

Time 41

Outside Of Time

Chapter 41: Temple (1)

Xu Qing wasn't unfamiliar with the dark night of the forbidden zone.

Regardless of whether it was the ruins of the city or this jungle.

He lived in the former for over ten days and he has also experienced several nights in the latter.

At that moment, he, who was hiding in the cracks of a giant tree, had his eyes half-squinted. While he was taking a nap, he silently cultivated the spirit energy in the forbidden zone that was mixed with dense anomalous substances.

After the spirit energy entered his body, it was separated by the Mountains and Seas Art. The pure part nourished his entire body while the anomalous substances fused into his shadow.

Xu Qing was already used to such changes.

He even had a faint feeling that he cultivated in this forbidden zone because of his shadow, or it might be because this place was dangerous and so he was constantly on high alert.

Under his high concentration, his cultivation speed also increased greatly.

He wasn't far from the fourth level of the Mountains and Seas Art.

"It feels like sharpening a knife..." Xu Qing mumbled.

He didn't understand any great logic but he remembered that the blacksmith in the slums had once told people that a good saber needed a better whetstone to completely reveal its edge.

At that moment, the dangerous forbidden zone seemed to have become Xu Qing's whetstone.

During this day of tempering cultivation, Xu Qing silently opened his eyes after a long time.

He lifted his head and stared at the darkness of the night outside through the crack in the tree. At night in the forbidden zone, the roars of mutated beasts rose and fell from afar, echoing through the jungle like the low-pitched cries of gods and demons.

The cold intent was from the myriad of lifeforms that invaded this place also entered the cracks between the trees where Xu Qing was hiding and permeated his body.

It was freezing.

This scene made him feel as though he had returned to the ruined city. Slowly, a hint of loneliness permeated his body.

However, Xu Qing was already very familiar with loneliness. After a long time, he closed his eyes again and continued cultivating.

Just like that, time passed.

Because the resting place he found was very correct, the night was considered safe. Only in the middle of the night did Xu Qing, who was cultivating, hear footsteps from the outside world.

It was very messy, as though many people were moving forward in a line.

Xu Qing's expression turned serious as he narrowed his eyes and looked at the outside world. However, it was pitch-black outside the crack in the tree. There was nothing there.

However, Xu Qing's heart suddenly sank. This was because the moment the sound of footsteps rang out, the roars of the mutated beasts in the nearby jungle instantly disappeared. This caused Xu Qing's vigilance to rise abruptly.

He recalled the singing footsteps he had encountered previously. However, the feeling it gave him now was somewhat different.

"It's not like the footsteps that sang that day. Also, there was no singing voice."

Xu Qing quickly analyzed and didn't act rashly. He forced himself to calm down and held his breath as he stared at the dark night outside.

Gradually, the sound of footsteps became clearer, as though a group of people was lining up and gradually approaching.

At the same time, waves of coldness that exceeded the possible scope of it, as if it could freeze one's body, also invaded fiercely at this instant.

Xu Qing wasn't unfamiliar with this coldness. Regardless of whether it was the singing voice back then or the strange existences that appeared at night in the ruins of the city, they all emitted this kind of temperature.

However, the degree of coldness was different. Back then, the singing voice could freeze his soul but the cold now only made him feel unwell. It didn't cause him to lose his mobility.

"It's an existence similar to the bizarre existences in the ruins!" After Xu Qing made his judgment, he clutched the iron stick tightly and took a deep breath to control the fluctuations in his heart. He then forcefully closed his eyes, not wanting to open them.

Don't look, don't touch, don't see.

After Xu Qing closed his eyes, the sound of footsteps suddenly grew hurried, getting closer and closer. It was as though countless people were circling around the tree he was on.

Xu Qing's heart trembled. He tried his best to control his impulse to open his eyes and see what the other party was like.

After a long time... when the sun rose in the sky, the chaotic footsteps finally stopped lingering and slowly moved away.

The sky was bright.

Xu Qing didn't open his eyes immediately. He waited for a moment before he slowly opened his eyes. He then saw that there was a thick layer of ice at the entrance of the tree he was in, and his entire person was sealed within it.

Through the layer of ice, the sunlight cascaded onto Xu Qing's body. He let out a breath and pressed his left hand on the ice. With a violent push, cracking sounds rang out as the ice layer shattered and fell to the ground.

Xu Qing slowly emerged. He first observed his surroundings and saw that the wolf corpses still there yesterday had all disappeared. Also, there were... a large number of footprints on the ground.

They were human footprints.

There were so many of them that it looked like hundreds of people had passed by.

Xu Qing had never heard of hundreds of people entering the forbidden zone simultaneously.

Especially since... these footprints were really footprints and not shoe prints.

Xu Qing fell silent and retracted his gaze after a long time. He could sense the strangeness of the forbidden zone even more deeply now. At this moment, he took advantage of the fact that the danger in the forbidden zone was lesser at dawn compared to the night. Xu Qing didn't give up on exploring and left in a flash.

A few hours later, Xu Qing finally reached the furthest place they had gone previously, the small canyon where the Thunder Team plucked the seven-leaf grass.

The interior of the canyon was the same as when they had left. The sunlight streamed down from the top of the vine tree and landed on the ground. The fragrance of flowers filled the air, isolating them from the dangers of the outside world. It was like a paradise.

At that place, Xu Qing heaved a sigh of relief. He then lifted his head and looked at the other end of the canyon where the cluster of temples was located.

After staring for a moment, Xu Qing retracted his gaze and rested for a while. His body then sped off, heading straight for the cluster of temples.

The jungle outside the canyon was even lusher and there was less sunlight there.

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It was unknown if it was because this group of ancient temples still emitted the glory and authority of their era but there were very few dangers when he got close after exiting the canyon.

The lush jungle seemed to be much gentler in terms of aura.

In fact, the jungle closest to the cluster of temples wasn't much different from the trees Xu Qing saw in the outside world. It was no longer malevolent or pitch-black.

There was also some seven-leaf grass here that was picked up by Xu Qing.

Everything here made Xu Qing feel a little surprised but his vigilance didn't decrease. He cautiously approached.

Two hours later, when dusk was about to arrive, he walked out of the jungle and arrived in front of the cluster of temples.

There were very few trees here and the sunlight shone down on a large area, causing Xu Qing to feel a little dazed.

What reflected into his eyes were huge domed buildings that were hundreds of feet tall.

Even though it had collapsed, even though it was dilapidated, and even though it was covered in moss, the temple, which was piled up neatly with rocks that were much larger than his body, still felt vast.

Walking inside and stepping on the broken bricks on the ground, Xu Qing felt as though he had arrived in a country of giants.

Broken walls could be seen everywhere and each of them exuded an ancient feeling of age, as though they were telling Xu Qing about their experiences.

Further ahead was a collapsed statue.

The lower half of the statue was gone, turning into countless pieces that were hard to piece together. Its head was still intact but its appearance was already blurry.

Even so, it was still over 300 feet tall. One could imagine that before it collapsed, it was at least 2000 feet tall.

