year. Even if I refuse to work with you and go there alone, you still have to follow beside me and listen to my orders.”

“You...fine, 30-70! You can’t ask for more than that. After all, this marine map is mine, and most likely I’ll be the one who contributes the most when the time comes.”

“Most likely? You distribute income based on something that may or may not happen? If you were in my position, would you accept it?”

“If it weren’t me, would it be you? I’ll never agree to a 40-60 split!”

“Then disperse the pink crystal dust yourself. Don’t blame me for not reminding you, the slightest inhalation of that thing will completely paralyze your mind. Be prepared to be excreted by some sea beasts.”

“Fine, 40-60! Damnit, my heart hurts!” Duan Yue clutched his chest with a hand and put on a painful and reluctant look as he stared at Yunxiao fiercely.

While smiling, Yunxiao poured himself another cup of tea and took a sip before speaking calmly, “I give you two options: the first one is a 50-50 split, and the second one is you give me the Kunwu Divine Tree and help me kill a fourth-tier poisonous sea beast, and the rest of the things belong to you. Choose one.”

“No way!” Duan Yue jumped and said angrily, “Don’t go too far, boy! You’ll only get a 50-50 split in your dreams! As for Kunwu Divine Tree, it is a precious plant, and its value is too significant to be measured, which I think is not below that of a ninth-tier material. I can help you kill a sea beast though. How about I kill two for you, and everything else will be mine?”

Pa!

Yunxiao put down his teacup and said coldly, "It seems like you are not sincere about working with me."

"I'm not sincere?" Duan Yue rolled his eyes and said vexedly, "I'll suffer a great loss if we split 50-50, but if I give you the Kunwu Divine Tree, once we arrive the sea area and find nothing but the divine tree, I'll have to jump into the sea and drown myself!"

Yunxiao smiled and said, "In business, one must be able to suffer losses. Sometimes, losses are blessings. Don't forget, you're in my service now, so giving you a 50-50 split is the best I can offer."

Duan Yue kept slapping himself on the head. 'Stupid! Why did you bet with this boy? You've brought yourself into a trap!' After being angry with himself for a while, he calmed down and said painfully, "Fine, we will split 50-50! But, I have one condition!"

"Oh?" Looking at his serious face, Yunxiao said, "What condition? Let's get the unpleasant out of the way first. I'll not agree to those conditions like 'let you pick first'."

Duan Yue felt his head reel. He really could not understand why a fifteen-year-old boy could be so smart. 'I remember that when I was at his age, the only thing in my head was about picking up girls...' He shook his head with a wry smile and said, "My condition is...if you have the strength and ability one day, I want you to refine a Universal Golden Pill for me!"

Yunxiao's pupils constricted. His eyes gleamed as he studied Duan Yue again, and only then did he nod lightly and speak, "Alright, I promise you!"

"Really!" Duan Yue was overjoyed, and he was so excited that he almost forgot himself. But then, he asked suspiciously, "Do you know what a Universal Golden Pill is?"

He was afraid that Yunxiao did not know about this medicinal pill and was just making a casual promise. After all, it was not a medicinal pill that he could get in touch with at his current level. Duan Yue feared that when the time came, Yunxiao would go back on his own words with an excuse that he knew nothing about the medicinal pill.

“Hmph! It is nothing special but a medicinal pill that, when taken by a peak nine-stars Martial Emperor, can increase the chances of breaking through to the realm of Martial Supreme by a mere thirty-percent,” Yunxiao said disdainfully.

Duan Yue was relieved when he saw that Yunxiao was able to say out the medicinal pill’s effect, but his nostrils flared at that disdainful tone. “Do you know how precious this medicinal pill is? Do you know all the great powers will fight to the death for it? F\*ck! It is nothing special? A mere thirty-percent? Do you have any idea what the tier of this pill is? Do you know how difficult it is to refine one? Do you know the meaning of increasing the chances of breaking through by thirty percent?”

