

## Thief 111

### Chapter 111 - Land Of Kingdoms

6-7 minutes

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The wintery winds were drifting past Ace's body, but he didn't feel any cold and enjoy the refreshing air. He finally left that damn place!

Furthermore, he was very glad about he didn't use invisible bead; it would be a waste because the formation area was just too damn big and he crossed the formation in over two hours with the help of Empty Dream.

If he were to use soul-shattering eyes, he didn't dare to imagine just how long it would take to find a way out. Nevertheless, he was out of that place and observed the area. After all, he was in the middle lands now!

Ace felt the qi in the air around the area was a hundred times denser than western low lands and finally understand the difference between the two places.

The qi density was not important to Ace at all though, because he can draw qi even in that sky-changing formation where it was very scant, whether it was heavenly qi or worldly qi. But he still felt it was quite refreshing to breathe in this air filled with denser qi.

After getting used to his new environment, Ace scan his surrounding with heavenly sense and didn't find a soul. "Where should I go?" He mused calmly.

Suddenly, Ace remembered seeing some unfamiliar maps in Dulce and Vance storage rings.

Every time he stole a storage ring, he always find many other things that the system didn't count as treasure, and maps were one of them.

With a thought, many maps appeared in Ace's hands. They were not normal and all of them were drawn on some demonic beast hides and high-quality ones.

Ace saw some of these detailed maps were specifically only of Luminous Kingdom, the Golden Hammered Kingdom, and some other famous kingdoms and store them back because he wanted to know which direction he should go. He was not in any kingdoms at this moment.

He finally found what he was looking for, a big detailed map of the entire land of kingdoms!

Ace quickly recognized the sky-changing border area and was shocked because he saw just how large this border truly was. It covered hundreds of miles!

Now, he felt somewhat lucky to encounter Empty Dream and left without wasting many years!

Ace quickly concentrated on the map again.

Land of Kingdoms structure differed from the land of cities.

In low lands, there were east, south, north, and west, but in the middle lands, there were grades of both lands and kingdoms.

The closest of him were third-grade kingdoms land and furthest was first-grade kingdoms lands and furtherer was the middle sky changing border!

Ace's attention was on third-grade kingdoms land because it was the closest to him. There was a border forest between him and third-grade land.

He estimated it would take a month to cross that border forest if he didn't encounter any strong demonic beast and a week more to find the closest town.

Ace store the map back into the thief's space.

After activating his lightning steps, he moves in the straight direction like lightning because he will find that border forest eventually and then he can use the map to cross it.

*'Heh, being able to move freely really is a blessing.'* Ace thought joyously as he traveled towards his destination at full speed.

Ace didn't know that where he was, no one came easily because this place was the area of sky-changing border and for centuries no one has ever crossed it. One reason was the sky changing pass, and the other and most important one was, no one wanted to go in that barren place willingly.

After two days of travel, a large expansion of threes came to Ace's view, and he instantly knows it was that border forest.

In these two days, he was going through any kind of book on kingdoms that he found in his thief's space. He discovered; almost all the books on those stolen bookshelves of the upper part of the luminous library were about kingdoms.

Ace finally knows the vague structure of a kingdom.

The entire land of kingdoms was neatly divided between hundred kingdoms!

In first-grade kingdoms land were top ten kingdoms.

In second-grade kingdoms land were kingdoms that ranked between 11th and 30th.

As for the kingdoms of position 31st and 100th, they were all in the land of the third-grade kingdom.

The grade distribution was the same, based on the qi density of lands.

A third-grade kingdom or weakest kingdom in the middle lands has at least two provinces, each containing three or four prefectures. The prefectures were then subdivided into ten to fifteen counties and the counties in cities or towns.

As for a second-grade kingdom, it has at least five or more provinces, and last, the first-grade kingdom can have ten or more provinces under its control.

For centuries, these 100 kingdoms never become 101 kingdoms.

As for the ranks, the top ten kingdoms were like mammoths; no one can shake their positions. The other ranks depend solely on prowess!

It was like this if you have the power you can challenge any kingdom for their position in the ranking by 'Ranking Wars' but these ranking wars were very rare because defeat means the destruction of the entire kingdom and the entire royal family's death!

Besides, only a weaker kingdom can challenge a higher ranked kingdom no other way around.

Ace frowned when he finds these cruel rules of middle lands and became even more vigilant of this place. He has already encountered someone like Vance and Layla in low lands and he didn't want to bump into them any time soon, especially Layla.

After reading every information about middle-lands, Ace's focus finally shifted to Rune Crafting again because the resting period of two days was finally over. It was time to learn the next part of heavenly rune crafting.

Now, he has Empty Dream insights on rune crafting and wanted to see the similarity between heavenly rune crafting and worldly rune crafting!

### **Chapter 112 - A Thief's Mentality**

6-7 minutes

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Ace was resting on a tree.

He was still in the outer area of this border forest and didn't encounter any demonic beasts or humans.

But he didn't care, and all of his attention was on rune crafting because he only got a day, so he wasn't planning on wasting even a second of it in traveling.

The Heavenly Rune Crafter Manual was very well structured because every part was arranged in a strict order. Simply put, Ace can't just learn the runic eyes technique and start rune crafting, he has to understand every part before he could craft anything.

Now that he has already mastered a stage of runic eyes. It was time for the Runic Soul Manipulation Technique, also the second part of the manual.

The runic soul manipulation technique has twelve levels, just like the Rune Crafter tiers. The higher level he goes, the higher his rune crafter tier will be.

*'This technique is for manipulating the soul qi thoroughly while creating rune symbols.'* Ace was going through the technique, *'If I messed up even a little bit, the entire symbol would be destroyed.'*

Ace take a deep breath as his expression was solemn because this technique was even more difficult than runic eyes!

He has some experience with eyes skills and that's was also the reason for his successfully mastering the first stage of runic eyes.

However, this controlling technique was entirely new for him, well, until he saw the requirement for the first level of this technique.

"In the first level, I have to create needle-like threads with my element soul qi." Ace mumbles as an excited expression appeared on his face because this was just like forming soul threads.