Standing in front of it, Xu Qing's existence was very insignificant.

At that moment, a gust of wind blew over. It was like the sound of a flute, desolate and echoing. At the same time, it seemed to isolate space and time, causing the former glory to only be left with the gazes of future generations.

Xu Qing quietly stared at the statue and fell silent for a long time.

He thought of the ruins of the city outside the slums. He wondered if the people of the future would be like him, entering the forbidden zone carefully and looking at that city as though it was history.

A long time later, Xu Qing retracted his gaze and searched the temple complex but he didn't find the special stone that Captain Lei mentioned.

When he arrived at the residence, he had already asked around. This special stone would emit a rainbow-colored glow.

It was as though it grew naturally and the timing of its appearance was irregular.

After failing to find anything, Xu Qing felt some regret. His body agilely leaped up and with a few undulations, he arrived at the top of a temple. He then stood there and gazed at his surroundings.

Behind him was the outer area of the forbidden zone's jungle. Although he couldn't see the end, he could still see part of it. Calculating the time, today was the fourth day mentioned by Bone Blade, who had bought insurance from him.

Yesterday, when Xu Qing was in the jungle, he didn't see any fog. Today, there was still no fog, so he didn't need to save them.

Hence, he turned his head and looked in another direction from the temple cluster. That place... was the depths of the forbidden zone's jungle.

After pondering for a while, Xu Qing lifted his head and noticed that it was getting late. He planned to explore a small area in the depths and rush back before the sky turned dark. He would rest here tonight and return tomorrow morning.

With this plan in mind, Xu Qing immediately moved. He jumped down from the temple and headed toward the depths.

The instant he stepped into the depths of the jungle, his nerves tensed up intensely and he became even more vigilant and cautious.

This was because he knew that the degree of danger here was much greater than the outer perimeter.

In reality, that was indeed the case. After an hour, Xu Qing's figure once again appeared within the range of the temple.

His expression was gloomy and there was still lingering fear in his eyes.

However, his leather pouch bulged as though it was filled to the brim.

Previously, he had only walked for less than a mile when he saw much aged seven-leaf grass. It seemed like it hadn't been picked for a long time. This surprised Xu Qing because those aged seven-leaf grass were very valuable.

However, when he was picking them, he felt that the density of the anomalous substances had doubled. If it wasn't for the fact that his shadow could absorb them, it would have been difficult for him or others to take a single step in.

Also, he saw the strange jellyfish he had seen in the forbidden zone from afar again...

There were over ten such jellyfish here but they were much smaller. However, the cold aura on their bodies was still very obvious.

Fortunately, most of these jellyfish were sleeping on trees. After Xu Qing saw them, he carefully avoided them.

However, as he moved forward, he had a very strong feeling. It was as though there were countless gazes in the depths of the jungle. They seemed to be corporeal and were filled with greed as they landed on him from an unknown location.

All of this caused Xu Qing to feel like needles were pricking his back.

This place was only the edge of the depths of this forbidden zone. The area inside was even larger and it was impossible to imagine how many terrifying existences there were.

Xu Qing didn't dare to continue forward and retreated safely.

It was only when he retreated to the temple's boundary that the feeling of the needles pricking his back dissipated.

It was as though this temple was a boundary that stopped the malice from the depths of the forbidden zone.

Xu Qing took a deep breath. Taking advantage of the fact that the sun was about to set, he found a temple that was barely intact and stepped into it.

He found a stone crevice and crawled in, preparing to spend the night there.

Captain Lei had said that this place could temporarily avoid danger.

He had also checked the interior of the temple. This place was very spacious and exuded a strong sense of the passage of time. Regardless of whether it was the knife-wielding stone statue enshrined on the main seat or the numerous human statues carved on the surrounding walls, they all became blurry in the quicksand of time.

At the same time, there weren't many traces of mutated beast feces in the temple.

If there were none of them, or if there were many of them, Xu Qing wouldn't have chosen the place.

This was because neither was normal. Only when there were only a few traces of their existence would it be relatively safe.

After all, although the temple was in the jungle, there were very few trees there. Therefore, it was reasonable for mutated beasts who were used to living in the jungle to not come here often.

Very soon, night arrived.

As the roars from the outside world rang out, Xu Qing silently cultivated.

Time flowed by and it was in line with his judgment. There were very few mutated beasts in the temple group at night. Although the roars could be heard, they were mostly coming from afar.

However, just like yesterday, when Xu Qing was cultivating in the middle of the night, the strange and chaotic sound of footsteps appeared once again!

This time, it appeared outside the temple.

"Again?"

Xu Qing frowned. He didn't know why the footsteps would appear at the location he was at twice. He felt a little uneasy. After some thought, he did what he did yesterday and didn't open his eyes.

However, this time, the footsteps didn't gradually fade away like yesterday. Instead, there were more and more footsteps.

As they continued to gather, waves of cold intent permeated the air. It was as though countless bizarre existences had gathered outside the temple and were about to invade it.

Xu Qing's heart sank as he gripped his iron stick tightly. His mind quickly constructed the environment of this temple as well as a way to deal with any dangers.

At that moment, the sounds of footsteps converging outside suddenly disappeared and it became incomparably quiet.

This silence didn't make Xu Qing heave a sigh of relief. On the contrary, it made him feel as though a storm was coming and all the hairs on his body stood on end. He could faintly sense that the strange aura that had gathered outside the temple seemed to be hesitating about entering.

At the next instant, amidst the silence, the bizarre entity outside ultimately chose to step into the temple. Xu Qing then heard the sound of footsteps on the stone bricks as they entered the temple.

Smack.

This sound was like a huge rock that fell into Xu Qing's mind, causing his heart to sink. However, at this moment, waves of murmurs suddenly echoed in the temple, containing incomparable holiness.

There were also strands of golden light that suddenly spread out from the walls of the temple, illuminating the entire temple and permeating the air around Xu Qing. This caused the world under his eyelids, which was originally pitch-black, to instantly shine with light.

Under this golden light, Xu Qing felt a piercing pain in his eyes. This was the first time he opened his eyes after encountering such a strange situation.

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Chapter 43: That Strike (1)

He saw a golden light!

It came from all the blurry human figures on the inner walls of the temple.

Each of them was a small source of light. At this moment, the light gathered, causing the entire temple to become incomparably bright. However, the largest source of light wasn't them.

It was the main statue enshrined in the temple, the stone statue that held the stone saber!

Under the golden light, Xu Qing's mind trembled. He also saw a black foggy figure standing at the entrance of the temple. He couldn't see its appearance clearly but he could see a blurry human figure that was distorted in the golden light.

Outside the temple behind him, there were hundreds of black fog figures that looked like blurry human figures. There were humans and beasts.

At that moment, all of them emitted an astonishing chill that gathered together, transforming into a monstrous chill that seemed to be connected to the black fog that had seeped into the temple.