“Hmph!”

Yunxiao gave him a contemptuous look, as if he were a poor man roaring with a bun in one hand. Then, he snorted softly and closed his eyes as he said, “A Universal Golden Pill is an eighth-tier medicinal pill. Its three main ingredients are hollow hunting tooth, rock snake grass, and bloodless phoenix, in addition to broken dragon sand, a ninth-tier material, and 1,720 supplementary materials. It takes twelve different arrays and 360,000 incantation gestures to refine. The alchemist needs not only eighth-tier soul power, which is the minimum requirement, but also three seventh-tier spirit rejuvenation pills, so that his soul power can be replenished when needed. Otherwise, even an eighth-tier Alchemy Supreme cannot successfully refine one.”

“...”

The teahouse was strangely quiet. Apart from the sound of porcelain as Yunxiao placed down the lip of the teapot, there was no other sound. Duan Yue seemed completely petrified, as if he had turned into a mummy, sitting blankly there and unmoving. It was only after Yunxiao took a few sips of tea and changed the tea leaves that he slightly came back to his senses.

“Ha! Ha!” Duan Yue slapped his head with one hand as he pointed at Yunxiao with another and said, “Fake, this must be fake! You must be uttering nonsense. You are really funny, boy! You can’t be knowing the recipe of an eighth-tier medicinal pill and saying it out casually...Do you think you are one of the elders in the Sea of Soul Formation? Haha!”

Although he did not sound convinced, his stiff expression and shocked look showed that he had fully believed it in his heart.

Yunxiao arched his eyebrows slightly and chuckled in his heart, surprised by the fact that the old man had accurately guessed his identity a few times. Under his appearance of a fifteen-year-old boy was indeed the soul of a Martial Sovereign, and he was indeed an honorable elder of the Sea of Soul Formation in his previous life.

He smiled as he arranged the tea set orderly and said, "Let's go now! I have something very important to do, so I can't waste too much time."

"Oh? What is it?" Duan Yue was curious about what important matter this young man had, who always looked so calm as if nothing in the world could concern him.

"I'll tell you when we come back. When the time comes, I'll need your help, Sir Duan."

After they left the teahouse, Yunxiao took out an item. Duan Yue's eyes lit up when he saw it, and he said enviously, "A Tigerking chariot? It is an excellent fifth-tier artifact! But, do you think it is appropriate to take it out here? Recently the Xingyang family in the city was wiped out by some mysterious experts, and now the whole city is at the highest alert. If you take out a Tigerking, I fear you will be targeted by at least a hundred divine senses instantly."

Yunxiao chuckled and said indifferently, "That's exactly the effect I want!"

Under Duan Yue's shocked glance, he threw out the Tigerking, which grew rapidly in the air and soon cast a shadow over the street.

"You're really not afraid of anything!" Duan Yue watched helplessly as Yunxiao jumped up the chariot, and he had no choice but to follow.

While laughing, Yunxiao slapped at the chariot's control array, and the vehicle immediately turned into an amber-colored stream of light, zooming over Shangyang in the direction of Skyfragrance Empire. "It's not that I'm not afraid, but this is exactly the effect I want!"

At the moment the chariot appeared and left, countless divine senses poured over crazily, but they were all repelled by an even stronger divine sense. That shocked and terrified all the scouts, and dozens of figures appeared over the city in the next instant, each rushing toward different directions.

In a secret mansion at an unknown place that belonged to the Temple of Revered Elders, Zhu Jin, who was sitting cross-legged in meditation, suddenly woke up. His face fell, and he cried out in surprise, "It's him!"

In the next moment, he appeared directly in the sky hundreds of meters from the ground, shouting angrily as he watched the amber-colored stream of light disappear into the horizon. He did not know whether he should chase it or not. After staring blankly at it for a while, he turned sulkily and left. Soon, curses could be heard coming out of the Temple of Revered Elders. No other people dared to make a sound, and the curses quieted down after a few minutes.