"Heh, the first level is simple." Ace quickly uses the method of forming the soul threads and forms a white soul thread from his finger.

He saw the soul thread, and it was not as thin as a needle; it was as thick as a finger and his delightful expression instantly turned ugly.

"I have to make it thinner!" A resolution flashed past Ace's eyes.

One month pass since Ace was traveling in this thick forest and was quite close to his destination because of his high speed.

But Ace was not looking happy at this moment and his complexion was as dark as coal because, even after an entire month, he didn't reduce the soul thread into a needle!

It didn't mean he didn't make any progress and thinned it to as half a finger. Ace now finally understand just how difficult it was to control the element soul qi and his previous arrogance instantly shattered.

"How could something from the system is this easy to learn?" Ace smile bitterly and keep practicing the technique wholeheartedly.

After a week, Ace finally felt the trees were becoming lesser and lesser and knew he was not far away from the closet town to this border forest.

"I should be able to reach this small town of the Regal Kingdom in a week." Ace murmured with a hint of excitement in his voice while looking at the map.

He didn't know what this town's name was, but on the map; it was in the territory of this regal kingdom and this kingdom was the closest to the low sky-changing border.

Ace was looking forward to exploring this town. After all, it was the first town where he would go after entering the middle lands.

One thing that was worth mentioning is Ace didn't encounter any demonic beast in this large forest except some wild animals. He wanted to farm some EXP and thought since it was a forest of middle lands there were bound to be many powerful demonic beasts but disappointed in the end.

"Eva once said we can always steal from bad guys." But the next moment, a devious smile appeared on Ace's face, "Heh, but who is bad or good in this world of cultivation?"

Ace's mentality has undergone a vast change from when he first starts his journey of cultivation. If it was that little twelve years old Ace, he would never even dream of stealing from someone, even if that was a bad guy.

But now Ace will steal in darkness from those cultivators. He will not help others like Eva want to because just helping himself was big enough for him.

"This is the world of the cultivation and almost everyone has killed or ruined someone, whether it was for their wealth, an opportunity, or their prospect. Everyone is a thief in one way or another. I'm just a real Thief!" Ace mumbles these words and his eyes shimmer with understanding.

*'This path that I chose is unknown and mysterious.'* Ace thought deeply and for the first time, this notion even came to his mind.

Nevertheless, he didn't regret choosing this path and even looked forward to exploring its mysteries.

In three days, Ace exit the border forest. After traveling for one more day, he saw a clean avenue and knew this avenue leads to the town.

After traveling for two more days, Ace spotted a tall wall and excitement filled his eyes. He has finally reached a town and this entire journey takes almost six months.

Ace has also turned sixteen and looked more mature. But he would not enter that town with his genuine face because he didn't want anyone to see his real face.

By doing it, he can always stay in dark and no one will ever know who this thief, sky stealer was.

Because he was now bound to become famous and would make many enemies because he needed to raise his thief rank and knew every time he steals his thief symbol with imprinted itself on the thievery site.

Ace already had a qi soul manifestation realm expert as an enemy and other people who know his thief's name here, especially the golden hammered and luminous kingdom.

His enemies will eventually find out that he was still alive and in the middle-land, and once they did, they will do everything and anything to capture him, either dead or alive!

## **Chapter 113 - Lane Town**

6-8 minutes

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Lane town was a small town in the territory of Zander County, that is ruled by an Earl of Regal Kingdom.

In these kingdoms' level powers, royalties with royal titles control every influential position. People without royal titles or commoners didn't have the right to hold any extraordinary position.

As for how to get a royal title, it was, of course, depends on the person's contributes to the kingdom and more importantly, on cultivation base!

The lane town was considered an average town, but it was as big as a two-start city of low lands!

At this moment, Ace was observing the gate of lane town and saw there was no checking for identity crystal card. The two guards were cultivators of the fourth qi gate realm.

The town gate was almost deserted and no one seem to go in or out as he saw in the cities of low lands.

Ace has already changed his appearance to Javier's and after observing for some time, he went in ordinary fashion since there was no checking of identification.

Moreover, this town seems quite deserted, and this means some limited people visited. If Ace sneaks inside, someone might suspect him. That's why he went just like a traveler.

Even if anything goes wrong, these two guards can do nothing to him.

"Half!" One of the two guards directly released his cultivation base aura to stop this little traveler. They can tell this young man was only a third gate cultivator.

Javier quickly stopped and looked at those two guards with alertness.

"Entry fee is One fragment qi stone." The guards said without blinking, with a hint of disdain in his eyes.

Javier deeply looked at those two guards before he took a green crude-shaped marble-like stone from his storage ring that he was wearing. There was an aura of qi on this stone.

Ace knew this is the currency used in this kind of town. This crude-shaped marble was a fragment qi stone which is equal to a hundred low-level qi stones.

The system didn't even consider these fragment qi stones treasures and Ace has almost fifty million of them in his thief's space.

From the moment Ace knew about the qi stone used in arrays and formations, he was planning on using these fragments of qi stones, for the time being, wasting no high-quality qi stones.

'SSsss' Both guards inhale deeply.

It stunned the guards when they finally notice the storage ring in this young man's hand. Because storage rings were only common in the capital of Regal Kingdom and their price was almost off the roof!

"Y-young Master, please... Welcome to Lane Town." The guard's tone instantly takes an opposite turn, and he politely took the qi stone from Javier's hands and, with a slight bow, gesture to him to enter the town.

However, the other guard's eyes instantly shone with an unusual light, but he only shows respect on the surface and bows to Javier just like the first guard.

Ace didn't pay any heed to those two guards and enter the town coolly. He has already decided to collect some important information and leaves in two or three days.

Because this is not what he has imagined, Ace thought, since he was in the middle lands anywhere he goes would be a prosperous place, at least equal to a one-star city of low lands. But to his disappointment, this was not the case.

*'Maybe I'm just in the wrong place.'* Ace reflected as he saw the empty roads of this lane town.

Now and then he would saw some residents of the town. Everyone looked at him curiously.

*'Sigh...'* Ace sighed, *'It seems travels are not very common here. It was wise to enter ordinarily.'*

Although the town was deserted, it was almost as large as River Flower City.