This caused the only black shadow that entered the temple to slowly raise its head under the illumination of the golden light. It let out a roar that seemed to be able to shake souls and took another step forward.

This step seemed to have offended someone and touched a taboo!

On the instance he landed, Xu Qing was shocked to see that the saber-wielding stone statue that emitted boundless light seemed to come alive as it directly walked down from the ground.

With supreme dignity and an indescribable holiness, he was like a god that had descended to the mortal world. He strode forward and walked toward the black shadow amidst the rumbling sounds on the ground.

He raised his hand and struck down with his blade.

This strike was simple and unadorned. However, it seemed to contain a certain charm of the Great Dao, shocking the heavens and earth.

One's ears couldn't hear it but one's soul could sense the mournful voice emanating from the black shadow.

The fog instantly evaporated, revealing a rotting body in tattered clothes.

He could tell that it was an old man with empty eye sockets.

At the next moment, its body directly collapsed and evaporated like fog.

As for the black shadows outside, they were also affected, one after another. The black fog around their bodies became somewhat blurry, allowing Xu Qing to see a familiar face among those figures with the help of the golden light.

It was the Bloodshadow Team Captain!

At that moment, he was within the group of black shadows. His skinny face had no expression at all. As the golden light spread out, his entire body seemed to have been purified and dissipated.

A long time later, in the darkness outside, the figures that hadn't dissipated slowly retreated and finally disappeared completely.

At the same time, the golden light in the temple gradually decreased. The imposing figure then turned around and returned to his original location with the light. As the light on his body completely dissipated, he seemed to have transformed back into a stone statue. He stood there and gazed in the direction of the gate, as though he was waiting and guarding it. He didn't move at all.

After a long time, everything returned to normal. Only Xu Qing, who had seen all of this through the crack in the rocks, was panting heavily. Disbelief could be seen in his eyes.

The Bloodshadow Team Captain who had clearly died in the singing fog and turned into dust still existed.

It was just an ordinary temple but at night, it emitted boundless golden light.

The motionless stone statue walked down like a god descending to the mortal world. That strike was incomparably profound.

At that moment, sunlight appeared outside. A new day had arrived.

It took a long time for Xu Qing to calm down. He then silently crawled out from the crevice.

He looked at the light outside and then at the human statues on the surrounding walls. Finally, his gaze landed on the stone statue with the saber.

He didn't know what kind of existence the other party was. Was he alive or had he passed away?

It was unknown how old this cluster of temples was or how glorious they were.

However, everything that happened last night shocked him greatly.

This was especially so for the imposing aura contained in that profound saber strike. It caused Xu Qing to be deeply shocked, as though it had been carved into his soul and was impossible to forget.

He couldn't imagine that in this forbidden zone that was filled with dangers, there was actually an area where darkness couldn't enter.

Captain Lei hadn't told him about this matter. Perhaps even Captain Lei didn't know about it.

The scene last night didn't appear very frequently. At the same time, no one could stay in the forbidden zone for a long time like him.

Therefore, even if others had seen it, the number of people that did was extremely few. What was more likely was how this matter was turned into an unproven legend.

Xu Qing fell silent. He then bowed deeply toward the stone statue and the surrounding people.

After some thought, he took out a piece of candle from his leather pouch and placed it in front of the stone statue. He then lit it and bowed again.

He turned and left the temple.

Even after he walked out of the cluster of temples, he still turned his head back to look at the temple's direction from time to time, as though he wanted to engrave this place in his heart. At the same time, the scene of the strike kept appearing in his mind.

This scene was incomparably clear in his mind, so much so that Xu Qing, who had left the range of the temples, raised his right hand when he was walking in the jungle. He instinctively wanted to imitate it.

Every time he copied the move, he felt it deeply.

If the cultivation of the Mountains and Seas Art was an imitation and visualization of the xiao diagram, then the current Xu Qing had replaced the xiao diagram with the image of the saber strike in his mind.

During this imitation, his cultivation unknowingly broke through and his Mountains and Seas Art advanced to the fourth level!

Perhaps it was because he had copied the saber strike but the increase this time not only increased his strength and speed by several folds, it also allowed him to make some mental breakthroughs.

This kind of breakthrough caused Xu Qing's thoughts to be even sharper. At the same time, when he lifted and lowered his right hand, there was a faint hint of the feeling of a falling blade from a god statue.

This made Xu Qing very surprised.

Gradually, two days passed. Maybe it was because he was in the periphery, or maybe it was because of the intimidation from the temple, he didn't encounter any strange footsteps on the way back.

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Chapter 44: That Strike (2)

As for the mutated beasts, Xu Qing encountered some of them.

However, the increase in his cultivation base allowed his ability to protect his life to increase. It could be considered successful if he was careful.

Although he didn't find the heavenfate flower and scar-repelling stone, his harvest of the seven-leaf grass wasn't small. If he went back and sold them, he could exchange them for quite a lot of spirit coins.

At this moment, when dusk was about to arrive, Xu Qing also saw the world outside the jungle. Just when he was about to walk out, his footsteps suddenly paused. He lowered his head and looked at a blade of grass beside him.

The appearance of this grass was somewhat similar to the heavenfate flower. However, even with his meager knowledge of plants and vegetation, he could tell that this wasn't the heavenfate flower after taking a closer look.

However, Xu Qing thought about it and looked around guiltily. After some hesitation, he still plucked it in the end and kept it in his leather pouch.

He sprinted all the way out of the jungle and returned to the campsite at night.

It wasn't late at night yet, so the campsite was still very lively. This was especially so for the areas with feathers on the tents. Amidst the lively atmosphere, one could hear bursts of unrestrained panting.

Xu Qing didn't pay attention to these. When he returned to his residence, he had just pushed open the courtyard gate when he saw Captain Lei walking out of the house.

Captain Lei only felt relieved when he noticed that although Xu Qing was in a sorry state, there was nothing wrong with him.

"What took you so long?"

"I went to the temple." Under the moonlight and the light from the house, Xu Qing saw the redness in Captain Lei's eyes and the fatigue on his face.

He hadn't had a good rest during this period of time. As for the reason... he had already realized it, so he felt some warmth in his heart.

"Temple?" Captain Lei was a little surprised. He didn't expect Xu Qing to have ran so far. At that moment, he called Xu Qing into the kitchen and rolled up his sleeves. As Xu Qing waited, he served the dishes that were already prepared.

The food was still warm and there were no signs of it being touched. Xu Qing started.

He was very clear that Captain Lei didn't know when he would be back. So, the fact that he was able to heat up the food right after he returned could only mean one thing.

The other party... had prepared food every day and was waiting for him.

Xu Qing silently stood up and went to get the bowls and chopsticks. There were three sets of chopsticks lined up. After that, he sat down and started eating.

It was very fragrant. There was a special taste that could only be experienced by the heart.

Captain Lei ate very little. Most of the time, he was either drinking or looking at Xu Qing with a smile on his face.

"Eat more. You're still growing. If you don't eat more, you might not become tall in the future."