Ace was not tired, so he strolled around the town and find some wonderful restaurants since he ate nothing for almost six months.

Suddenly Ace located an old building, 'Sienna Book Shop' signboard was hanging outside of it. *'I should go there and see if I can find some important information.'*

With large steps, Ace enter the old bookshop and saw a little girl snoring behind the counter. She seems to be only ten or younger and very cute.

Ace smile wryly, *'I should go somewhere else.'* He didn't want to disturb this little girl and turn around to find some other place. Besides, what can this little girl tell him?

He was about to exit the shop when an angry voice of a man enters his ears, "Sienna! You dare to sleep on work!"

Sienna, who was sleeping peacefully, was jolted awake by this angry voice and subconsciously shouted, "N...N-no! I'm... just resting!"

"Oh, then why didn't you attend this young friend?" A middle-aged man entered the shop from a door behind the counter as he said with a hint of anger in his voice.

Sienna, whose eyes were still drowsy, confusingly, looked at the entrance and finally saw a young man looked at her curiously.

The haze from her eyes quickly vanished as she curiously asked, "Why is he here?"

"You brat, what kind of question is this?!" The middle-aged man lightly flickers on Sienna's forehead, "Go and clean that droll on your face, you almost looked like a pig."

"Sienna is not a pig!" The little girl angrily yells at the middle-aged man while running inside with a cute pout on her pale face.

"Young friend, I apologies for my daughter's early manner." The middle-aged man smiled at Javier. "I'm Laden, the owner of this bookshop. We have some common mortal grade skills and techniques as well as maps and informal books."

Laden introduced a variety of books to Javier, that was commonly bought.

"Sir Laden is overly polite." Javier smiled while saying, "It was my fault to leave without saying anything."

"Hah, don't mention it." Laden smiled, "We didn't have many visitors these days. You can also tell."

"I'm very curious about it." Ace couldn't help but subsequently asked.

Even if this town was on the edge of middle lands, it is too desolate!

## **Chapter 114 - A Big Event**

6-7 minutes

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"Oh, you didn't know about the big event?" Laden was very surprised as if this event was very important or something.

*'I'm new here. How would I know anything about this big event!'* Ace thought.

Javier said while smiling, "I'm a traveler and had little interaction with anyone for some time. I hope sir don't mind telling me what this big event is."

"A traveler, eh." Laden deeply looked at Javier. *'This young man is a third gate cultivator. How did he didn't know about it?'*

Laden found nothing suspicious about Ace because he was a peak qi gates realm expert himself and blindly believe in his senses. But it was still strange that this young man didn't know about the biggest event of youngsters.

Even with his doubts, Laden speaks honestly, "This event is held by the Damien Royal Institute." There was a clear longing in Laden's voice when he speaks this name.

Laden excitedly looked at Javier but only see Javier has not a hint of excitement after hearing the Damien Royal Institute name.

"Don't tell me you didn't even know about the Damien Royal Institute?" Disbelief shone on Laden's face.

Javier said with a straight face, "I don't. But I know about the Damien Kingdom. It is the number one kingdom of middle lands, right?"

How could Ace didn't know about the top ten kingdoms? They were very clear on the map and he even had separate and detailed maps of each one of them.

Laden looked at Javier as he was seeing a hermit, "If you know of Damien Kingdom, then you should also know about the biggest institute of middle lands. Every younger dreamed of entering this institute!"

"Oh, is that big of a deal?" Javier finally shows interest.

Now Ace wanted to know more about this institute. Because there was no such a thing as an institute in the low lands.

Laden tells Javier with a serious face as if it was a crime to not know about this institute, "Let me open your eyes, young man. Damien Royal Institute student status is equal to a Marquess/Marchioness in the middle-lands!"

"They have many powerful techniques and skills. Supposedly, a student of Damien Royal Institute can fight with someone in higher realms like it's nothing for them. They are all the cream of crops, true genius!"



"But alas, getting a seat in the institute is equal to reaching the sky, and only by going through their hard test, one has a chance. It doesn't matter who you are. Even if you're a prince of a kingdom, you have to go through the test!

"Rumor has it that test is so deadly many youngsters die in it! But every five years almost ten of million youngsters take part in it to try their luck and only ten thousand passed it!

"This exact test is in six months so every youngster in middle-lands is heading to the capital of their kingdom so they can have time to take part in the selection test of Damien Royal Institute!" Laden's voice was filled with enthusiasm in the end.

Javier's eyes were glowing with a special light as he asked, "Sir, can anyone participate in this selection test?"

Candidly, it would be a lie if Ace said his heart was not pounding after hearing about this institute and competition. It was not because he wanted to study there; it was because he can steal from ten million youngsters!

One has to know only nobles would take part in this test and every noble is bound to be wealthy!

*'Just how much TP I can farm in this test!'* Ace's heart raced as he wanted to fly over there immediately.

Laden finally get a normal reaction from this dense young man and happily answer, "Yes, anyone in the Qi Gates realm and below the age of eighteen can participate in the selection test held at the Regal City also the capital city of Regal Kingdom!"

Javier takes a deep breath before asking seriously, "How much time it will take to go to the capital?"

Ace has seen the map, and he knows it would almost take him seven to eight months before he reaches the Regal Capital City if he travels at full speed without resting. But he still asked if he was wrong in his calculation.

"From here?" Laden looked strangely at Javier and said with doubts, "If you go there with your cultivation, it will take you two years. But more importantly, your cultivation is quite shallow. Young friends don't court death. We commoner didn't stand a chance even in that selection test, much less the actual test of hundred kingdoms."

Laden has a good impression of Javier; this young man was polite and wasn't arrogant like some youngster who has his cultivation. That's why he warns him kindly.

"Is there no other way?" Javier still insists.

Ace could tell this shop owner was warning him out of kindness, but he also could tell Laden knows a faster way to go in the capital.

"Sigh... Youngster these days." Laden sighed, but he still said since this youngster wanted to go, he can't stop him. "If you have qi stones, you can go to Zander City and hire a tamed flying demonic beast. With it, you can reach the capital in a month! But it is very expensive."