This sentence made Xu Qing lower his head. After a while, he hummed in agreement and obediently ate more. After that, he told Captain Lei about what he had seen and heard in the temple.

Captain Lei was originally drinking mouthful after mouthful of wine but he was soon attracted by Xu Qing's tales. After Xu Qing finished speaking, he took a deep breath and slowly spoke.

"I've heard people talking about this before but that was a long time ago. Some people seemed to have seen a similar scene but like the singing voice, it eventually became a legend.

"Now that I think about it, it seemed to have happened not long after the singing voice appeared." Captain Lei muttered. He suddenly thought of something and sadness slowly appeared in his eyes as he reminisced.

Looking at Captain Lei, Xu Qing knew what he was thinking about. He suddenly felt a little guilty and felt that he shouldn't have said this. Hence, he fell silent.

After a while, Captain Lei regained his senses. He seemed to have seen the reason for Xu Qing's silence and smiled.

"You're too sensitive. I'm not as fragile as you think."

As Captain Lei spoke, he drank a large mouthful of wine and changed the topic. He then told Xu Qing about the interesting things that had happened at the campsite recently.

He chatted as he drank and Xu Qing listened as he ate.

They were like each other's... family.

Late at night, Captain Lei sat there and drank his wine. After Xu Qing cleaned the table, Captain Lei smiled and got up, returning to his room.

Xu Qing also returned to his room. After he entered, he saw that the bedding had been changed to a new one. Moreover, it had been rolled up earlier and was laid out properly. There was even a hint of a sun-dried smell on it.

Xu Qing lifted his head and looked at Captain Lei's room next door. After a long while, he walked over and wanted to sit on it. However, when he lowered his head and saw the dirt on his clothes and hands, he still rolled up the blanket and sat on the bed frame with his eyes closed as he cultivated.

Early in the morning, Xu Qing opened his eyes.

He was about to leave the room but after some thought, he went to the bathroom and endured the discomfort to wash his hands.

After making his hands clean and white, he took a deep breath and walked out of the room, heading straight for the tent the doctor was in.

He knew that he couldn't go too early, nor could he bear to go too late.

As for the former, Grandmaster Bai hadn't started lessons yet. As for the latter... he was worried that he wouldn't be able to hear the content at the start.

Just like that, with Xu Qing's calculations, when he arrived outside Grandmaster Bai's tent, the sound of an assessment rang out.

Xu Qing was very happy in his heart. He stood there silently and listened attentively.

"Green lotus flower dew, also known as green lotus dew. It's a flower bud from the water lily family's lotus. It's an aromatic water obtained by combining it with a special method of heating. It has the effect of flattening one's lungs and treating heat by coughing up blood..."

The voice of the young girl in the tent was as usual. Xu Qing slowly fell into a trance as he listened, unaware of the passage of time. Very soon, more than two hours passed. It was until the tent suddenly opened that Grandmaster Bai stood there and looked at him.

"What's the matter?" Grandmaster Bai's gaze wasn't sharp but it was dignified. Xu Qing was very nervous. He braced himself and took out the medicinal herbs he had plucked on his way back. He then lowered his head and spoke softly.

"Grandmaster Bai, I... I wanted to ask if this is a heavenfate flower."

As soon as he said this, Grandmaster Bai was stunned.

After his gaze swept over, there was a hint of strangeness in his gaze. He then looked at the youth's hands which were much cleaner than before. After a long while, Xu Qing grew increasingly nervous and he slowly spoke.

"This one isn't."

Xu Qing hurriedly bowed and left. On the way, he heaved a sigh of relief but he still felt some trepidation in his heart. Hence, he turned his head to look at the tent and discovered that Grandmaster Bai was also standing there.

Noticing the youth's gaze, Grandmaster Bai nodded.

When Xu Qing saw this scene, he stopped in his tracks and bowed deeply once more before leaving.

After watching Xu Qing's figure disappear into the distance, Grandmaster Bai turned and walked into the tent. At that moment, the guards, the young man and woman who were originally in the tent seemed to have been petrified and were motionless.

At the place where Grandmaster Bai sat earlier, a table had been placed there at some point in time. On top of it were some delicacies and fine wine. Beside him was an old man in purple robes and behind him was a gray-robed old servant.

Seeing Grandmaster Bai enter, the purple-robed old man laughed.

"Grandmaster Bai, how was it?"

"What do you mean how was it?"

Grandmaster Bai didn't seem surprised by the sudden appearance of the purple-robed old man. He wasn't worried about the motionless crowd either. He sat opposite the purple-robed old man and took a sip from the flask.

"I'm talking about that kid. I told you last time that I found a good seedling while waiting for you." The purple-robed old man said with a smile.

"A good seedling? It's one thing for this kid to come here to eavesdrop for the first time but this time, to eavesdrop, he casually found a medicinal herb and asked me if it was the heavenfate flower. If this continues, I reckon he'll use the excuse of asking about medicinal herbs to eavesdrop every day. If you didn't talk to me about him, I would have chased him away long ago."

Grandmaster Bai glared and snorted at the purple-robed old man.

The purple-robed old man laughed.

"You have a sharp tongue but a soft heart. With your bad temper, if you didn't sincerely think that he was a promising talent, it would be useless no matter who introduced him."

Grandmaster Bai let out a cold snort and didn't bother to defend himself.

"Are you planning to bring him back to the Seven Blood Eyes? Your place is filled with foul air. All you would do is waste a scholar's seedling!"

"How is it a waste? What's the use of being a scholar? Cultivation is the most important thing in this world!" The purple-robed old man raised his brows and replied.

"A scholar is useless? Why did you still come here to wait for a mortal like me? You kept inviting me to your Seven Blood Eyes." Grandmaster Bai said angrily.

"You're different..." The purple-robed old man smiled awkwardly.

"How am I different?!" Grandmaster Bai glared at the purple-robed old man with a bad temper.

The purple-robed old man helplessly slapped his forehead.

"Aiya, I just remembered that there's something I haven't done. Grandmaster Bai, I'll take my leave first. I'll come back to drink with you tomorrow."

With that, the purple-robed old man stood up and was about to leave. However, before he left, he turned back to look at Grandmaster Bai and spoke seriously.

"Grandmaster Bai, if you really think that that brat is a promising talent, then teach him some knowledge. Let him have a chance to become a scholar with cultivation in the Seven Blood Eyes."

With that, the purple-robed old man left with the old servant beside him. After he left, the stillness in the tent instantly departed. However, no one noticed the abnormality earlier.

The guard was still standing guard. The youth was still vexed and the girl was still smug.

Only Grandmaster Bai lifted his head and looked in the direction Xu Qing had left earlier, his gaze pensive.

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Chapter 45: Kid, You Answer

At that moment, Xu Qing only heaved a long sigh of relief when he returned to his residence.

He felt that it wasn't too good for him to do that but his thirst for knowledge left him with no other choice.

He also understood that his little trick had probably been seen through.

"I have to repay you in the future."