"What? We can use tame the demonic beasts?" Ace was astonished because he never saw a tame demonic beast in low lands.

"Yes, only cities like Zander have this facility because Earl Zander lived there. But it will still take you three months with your speed.

"Moreover, as you can see, everyone is going in the same direction as you. Because anyone can watch the selection test and a very large crowd gather in the capital, especially nobles!

"In the time you reached the Zander City, all the demonic beasts might already be hired," Laden told truthfully.

*'An enormous crowd eh, this is the more reason for me to go!'* Ace thought ecstatically.

He would never miss this chance to become wealthy and famous!

## **Chapter 115 - Bandits**

6-7 minutes

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Laden didn't know Ace's true speed because Ace was confident of reaching Zander City within seven days if he didn't stop.

*'I should start my journey today!'* Ace was too excited to wait for a day or two and chose to leave the lane town at the very moment since the time was limited and he can always rest after reaching the destination. He only has six months!

"Sir, thank you for giving me this valuable information." Javier thanked Laden as he places a transparent green qi stone on the counter with a meaningful smile on his face.

There was a much larger qi fluctuation emitting from this qi stone because this was a low-level qi stone!

Laden left a good impression on Ace, so he gave him a low qi stone to show his goodwill.

Laden saw the green transparent qi stone and was bewildered because low qi stones were very rare in this town, and no one was willing to trade with low qi stones here. And this was almost equal to his five years' worth of income!

Laden was going to refuse this generous gesture because it was too much, and he was also an upright man. But to his surprised the young man has disappeared into thin air as if he was never there!

Laden rubs his eyes and saw again, but the low qi stone was still there and mumbles in a daze, "I-is he was a ghost?"

"Dad, you look silly." At this moment, Sienna's laughing voice sounded and Laden snapped out of his daze.

He quickly clutch the low qi stone from the counter because if anyone saw it they might want to rob him!

"Dad, where is that big brother?" Sienna looked at the entrance curiously and didn't find that customer.

Laden looked at Sienna, who has washed her face and combed her hair, and looked very cute. He pinched her rosy cheeks as he said, "That big brother is gone because he was afraid of my little piglet."

"Hmph, liar! Sienna is not a piglet!" Sienna pout cutely.

"Hahaha." Laden laugh out loud as he looked lovingly at little Sienna. He enjoys teasing this little thing.

*'But that youngster was mysterious even I a peak qi gates realm didn't notice him leave.'* Laden thought with a smile on his face.

Ace used the heartless stealth with lightning steps to leave Laden's shop because he knew he would refuse his friendly gesture and leave like this.

Now, he was not in the mood of going anywhere but was eager to reach the Regal City as quickly as possible. That city was a treasure house for him and maybe the fastest way to raise his thief rank or even get a new title.

In five minutes, Ace reached the gate where he has just come an hour ago and stopped using his skills. Since those two guards have seen him coming, it would not be wise to leave like a ghost.

Javier walk to the gate and saw one guard was missing but gave little attention to it and walk past the gate.

"Young Master, you leaving so soon?" The guard asked, who collected the toll from Ace.

"Yes, I have some important business." Javier coolly replies while walking. He didn't look at the guard like an arrogant noble.

Javier's attitude did not offend the guard because someone with a storage ring has to be arrogant.

After Ace leaves the lane town, he finds the road that was going toward Zander City. He was just going to use the lightning steps when he heard a yell.

"Young Master, please wait!"

Ace instantly senses ten cultivators of qi gates realms. If he wanted, he can just ignore them and leave, but he finds a familiar soul signature in this group and looked behind.

Ace saw nine black-robed men following an armed man, and he was a little surprised because this armed man was the missing guard of the lane town gate.

This guard was also the one who call for him and the soul signature was exactly his. His name was Trenton.

Trenton saw Javier stopping and calmly looking at him. He smiled while saying, "Young Master, I didn't think you would leave so soon."

Ace could tell this guy was up to no good and nonchalantly said, "Scram, before you ruin my good mood." He has learned how to act like an arrogant person by posing Javier. The command was true, though.

Trenton's face stiffed but before he could utter anything the man beside him said jeeringly, "Brat you didn't seem to understand the situation, leave that storage ring and scram or I'll collect it from your corpse."

Ace saw this man has a deep scar on his forehead and he looked quite scary. He was also the strongest in the group, a peak qi gates realm cultivator.

"Sigh... So, you want my storage ring. Are you the one who calls for these idiots?" Javier glanced at Trenton as he asked calmly.

Everyone's face darkens after being called idiots. Either this guy was too arrogant, or he was a blind fool!

"Boss, just kill this boy and take his storage ring. He is simply a madman." One of the black-robed men said.

"Brat, you're the one who didn't see what good for you, Die." The bandit boss punch at Javier's head with his full power, Javier's attitude also irritated him.

Ace didn't move an inch from his place and impassively looked at incoming fist, *'Soul Piercing Bullet.'*

Orange soul qi steamed through Ace's hand as it mysteriously takes the shape of a finger size spearhead. This was the manifestation of soul qi.

And the moment Ace active the soul-piercing bullet he masters just two days ago, the spearhead instantly shot towards the bandit boss's head.

The bandit boss wasn't aware of what was coming. The soul bullet sinks into the space between the boss's eyebrows, leaving no external or internal wounds.

Then it happened. Before the punch can connect with Ace's head, the light from the bandit boss's eyes vanished and he falls in the dirt with his eyes wide open.

He was dead because his soul was obliterated!

## **Chapter 116 - Zander City**

6-8 minutes

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When the group of bandits saw their boss' mysterious way of dying. They bewitched.

But the very next moment, everyone was scared silly as they looked at the young man, who was smiling calmly at them. That smile gave everyone shivers as if grim ripper was looking at them while sharpening his scythe.

"M-monster, RUN!" Trenton bark and runs without thinking. He knew he had provoked a terrifying individual.

Well, no one can blame Trenton because no one as powerful as Ace came here so easily, and Trenton stays far away from powerful cultivators.

When Trenton saw the storage ring in Javier's hand and after confirming his weak cultivation. He calls for his group of bandits and thought it would be a big harvest this time around because they never rob some with a storage ring before.

Trenton planned to rob this brat at night with no one finding out and was heading back into the town to smuggle his gang of bandits inside. But to his surprise, that brat was quite far away from the town and, though the luck was on his side.

He has done this kind of thing before and rob quite many helpless people and even killed them. But this time he has provoked a dark star who has killed their boss without even blinking.

"Heh. Good luck with that." Ace's impersonal voice brushes past their ears.

This was the last thing everyone in the group hear before they fell on the dirt and become corpses!

"Not even a single EXP, huh." Ace was coldly looking at those ten corpses as he pursed his lips, "But soul attacks are dreadful and mine was only at the low efficiency."

This was his first time using soul-piercing bullets on someone, and it didn't disappoint him.

'Now, I should learn the Soul Barrier of Soul Guardian Barrier Art and Camouflage Steps.' Now that he had mastered a soul attack completely, he needs a defensive skill as well.

The soul barrier was like soul-shattering eyes and had a backlash, but it was still a protective soul skill and the backlash was far better than being dead.

As for Camouflage Steps, it was specifically for fighting and since he masters, the lightning steps to low-level mastery and didn't seem to make any progress in it any further; it was time to move on to this part of the Misperception Sky Steps Art.

Ace scan the corpses and didn't sense any qi stones or storage rings. *'Bandits are surprisingly poor these days.'* He sighed.

If those corpses knew what was thinking, they might die again from anger.

Since there were no more hindrances, with the lightning-like movement, he blurs and disappeared in the avenue that leads to Zander City.

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A week later,

Ace was looking at the large golden gates that were exploding with activates.

These golden gates were the city gates of Zander City!

Without resting for a moment, Ace reaches the biggest city of Zander County in a week, from Lane Town.

This journey would normally take him a month if he leisurely travels but Ace didn't want to miss this big chance of farming a large amount of TP and a chance to raise his thief rank.

*'This city is even more packed than the luminous city.'* Ace nodded in satisfaction. He was finally seeing what he had imagined.

On the city gate, there were three blocks, one for carriages, one for pedestrian, and the last was almost empty as if it was specific for the special personal like nobles.

The guards on the gate were middle stage Qi Foundation realm and collecting tolls showing no emotions.

Ace was amazed because almost everyone in that sizeable crowd was a cultivator of at least Qi Gates Realm.

Since there was no check for identity, he gets in the second line and waits for his turn.

If he wanted, he can just sneak inside, but he didn't mind waiting and go like a proper person since he was not here for stealing. Because if he makes a move right now, he might alert many.

Ace also noticed that there were many youngsters in the masses and instantly knew they were also here for the competition in the capital.

They might not be participants, but they can always watch and gain experience or just enjoy the grand show. This was especially the case for nobles.

In front of Ace, there were twenty men, and the line was moving steadily. At this moment, Ace felt a hand on his shoulder from behind and curiously turn around with a plain face.

Ace saw a tall, slim young man in his late twenties beaming at him. This young man was quite handsome, much pleasing to the eyes than Javier's plain face.

"Hehe, little brother, are you alone?" The young man asked with a beaming smile.

Javier said, showing no emotions, "Yes, is there some problem with it?"

Ace measure the young man closely and a hint of surprise flash past his eyes. But it was all hidden under Javier's face and the young man didn't suspect a thing.

"Oh, you take it in the wrong way." The young man put a friendly face before saying, "I'm also alone. Why not we tag along?"

"Sure." Javier coolly said.

"My name is Jason Lan." Jason introduces himself enthusiastically.

"Javier," Javier said impassively.

"Haha, little brother Javier, why so cold? We're friends after all." Jason seems to be very optimistic as if he didn't care about Javier giving him the cold shoulder.

"You two lovers, move quickly or I throw you out of the line!" A man behind Jason yell. He was an early stage qi foundation cultivator.

"Geez, uncle, why are you yelling? My ears almost fell off." Jason retorted. He didn't seem to be afraid of that Qi Foundation cultivator.

After all, Jason was only a fourth gate cultivator himself!

"Boy, you dare to call me uncle??!" That man's face turns red from anger. He didn't seem to like this word.

"So, what can I call you little oldy?" Jason innocently asked

A thick vein pop on that man's forehead. He was very short temper and about to attack Jason.

After all, this guy was 'insulating' him with such an innocent face. How could he take it standing?!

### **Chapter 117 - Limited Slots**

6-7 minutes

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The man was about to attack Jason when one of the gate guards released his aura and roar loudly, "Shut up, you two retards! Where do you think you're standing?!"

The short temper man instantly backs down, but he still looks coldly at Jason, "Bastard don't let me caught you!"

Jason smiles mysteriously at the man and ignored his threat as he also shut up.

Ace saw all this with great interest and couldn't help but think, '*Interesting.*'

After the brief bout, the line move smoothly but Jason would still spout something random now and then. Yet his new 'friend' Javier simply ignore him, but it didn't shut his mouth.

It was finally Ace's turn.

"Ten fragment Qi stones." The guard coldly said.

"What? Didn't the toll was five just a month ago?" Jason, who was standing behind Javier, exclaims.

Everyone began to rustle because Jason was telling the truth.

"So, what?" The guard scorn and said disdainfully, "If you didn't have Qi stones then scam to the side."

Javier simply ignored Jason and give the guards ten fragment Qi stones.

"Heh, your friend might get you killed." The guard accepts the Qi stones and sarcastically warns Javier.

The guards have already banded them together since Jason was so friendly with Javier.

Javier didn't pay any attention to the guard and pass the gate.

"Twenty fragment Qi stone." The guard coldly smiled at Jason as he demands. How could they just let this troublemaker go so easily?

The man behind Jason also smirks, hearing this since he has the bone to pick with him.

Everyone expects a little show because this guy was continuously yapping and they didn't think he would comply without retort.

But to everyone's surprise, Jason flips his hand, and twenty fragment Qi stones appeared, and he gives them to the guard with a beaming smile, "Here."

A hint of surprise appeared on everyone's face, guards included.

"So, you have some brain after all." The guards quickly take the Qi stones, "Now, go and don't cause any trouble or the patrolling guard will throw you out."