The youth mumbled and remembered this matter in his heart. He didn't know how he could return the favor but that was what he thought in his heart. Maybe he would have this chance in the future.

Worried that he might forget, Xu Qing took out a bamboo slip from his leather pouch and used an iron stick to carve the words 'Grandmaster Bai' on it.

Upon closer inspection, other than Grandmaster Bai, there was also Captain Lei on the bamboo slip. There were also three other names on it.

Those three names were all people who had helped him in the slums. Even if it was just a little, he remembered them by heart.

Just like that, after carving the name, Xu Qing took out another bamboo slip and recalled the content he had heard during this lesson, recording it down bit by bit.

He even took out the bamboo slip from the previous lesson and silently memorized it. After confirming that he had memorized everything, his expression revealed satisfaction.

"There are already twenty-seven types of herbs that I understand."

Xu Qing was very happy. This feeling lasted for an entire day and he was also in a good mood when he cultivated.

Hence, he woke up very early the next day. After selling some seven-leaf grass, he bought a herb that was similar to the heavenfate flower and went to Grandmaster Bai's tent with great familiarity.

It was still the same spot as yesterday. He stood there and silently waited while paying attention to the lesson inside. When the lesson ended and Grandmaster Bai walked out to ask, Xu Qing nervously took out the medicinal herbs and asked.

Looking at the medicinal herbs, Grandmaster Bai coughed lightly. As he shook his head, he told Xu Qing about the medicinal herbs he had bought.

This allowed Xu Qing to gain additional understanding of another type of medicinal herb. This caused his satisfaction and gratitude to deepen. After he bowed and left, he turned his head in the distance and saw Grandmaster Bai standing at the same spot as yesterday, nodding his head in acknowledgment.

This scene was reflected in Xu Qing's eyes and it was also engraved in his mind.

Just like that, half a month passed.

Xu Qing would take all kinds of medicinal herbs almost every day and ask Grandmaster Bai after he finished listening to the lesson outside his tent.

He learnt more and more about herbs. He even heard a lot about the method to mix herbs.

This allowed Xu Qing to gain a lot. He had recorded dozens of bamboo slips.

As for Grandmaster Bai, he had never mentioned anything about Xu Qing stealing his skills. Every day, he would patiently answer his questions about the medicinal herbs.

In the end, not only were the guards used to the appearance of this kid in a leather coat every morning but even the youths in the tent had a deep impression of him.

He even came when it was raining heavily outside. Regardless of whether it was Grandmaster Bai or the young man and woman, they all thought that Xu Qing wouldn't come. However, Xu Qing walked over in the rain wearing a raincoat.

No matter the weather.

This left a deep impression on Grandmaster Bai and his two disciples.

Hence, one day, when it was time for class and Xu Qing didn't show up on time, which was a rare occurrence, the young man and woman would frequently glance outside.

They seemed to be surprised that the dirty little scavenger didn't come today.

It was only when Xu Qing's fatigued figure appeared in the tent that the youth and young girl retracted their gazes.

The reason why he was late was because other than attending Grandmaster Bai's lessons, Xu Qing would also enter the forbidden zone to search for heavenfate flowers and scar removal stones. At the same time, he was also tempering himself by hunting mutated beasts.

However, the search process wasn't very smooth.

He still hadn't found these two items and Xu Qing once again experienced the dangers of the forbidden zone.

Even though he was at the fourth level of the Mountains and Seas Art, he still possessed the keen judgment and observation of an old scavenger. If he was careful in the outer edges of the jungle, he might be able to survive or even hunt but he would still encounter danger occasionally.

That time, he was late because he had encountered a mutated beast that had walked out from the depths. He barely managed to escape death. After running for an entire night, he finally returned in the morning.

After he returned, he didn't rest but quietly listened to the lecture.

Other than that, during these few days, Xu Qing had another gain that wasn't too big or too small. That was the insurance that Bone Blade had mentioned.

Bone Blade lived very well.

Ever since Xu Qing bought insurance from him last time, he would come and buy it every time he entered the forbidden zone. Since the fog never appeared again, Xu Qing didn't make a move either.

However, Bone Blade was still persistent. In fact, for some reason, more and more people came to buy insurance from him.

Out of caution, Xu Qing didn't bother with most of them. He only agreed for the people whom he had saved before.

This caused Xu Qing's income to increase. Coupled with the harvest he obtained from hunting in the forbidden zone, his days slowly got better.

Although Captain Lei couldn't continue with his mission, the rent money Xu Qing offered was extremely high. Even though Captain Lei didn't accept it, Xu Qing still insisted. In the end, Captain Lei could only accept it.

Captain Lei spent most of the money on food. This allowed Xu Qing to have hot food every time he returned from the forbidden zone.

Captain Lei even bought some clothes for Xu Qing.

These clothes were all very new and Xu Qing couldn't bear to wear them. Every piece of clothing was neatly folded and placed in a cabinet. He would occasionally take them out to take a look, feeling happy whenever he did so.

Mealtime every day was also the warmest moment for Xu Qing.

This was because not only did he eat well but Captain Lei also liked to talk about the trivial matters on the campsite at this time, just like how the elders at home would talk about their neighbors when they were old.

During this time, Cross and Luan Tooth also returned. They accompanied Captain Lei for a while before leaving again.

It could be said that this period of time was the time when Xu Qing felt the most satisfied in the past six years.

With hot meals, new clothes and Captain Lei's company, his cultivation base was also improving. His knowledge of plants and vegetation was also increasing.

Hence, other than feeling satisfied, he cherished everything he had now. Every day, he would attend lessons outside the tent and was exceptionally serious.

On this day, under the morning sun, Xu Qing, who was standing outside the tent, heard Grandmaster Bai's question to the youth.

"Chen Feiyuan, tell me about this medicinal herb, Night Corpse Leading Ox."

Chen Feiyuan was Grandmaster Bai's name for the youth. Xu Qing had learned about it during the past month or so and he also knew that the girl's name was Tingyu.

Hearing Grandmaster Bai's question, the youth didn't know how to answer. He stuttered for a while before stopping.

Xu Qing couldn't see the tent but he could imagine that after the tent was opened many times, he would see the other party's mournful face from the corner of his eyes.

"Ignorant and incompetent. Tingyu, you will answer." Grandmaster Bai's voice was very stern as he named the girl to answer.

However, this time around, the girl was not prepared enough.

"Night Corpse Leading Ox, also known as Poison Mountain Root Spot... Teacher, I, I forgot." After the girl said this, she fell silent.

The tent immediately fell silent. It was obvious that Grandmaster Bai was brewing with anger. At that moment, Grandmaster Bai's voice resounded with unconcealable anger.

"Kid, you answer."

Xu Qing, who was outside the tent, started and subconsciously spoke up.

"Night Corpse Leading Ox, also known as Poison Mountain Root Spotted Chrysanthemum. It is the root and stem of the vine of the chrysanthemum plant, the thin-veined Turtledove Chrysanthemum. It is a woody vine that grows in ravines with Yin energy, cold streams, or jungles. Its taste is astringent and slightly warm when it enters the mouth. It also has the feeling of rotting. It has the miraculous effect of reducing wind. However, it is excessively poisonous. It belongs in the typical extreme endpoint of yin and yang grass." Xu Qing stopped here.