Jason smiled and said nothing as he nodded and enter the city.

"You? Why are you smiling? Twenty fragment Qi stones!" The guard looked at the short temper man, who was laughing joyfully.

That short temper man's face instantly fell and everyone couldn't help but chuckle.

Ace watch this little show with his heavenly sense and his lips curled in a smile.

"Little Brother Javier, sorry to keep you waiting." Jason quickly caught up with Javier as he apologized.

"I wasn't waiting for you." Javier coolly said.

"Hehe, don't be like this. Tell me, are you also here to go to the capital?" Jason inquires.

Javier nodded without looking at him.

"It won't be easy, you know," Jason said. "As you can see, there are quite some people and many nobles in Zander County wanted their younger generation to take part in the selection test."

Javier finally looked at Jason as he asks, "What are you trying to say?"

"Let me tell you, although the death rate in the selection test of the capital is not as high as the actual test. But many nobles would throw their youngsters in it because just to take the selection test is a great honor and they might catch the fancy of a higher noble house.

"But if they pass just the selection test, even by a fluke, the king will instantly grant them noble titles and lands. That's why even a coward takes this chance just to soar." Jason said while smiling as they walk in the busy streets of Zander City.

"What is has to do with going to the capital?" Javier question with a plain face.

"It has everything to do with it." Jason beams, "Do you know how many beast tamers are in the Zander County, who can control the tamed demonic beast?"

Jason didn't wait for Javier's answer and said, "Only a hundred, and each flying beast can carry fifty passengers. Now, tell me if the trip to the capital takes two months round trip and the selection test will start in six months, so how many people can go to the capital on these three round trips?"



Javier finally shows a hint of bewilderment as he answers, "15,000 people if the beast can carry fifty at a time."

Jason's knowledge surprised Ace and only now he understands the gravity of this situation.

"Hehe, you are right and there are almost five million people live in Zander County. In them, there are over three million people cultivators, and more than fifty- thousand are lesser nobles! Now, do you understand why I said it is difficult to go to the capital!" Jason laughs softly.

Javier wore a grim face as he asked, "Let's assume the commoners didn't get a slot in these fifteen thousand slots. Then what about the nobles? They won't just politely give up on the glory, right? If you just tell is true."

"Little Brother Javier, you are very sharp." Jason show a hint of surprise as he profoundly looked at Javier.

Ace scoff in his heart, *'Does this guy think I'm an idiot?'*

"Yes, you are right in Hayden Prefecture. There are six counties and the situation is the same for every one of them. But you underestimate the Beast Calling Organization shrewdness.

"Since there was so much at stake, anyone would be willing to pay any kind of price and that's what Beast Calling Organization did. Now that the time was short, they're going to hold different auctions for these slots in every kingdom, and it might be the biggest auctions after the Myriad Pill Flame Auction!

"That's was also the reason for the toll to increase. These nobles would not sit idly and let this chance to make Qi stones pass. Just imagining the huge amount of Qi stone rolling makes my heart race." Jason had a passionate expression on his face as his eyes were shimmering with greed for Qi stones.

When Ace hear it was a question of wealth, he wanted to laugh!

## **Chapter 118 - Three Giants**

6-8 minutes

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Since this was the question of wealth, Ace wasn't bothered anymore.

He asked something about what he just heard, "This beast calling organization tells me about it and what is this Myriad Pill Flame Auction? Is it that big?"

Ace knew this guy's knowledge was deep and took advantage of it.

Jason was bewildered seeing Javier's calm attitude even after hearing about the shortage of tame beast and asking this meaningless question.

"You didn't know about Three Giants?" Jason barks in surprise.

"What, three giants?" Javier confusingly looked at Jason.

"I thought you were from some big noble household and you didn't even know about three giants?" Jason pursed his lips into a mysterious smile.

"Does it matter?" Javier narrowed his eyes as he wore a confused expression.

"Of course it matters. If someone knows you didn't even know about three giants, they will laugh at you and call you country bumpkin!" Jason sternly said, "Since we are friends I'll tell you so you don't embrace me."

Javier rolled his eyes.

"Three Giants are three organizations, Pill Flame, Beast Calling, and Nightmare Ghosts!

"These three giants are all around the high and middle lands, especially high lands!

"Pill Flame Organization controlled every medicinal herb, alchemists, crafters, rune crafters. The Myriad Pill Flame Auction is also held by this organization every three years. But only in the high lands. They had little connection below first-grade lands, though.

"However, its auction reputation is so great that almost everyone in the middle-lands knows about it.

"Beast Calling Organization controlled these Beast Tamers. They are as rare as an alchemist, but only this organization has a method to nurture a beast tamer while you can still find techniques about alchemy in the top ten kingdoms.

"As for Nightmare Ghosts Organization, they call themselves the traders of death! Simply put, this is an organization of deadly assassins, and no one knows how to join this organization.

"But everyone knows how to hire an assassin from this organization. This is the scariest organization of three because if they accept the contract, then the target was hundred percent dead!

"No matter where the target hides, they will find it and hunt it down. The target would never even see them coming. That's why they call themselves Nightmare Ghost." Jason gravely said.

Ace swallowed hard, especially after hearing about this Nightmare Ghost Organization reputation!

Ace has some shallow knowledge about this Pill Flame Organization because of Vance's storage ring and knew Vance was an Azure Alchemist. But it was very vague, and he didn't think this organization was so powerful that it controlled such a force and resources.

He suddenly remembered finding an Azure Pill Insignia in Vance's belongings and he tossed it to the side and paid little attention to it and thought it was something useless.

However, now, *'That think might have some great use!'*

"Are there any other organizations like these three?" Javier asked with great interest.

"Others?" Jason snorted. "Do you know the background of these three organizations?"

"I won't be asking you if I know, right?" Javier said impassively.

"Hehe, no one dares to mess with them, you know why?"

"Even after Pill Flame controlled the largest resources below royal lands and beast calling controls beat taming techniques and skills. But no one ever attempts to swindle or steal from them.

"Even when Nightmare Ghost once killed an emperor, that empire didn't even dare to yap!

"This all because these three organizations represent three ancient sects!" Jason's tone was stiff when he mentions ancient sects.

*Ace's heart sank when he heard it, 'Didn't that old ghost say there was only one sect?! Where these three came from and why are they interfering with these mundane affairs?'*

Ace has many questions, but no one can answer even one of them. He has thought that the ancient sect would probably be aloof and didn't interact with lower lands, but it was not the case at all.

Now he even doubted Empty Dream's story.

If these three ancient sects were active in lower lands, then he has to change his plans completely and thought twice about becoming famous and robbing pill shops!

*'If that old man was from this pill flame organization, he might already disclose the information about the blood rose! And if they found out that I'm still alive, they will hunt me to no end!'*

Before Ace thinks it won't be a big deal if that old man and that woman find out that he was alive, since this land of kingdoms is so big, they can't possibly find him. But now, if he mixes the organization established by an ancient sect, everything changed!

The important point was he manage to escape the deadly formation which will make them even more determined to hunt him.

*'Damn it, why I am so unlucky!'* Ace thought with a huge grievance in his heart

Jason returned to his cheerful self as he looked at Javier, who seem to be in deep thought, "What are thinking about?"

Ace finally snapped out of his complex thoughts, but his mood was sullen.

"When is the auction?" Javier asked, showing no disturbances.

"In three days, in the Beast Calling Branch because it is the only place that can hold hundred thousand people!" Jason said while smiling, "But we have to buy a token for entering first and it won't be cheap either."

"Then, do you know where is branch is?" Javier asked.

Jason nodded, "Follow me."

*'This guy is quite handy to have.'* Ace thought

The two of them leisurely walk in the direction of the Beast Calling Organization's branch and the closer they get the crowded it became.

Ace was amazed because he never saw these many people in a single place before and all of them were cultivators!

He also notices this city was at least three times larger than Luminous City.

"Hehe, here we are," Jason said playfully.

Ace looked in the direction where Jason was pointing and was astonished because there was a giant colosseum in front of him!

## **Chapter 119 - Beast Calling Colosseum**

6-8 minutes

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Ace looked at the gigantic edifice covered almost a mile, with bewilderment. He never would have thought there was such a structure in this city.

"Hahaha, little brother Javier seems quite surprised." Jason chortled. "Isn't it majestic?"

"It is." Javier answer subconsciously.

"Rumor has it, the headquarter of beast calling organization is a hundred times larger than this branch." Jason chuckles. "And you'll find this kind of colosseum in every large city like Zander."

*'These ancient sects are filthy rich.'* Ace's eyes were opened today.

"Wait until you see those tamed beasts. You'll understand why they need such a structure." Jason pursed his lips in a mysterious smile.

They walk towards the Colosseum entrance, which was rather packed.

"They are taking advantage of us!"

At this moment, a heavy yell sounded from the large entrance.

The middle-aged man was short and wearing lavish garments and had a proud bearing. He was noble.

"Shh... If you want to die than die alone, why are you dragging me!?" The man next to him quickly put some distance from that man while sweating.

"So, what? They're charging one thousand low Qi stones... just for a seat in the auction!" The angry man didn't back down at all and raised his voice further.

Now even the passers-by quickly put a large distance from that man's post hastily.

"He's dead," Jason whispered with a hint of confidence in his voice.

Javier's eyes narrowed in a slit as he looked at the man.

"Oh, did this friend have any complaints?" A jeering, high pitch voice sounded at this moment.

Everyone looked at the owner of this voice and saw a tall sturdy middle-aged man in his forties, dignifiedly walking out from the entrance.

He was wearing a light blue uniform embroidery with a Golden-Winged Snake insignia. There was also a silver horn on the snake's forehead.

'*What kind of beast it is?*' Ace wonder. He never sees this kind of beast in books.

"See that man in the unique robes and that winged snake? This is a beast tamer, and that symbol represents the Beast Calling Organization." Jason murmured, "The show is finally starting."

"Damn right I have a problem!" The angry man didn't seem to notice everyone's dreadful expressions.

"Oh, please elaborate freely." The beast tamer smiles genteelly even after reprimanding by that man.

But Ace instantly senses a well-hidden Qi fluctuation from that gentle middle-aged man and grimace, '*An Empty River Cultivator!*'

Ace vigilance towards these giants rose another level because a Qi River cultivator was very rare in middle lands and most of them were in the first-grade kingdoms or Kings of third-grade kingdoms!

But this mere branch in the third-grade kingdom has one. How could he not be stunned?

The man was about to shout again, but something happened that stunned everyone. A white foam flows from that man's mouth as his eyes lose their luster.

'*Thud...*'

The sound of that man collapsing on the floor resounded in the silent area.

"Oh my, this friend seems ill. Someone please escort him out and treat him. Our organization will pay all the expenses." The middle wore a surprised expression as if he was shocked.

Everyone in the crowd knows this dreadful beast tamer has killed this man mysteriously without lifting a finger, but no one dares to say anything. They didn't want to end up like that corpse.

The beast tamer glance at the man, who has come with that 'sick' man as he smiles knowingly.

That man was ashen and knew what this smile means. He quickly took his friend's corpse and even thanks to the beast tamer as he wore a forced smile.

"My name is Aden Peter, and I'm the Beast Master of this Beast Calling Colosseum." Aden introduces himself in a gentle tone. "I was just passing by when I heard the ruckus, but that friend wasn't able to tell me his grievance. Such a pity."

Aden shakes his head as if he felt sorry for that 'sick' guy, "But don't worry we're a fair and upright organization and if you have any complaints, anyone can come to me directly I'll make sure you get justice."

Aden solemnly said, "Now, please continue to your business and the first auction will start in three days as planned."

Aden left nonchalantly after speaking his piece.

Everyone in the area takes a massive sigh of relief. That guy was a maniac and who would dare to complain after seeing the result of the first one.

"What did I tell you." Jason chuckles lightly, "He just kill a chicken to scare the monkeys"

*'More like displaying his prowess.'* Ace thought. He might be the only one who felt what has happened.

Everyone knows what that man just did, but no one dare to speak up and they even force themselves to believe in that man's lie. This is what power means.