"What are the symptoms of an overdose?" In the tent, Grandmaster Bai asked again while the two of them were feeling slightly unconvinced.

"The symptoms of poisoning are abdominal pain, dizziness and hallucinations. If we don't save a person in 15 minutes, he will die." Xu Qing, who was outside the tent, was nervous but he didn't stop at all and immediately answered.

"How to detoxify the poison."

"You can use the method of vomiting and stomach lavage, supplemented by egg white and red-thorn stamen to treat the illness when the sun is strong at noon. The treatment time cannot exceed an hour and it can last for three consecutive days."

Following Xu Qing's answer, although Grandmaster Bai, who was in the tent, was expressionless, the eyes of the young man and woman beside him widened in surprise.

"What are the Yin-Yang Dual Polarity Plants?" Grandmaster Bai asked again.

"The two extremes of Yin and Yang, so-called the combination of good and evil, yang is medicine, yin is poison." Xu Qing answered without hesitation. These were all the knowledge he had heard during this period of time and he had memorized them many times, so he was already very familiar with them.

"How will this plant perform?" Grandmaster Bai asked even faster.

"Using the Night Corpse Leading Ox as an example, when combined with the Inch Leaf, it can increase the yang effect by several times. It can also help soothe injury caused by anomalous substances to the soul. However, if it is combined with the Fleeceflower, the yin effect will increase greatly. The toxicity is so great that if an ordinary person accidentally eats it, they will die within thirty breaths of time.

"How do you deal with the Fleeceflowers?"

"What's the use of an inch root?" Grandmaster Bai asked faster and faster. The nervousness in Xu Qing's heart gradually lessened and he answered equally quickly.

Just like that, the old man and the young man questioned and answered each other across the tent. Time flowed by and the time it took for an incense stick to burn passed.

Grandmaster Bai asked a lot of questions and many of them were answers that could only be known after combining the content of the lecture that had been held many days ago. However, Xu Qing answered all of them fluently.

As for the young man and woman, their previous shock had turned into extreme shock. They stared blankly at the figure projected in the tent.

Finally, under the dumbfounded gazes of the young man and woman, Grandmaster Bai asked his last question.

"Three stalks of one-year-old night-corpse lead-ox, six stalks of three-year-old Past-cloud cluster, and nine stalks of ten-year-old random chosen sedge grass of the single-horn water centipede. What are the effects of the medicinal liquid concocted?"

As soon as this question was asked, the expressions of the youth and the young girl changed rapidly and their breathing became hurried. This was because what was involved was no longer simple herbs but mixing them.

This question was also the one that caused Xu Qing to remain silent for the longest time. He pondered for over thirty breaths before he took a deep breath and spoke in a low voice.

"It's hard for evil to suppress good. The yang is stronger than the yin for the yin is weaker. Coupled with the effects of cloud grass, it can allow for the detoxification effect of the sedge grass of the single-horn water centipede to reach an astonishing level." After Xu Qing finished speaking, his eyes widened as he vaguely realized something.

"This is 70% of the basic pill formula for the Great Transformation Pill among the detoxification pills. In addition to three other types of medicinal herbs, it can be refined after heating for 14 hours." Grandmaster Bai's voice rang out faintly from within the tent.

"After testing you so much, do you have anything you want to ask?"

Xu Qing's mind jolted and his breathing became hurried.

In the past month or so, he indeed had many questions that he didn't understand. However, he was only eavesdropping after all. Although Grandmaster Bai was kind and didn't stop him, it wasn't good for him to disturb the other party's lesson and he couldn't ask about it.

Upon hearing Grandmaster Bai's words, Xu Qing hurriedly organized his thoughts and asked.

"Grandmaster Bai, regardless of whether it's in terms of origin or effects, the flamethrower hemp and impotence spike have something in common. What's the difference between the two?"

"Why can't the Spirit Stopping Flower be picked during the day?"

"The sap of the Inch Leaf has the effect of warding off evil spirits. Why can't it be used together with the Life Eye Branch that is also warding off evil spirits?"

...

Xu Qing asked one question after another and Grandmaster Bai answered them one after another. Every answer was very detailed.

As for Xu Qing, it was as though he couldn't finish asking. It was only when the time passed far exceeded the duration of the lesson and the two youths looked at him as though they were looking at a monster that Xu Qing glanced at the sky with a hint of longing and had no choice but to end the questioning.

He felt that he had gained an indescribable harvest from this day. Most of the questions in his heart had been answered and he even felt like he had mastered them.

This made his thirst for knowledge even stronger. He was prepared to engrave everything when he returned.

Just as he was about to leave, Grandmaster Bai's tired voice rang out from within the tent.

"From now on, you don't have to stand outside or take those messy medicinal herbs. From tomorrow onwards, you can enter the tent to listen to the lesson."

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Chapter 46: Poison Dao: Corpse Destruction Powder

When Xu Qing heard this, his eyes abruptly widened.

As his breathing hastened, he felt a rumbling in his mind. To be able to enter the tent and listen to the lecture was something he dreamed of. At that moment, in his excitement, he took a deep breath and bowed deeply toward the tent.

"Thank you, Grandmaster!"

Xu Qing said these words very seriously.

After a long time, he stood up and left the tent.

On this day, he didn't see Grandmaster Bai when he turned his head but he heard Grandmaster Bai criticizing the young man and woman in the tent.

Xu Qing didn't bother about these. He was already overwhelmed by intense excitement.

When he returned to his residence, he immediately informed Captain Lei of this matter. Captain Lei was also very surprised, especially when he saw Xu Qing's happy expression. His smile grew even wider and he felt rueful in his heart.

Although he didn't tell him the reason why this kid frequently headed to the forbidden zone during this period of time, he knew that the other party was searching for the heavenfate flower that could extend his life.

How could he not cherish such a loyal child who had saved his life in this cold world? However, he couldn't bear to see Xu Qing exhausted every time he returned.

At that moment, seeing that Xu Qing was happy, Captain Lei was also very happy. Hence, on that day, Captain Lei cooked a rather sumptuous dinner for Xu Qing. During this time, he kept reminding Xu Qing to respect his teachers, respect Grandmaster Bai, and so on. Xu Qing seriously memorized everything.

Even after Xu Qing finished eating and returned to his room, he was still in a state of excitement.

He was excited at the thought that he could attend the lesson in the tent tomorrow. While Xu Qing was filled with anticipation, he also found it hard to sleep.

As he was worried about personal gains and losses, he suddenly thought of the first time he and the other children met the teacher in the slums.

Hence, he opened the leather bag and tidied it up. In the end, he took out a relatively new bag and placed half of his spirit coins inside. There were also many of his white pills.

From Xu Qing's understanding, knowledge was priceless. It wasn't a big deal for him to give away all his savings.

However, he had to consider Captain Lei's side, so he left half of it behind.

After doing all this, he let out a long sigh of relief and silently closed his eyes. He then began to cultivate and cultivate, waiting for dawn.

This night was a long one for Xu Qing.

When the sun rose into the sky, Xu Qing changed into a new set of clothes and washed his hands clean before walking out of the room.

Just as he was about to leave, he was stopped by Captain Lei who hadn't woken up early during this period of time.

While giving Xu Qing detailed instructions, Xu Qing nodded patiently and listened attentively. In the end, Captain Lei helped Xu Qing tidy his clothes and passed him a leather bag.

"You can't enter the tent empty-handed for a lesson."

"I won't." Xu Qing said softly.

Captain Lei glared but he saw the determination in Xu Qing's eyes. Hence, he kept the leather bag and returned to his room to take out a flask of wine.

"I know Grandmaster Bai. He likes to drink. Bring this with you."

This time around, Xu Qing didn't refuse. After receiving the flask, he left the courtyard. After taking a few steps, he turned his head and waved at Captain Lei who was standing there. He then sprinted a few steps and headed straight for Grandmaster Bai's tent.

Looking at Xu Qing's back view, Captain Lei smiled.

"This kid wasn't this happy when we were distributing the seven-leaf grass."

Mixed with happiness and nervousness, Xu Qing arrived at the place where he had been standing outside of for the past month. He then took a deep breath and knocked on the tent's door.

"Come in."

Upon hearing Grandmaster Bai's voice, Xu Qing lowered his head and checked his clothes. He then tugged at his clothes forcefully to make them look tidier before he slowly pushed the door open. He then saw Grandmaster Bai and the youth sitting inside the tent with the guards.

When Xu Qing looked at them, they were also looking at him.

Compared to Grandmaster Bai's calm expression, the expressions of the youth and the young girl were much richer. Among them, the youth named Chen Feiyuan had an unconvinced expression, while the young girl, Tingyu, was more curious.

Xu Qing retracted his gaze and bowed deeply to Grandmaster Bai. After that, he took out the leather pouch and alcohol flask he had prepared earlier. He then imitated what he did in the slums and handed them over with both hands.

Xu Qing, who didn't lift his head, didn't see Grandmaster Bai at that moment. However, there was a hint of gentleness in his calm gaze.

Grandmaster Bai didn't take the leather pouch. He only took the flask of wine and drank a mouthful in front of Xu Qing, as though it was some sort of ritual.

"Class has begun." After putting down the flask, Grandmaster Bai slowly spoke.

It was still the first round of assessment. Tingyu and Chen Feiyuan seemed to be on par with Xu Qing. It was obvious that they had done their homework last night and their answers were very straightforward. After answering, they immediately looked at Xu Qing.

Xu Qing didn't look at them. Instead, he looked at Grandmaster Bai and answered all of his questions one by one. After that, Grandmaster Bai nodded and started the lesson formal.

Xu Qing listened attentively. He cherished the opportunity to enter the tent very much and wasn't distracted at all during the entire process.

It was the same for Chen Feiyuan and Tingyu. This made Grandmaster Bai feel a little amused.

Just like this, another ten days passed. Xu Qing was used to the lessons in the tent. However, his seriousness didn't reduce in the slightest and the knowledge he gained became increasingly abundant.

However, compared to him, Chen Feiyuan returned to his old self in just a few days. Only Tingyu was still comparing herself to Xu Qing. She was extremely serious.

However, after class, the two of them chatted a little more. Most of the time, it was Tingyu asking about life on the campsite out of curiosity. Xu Qing didn't speak much and only gave a few simple answers.

As for Chen Feiyuan, from the start to the end, he wasn't convinced by Xu Qing and didn't say much.

Xu Qing didn't mind this. He wasn't good at socializing to begin with, so he would leave for the forbidden zone as soon as possible after class. The reason why he went to the forbidden zone every day was because of the herbs.

Before he understood about herbs, all the flowers and trees in the forbidden zone were no different to him. However, things were different now.

Xu Qing would often discover some medicinal herbs that he knew of. Every time he discovered something like this, his understanding of plants and vegetation would deepen by quite a bit.

However, Xu Qing also slowly discovered that the majority of the herbs in the forbidden zone were evil yin poisonous herbs. There weren't many medicinal yang herbs.

Hence, his research on medicinal herbs focused on poison from the start.

As he picked the poisonous grass, he also built a simple house in the small canyon and used it as a lab for studying poisonous grass.

And with his body that could neutralize poison, Xu Qing was very bold in his research on poisonous grass. After trying out various combinations, he finally concocted an unknown venom.

This venom was mixed with eight types of poisonous grass and added with snake venom, using these nine substances to concoct it.

The poison contained intense corrosion. Xu Qing had tried it before. A single drop of the poison would cause the mutated beast's corpse to turn into blood within five breaths.

However, it would only be so fast for corpses. For living creatures, for some reason, the time would increase by a lot.

Even so, Xu Qing was already very satisfied with the first poison he concocted in his life.

After he dried it into powder, he named it Corpse Destruction Powder.

As for the Yang medicinal herbs, although there were very few of them, Xu Qing still managed to concoct some semi-finished medicinal liquids with the help of the Yin-Yang Extreme Art.

A small portion of it was mixed with the seven-leaf grass and it had some effects of suppressing anomalous substances. Xu Qing had once asked Grandmaster Bai if he could cooperate on the prescription so it would have a better effect on Captain Lei.

Grandmaster Bai told him that other than the heavenfate flower, everything else was useless. As for his prescription, it would eventually lose its effectiveness.

That was indeed the case. Even though Captain Lei took his medicine on time every day, the weakness in his body could still be seen by the naked eye. When Xu Qing saw this, he fell silent.

On this day, when the two of them were eating, Captain Lei wanted to say something but hesitated. In the end, he still told Xu Qing that he felt that it was unsuitable for him to continue staying at the scavenger campsite. He was prepared to buy residency rights in a nearby city in the near future.

"Kid, I know that your path will definitely not stop at this small campsite. Your future will be even further, so I won't ask you to retire with me."

The instant he heard this, Xu Qing, who was eating, paused. After a long while, he lowered his head and fell silent for a very long time before asking softly:

"Are you coming back?"

"Of course, I'll come back occasionally." Captain Lei smiled and raised his hand. This was the first time he touched Xu Qing's head. He sighed with emotion in his heart. He didn't want Xu Qing to risk his life in the jungle of the forbidden zone for him again.

Xu Qing instinctively wanted to avoid it but he glanced at Captain Lei and didn't move. This allowed Captain Lei's hand to land on his head smoothly. As he gently stroked it, Captain Lei laughed.

"Besides, you can come and visit me anytime."

When Xu Qing heard this, he nodded heavily.

That night, Xu Qing opened his eyes many times during his cultivation and looked toward Captain Lei's room.