*'Sigh...'* A sigh escaped Javier's mouth.

"What are you sulking about? Let's go. We have to get those seats, or do you want to complain as well?" Jason joke.

Javier rolled his eyes and follow Jason.

Just as Jason said after Aden killed that man, no one complain about the sky-high price of the seat in the auction.

The price of one thousand low Qi stones was quite high for folks in this place, but there were still buyers.

After all, the chance of getting in the test was much greater than this insignificant price and this was only the first auction out of three.

There were a hundred thousand seats and only forty-thousand of them left when Ace and Jason's turn come.

The receptionist was a beautiful girl in the same light blue uniform they saw early.

Jason also has a storage ring, and he pays with fragment qi stones, the same goes for Ace.

Ace was looking at the palm-size square token in his hand. It was light blue and had the same winged snake logo on it and a seat number was engraved on his token. He also felt something different.

*'This token is not simple.'* Ace couldn't help but use his runic eyes and just as he thought, there was a mysterious array engrave on it.

*'Rich bastards..'* Ace smiled bitterly.

## **Chapter 120 - Ace's Dilemma**

6-7 minutes

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It was already night, but the zander city was still active as day because of the upcoming auction.

After getting the token, Ace simply wanted to rest since he was traveling nonstop and now he has three days before the auction. As for anything else, he would think about it after recuperating.

But Jason has a completely different plan in mind. "Little Brother Javier, how about we go to Jade Pavilion and enjoy their fine wine? Trust me, this wine is famous throughout the lower lands."

Ace couldn't help but think, *'This name sounds kind of familiar.'* He finally remembered.

Javier asks with a bewildered look, "This wine you talking about is called the Jade Wine?"

"Oh, you know about the jade wine?" Jason was surprised, "If you know about the jade pavilion then you ought to know about the pill flame organization, after all, this jade pavilion is their business."

"What?" Javier showed a dumbfounded face. "This jade pavilion is also theirs?"

"Why, of course!" Jason said. "You'll find a jade pavilion in every large city like Zander."

Ace was now really confused, *'Why is this organization open a branch in low lands? Is it because of Luminous Kingdom? No, there is something more than meets the eye.'* He mused.

"It seems little brother has some encounter with the jade pavilion but didn't know their actual origin," Jason concluded with a smile on his face.

"Yes, I had once dined there." Javier nodded.

Before Jason would speak any further, a raucous voice sounded at this moment from behind.

"Little runt, I finally found you!"

Both of them turn around and saw it was the same short temper man they had encountered at the city gate or, more precisely, the man whom Jason make fun of.

"Oh, if it isn't uncle." Jason beam as if he didn't notice the sharp glance of that man.

"Still acting cockily, eh." The man sneers while coldly looking at Jason. He shifted his eyes to Javier. "Boy, are you with him?"

"I'm not." Javier coolly answered as he walked away from Jason without turning back.

"It seems your friend has already abandoned you." The man scoffs disdainfully at Jason. He didn't have any intention of stopping Javier, though.

Jason pursed his lips. "Hah, Uncle, are you going to cause trouble in the territory of beast calling colosseum?" He didn't seem to phase by Javier's departure.

The man's expression stiffened. No matter how bold he was, even he didn't dare to show his temper here.

"No matter what, boy, you're coming with me, or I don't mind dragging you." The man smiles coldly with narrowing eyes.

If it was someone else at the fourth qi gate realm, they would be scared silly after seeing an early foundation realm expert blocking their way, but it was not the case for Jason.

"Fine, let's have a chat somewhere else." Jason shakes his head helplessly and casually walked away with the angry man.

Ace watched all this scene play with his heavenly sense and his lips curled, *'Poor guy.'*

Now that he was alone again, he found an inn to recuperate. As for going to the Jade Pavilion, it would be a lie if he said he wasn't tempted to go when he remembers the taste of jade wine.

But restrain himself since he was not at an optimal condition and didn't want to take risks just because of mere wine.

On his way, he saw many inns, but to his surprise; they were all full, and this made me a little irritated.

*'This auction is a huge matter, I wonder if I should steal their qi stones?'* Ace truly wanted to because the amount would be huge, but shake his head bitterly, *'It's too soon to alert anyone, especially when these three giants are present.'*

First, his soul-shattering eyes skill was a double-edged sword, and he still knew little about rune crafting.

Second, the qi stones were probably low-level qi stones, and they were of little use to him, even if he stole them. The only thing he would get from all this is TP.

Lastly, he would alert too many big shots and also gain a colossal enemy, Beast Calling Organization!

Ace didn't want to tangle with these three giants, not until he was confident in escaping from them or it was necessary, and he had no other choice.

*'Damn it, I also need EXP!'* Ace sulkily thought, *'Let's mull it over before reaching the capital.'* He was in a dilemma.

In his thought, Ace finally found an almost full inn.

He didn't get a lavishing room, but he didn't care about this plain one either.

Ace sits comfortably on the soul bedding and sighed with satisfaction, "Finally some peace." He mumbles with a smile on his face.

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In a dark alleyway of Zander City,

Two silhouettes were standing there. One of them was tall and slim while the other one was a head shorter but sturdily built.

These two were exactly Jason and that man who lead him here with no concern for Jason's will.

Jason coolly looked around and ask with a smile, "Now what uncle? Wanted to kill me inside an Earl's City?"

"I don't know just where that cocky attitude of yours came from, but I'm not afraid of killing you even if this is the capital city!" The man answered coldly.

"Ah, another one of those rotten noblemen, I presumed," Jason asserts.

"Boy, you dare to call a noble rotten?" The man instantly released his cultivation base aura.

But to that man's surprise, Jason didn't even flinch despite his meager cultivation.



"Sigh... So, what if called you nobles rotten? It's not a lie." Jason sighed in disappointment, "You even let my scapegoat go, that's why your punishment is death."

The man's eyes contracted as his heart sank to rock bottom because he suddenly felt a mountain-like pressure coming from non-other than the young man in front of him!

"Y..."

Before he could speak a full word, a silver beam brush past his jaw, and the next moment half of his head was rolling on the floor!