This emotion was only buried in the depths of Xu Qing's heart after a few days. Every day, other than attending lessons at Grandmaster Bai's place, he spent more time in the forbidden zone, trying his best to find the heavenfate flower.

However, as Grandmaster Bai had said, this flower could only be chanced upon by luck.

[Outside Of Time](#)

Chapter 47: A Person's Dusk (1)

The eastern part of the Nanhuang Continent.

The season was now summer. As the rain gradually increased, the weather also slowly turned hot.

"It's May." On this day, the sun was high in the sky. After Xu Qing left Grandmaster Bai's tent, he looked up at the blue sky and the dazzling sun as he mumbled.

Unknowingly, two months had passed since he arrived at the campsite.

He recalled his experience in Bloodrain City two months ago. It seemed like a long time had passed but it was still vivid in Xu Qing's heart.

However, compared to when he lived in the slums more than two months ago, the changes in his body were already extremely great.

Regardless of whether it was the increase in his cultivation or the harvest from his knowledge of plants and vegetation, everything made Xu Qing feel that he was constantly growing.

During this period of time, under Captain Lei's sumptuous meals, he ate a lot of meat. Hence, his body, which was originally small and skinny, became slightly more refined.

Also, because he cultivated the Mountains and Seas Art, his masculine qi and blood were extremely exuberant. The aura he instinctively emitted gave off a sharp feeling.

Maybe it was because he had copied the saber move in the temple but Xu Qing's eyes were much brighter than others. Also, the more he copied, the more he looked like that.

This was especially so after he went to Grandmaster Bai's place for lessons. The accumulation of knowledge also gave him a scholarly temperament.

All of this caused Xu Qing, whose hands were used to being clean, to be unable to conceal his delicate features even though the dirt on his face hadn't been washed off.

This could be seen from the way the courtesans in the tents with feathers on them would often call out to him with their beautiful eyes.

However, Xu Qing didn't care about these. His mood had been somewhat gloomy these few days.

On one hand, they hadn't found the heavenfate flower. On the other hand, Captain Lei's frailty and old age were becoming increasingly apparent.

Hence, Xu Qing visited the jungle in the forbidden zone less and less. Every day, after Grandmaster Bai's lesson ended, he would instinctively head to his residence. Even though he spent most of his time cultivating alone, Xu Qing would feel much more at ease when he sensed Captain Lei next door.

He cherished dinner time every night even more.

Today was the same. Xu Qing, who was walking silently on the campsite, didn't bother with the scavengers in the surroundings. He first headed to the general store.

When the busy little girl saw his figure, she immediately ran behind the counter and took out a flask of wine, passing it to Xu Qing.

She was already used to this period of time. Every day, Xu Qing would come to buy alcohol at this time.

"Thank you." Xu Qing said softly and glanced at the scar on the little girl's face.

Although she had a hideous scar, the little girl was very optimistic. She smiled at Xu Qing and was about to say something when she was called over by the other scavengers.

Xu Qing didn't mind. He took the flask and prepared to leave but his back view fell into the little girl's peripheral vision. She hurriedly exchanged a few words with the scavenger and ran to the gate. When she saw that Xu Qing was about to leave, she suddenly shouted.

"Brother Kid."

Xu Qing stopped in his tracks. When he turned his head, he saw the little girl running over quickly.

After she got close to Xu Qing, she stretched out her right hand and opened it. There was a piece of candy inside.

"I don't know why you've been depressed recently but every time I'm unhappy, my mother will give me candy. As I eat, I feel happier."

"This is my last piece of candy. This is for you."

As the little girl spoke, she was afraid that Xu Qing would reject her, so she directly placed it in his hand and quickly ran toward the shop. When she reached the shop's entrance, she turned her head and looked at Xu Qing as she shouted loudly.

"Brother Kid, you have to be happy!"

Xu Qing stood there in a daze as he watched the little girl's figure enter the shop. He lowered his head and looked at the candy in his hand. After a long time... he carefully kept this piece of candy.

On the way back, there was a commotion at the campsite. From afar, Xu Qing saw two carriages arriving one after another.

Regardless of whether it was the carriage's brand-new nature or the horses' sturdiness, the number of carriages in front of him far exceeded what Xu Qing had seen in the past. Not only were there guards but there were also three to five middle-aged men among them. The spirit energy fluctuations emanating from their bodies were clearly powerful.

They were not the core of the convoy.

As the convoy arrived, a group of young men and women walked out. They were all around the age of 16 or 17 years old. They had tall and broad strides and were dressed in bright clothes. Their skin was fair and the men were handsome while the women were beautiful.

Their identities and backgrounds were all extraordinary. At that moment, they seemed to despise the mess on the campsite, so they set up camp outside the campsite. The feeling of being bossy was very obvious.

Moreover, each of them seemed to have a follower by their side. About a hundred people were serving these fifteen to sixteen youths.

As for the second convoy behind them, although they weren't bad compared to the former, they were inferior.

Also, it was obvious that they knew the identities of those young men and women. Hence, the second convoy wasn't willing to come into contact with the former and avoided them as they entered the campsite. Most of the people walking down were very low-key.

Xu Qing swept his gaze across them.

The convoy at the campsite would appear every few days. They would either issue missions or enter the forbidden zone alone. There were all kinds of people in there.

This was also the foundation of the scavenger campsite's existence. Xu Qing was used to it.

When he returned to his residence, he saw Captain Lei exercising in the courtyard. Under the sunlight, there was a hint of twilight on Captain Lei's body, causing Xu Qing's heart to sink even more.

"You bought me alcohol again. Not bad, not bad." Captain Lei smiled and spoke when he noticed the alcohol flask in Xu Qing's hand.

"Alright, go and clean up the kitchen. I'll go out for a stroll and buy some ingredients back." Captain Lei said and left with his hands behind his back.

[Outside Of Time](#)

Chapter 48: A Person's Dusk (2)

This was the agreement he had made with Xu Qing. He had to buy the ingredients. Xu Qing didn't refuse but he paid even more rent.

It was as though this was how he got along with Captain Lei.

On this day, Captain Lei returned earlier than usual. Xu Qing had just finished cleaning up the kitchen when he returned with some meat. He smiled at Xu Qing and started cooking.

Just like before, Xu Qing sat at the side and studied. However, as he watched, he felt that something was amiss... If this continued, the time for dinner would be brought forward and it wouldn't be in the evening anymore.

After realizing this, Xu Qing understood something in his heart. He looked at the busy Captain Lei and wanted to say something but hesitated. In the end, he fell silent.

As usual, Captain Lei chatted as he cooked.

During this short period of time, before dusk arrived, the dishes were already cooked. After placing them on the table, Captain Lei looked at the silent Xu Qing and patted his head.

"Kid, I've already bought the right to enter Songtao City. I'll pack my luggage later. I'll be leaving tomorrow morning." Captain Lei picked up the wine he had bought for him for a long time and took a big gulp.

Xu Qing's movements were stiff. After a moment of silence, he lowered his head and spoke softly.

"So soon?"

Captain Lei didn't speak. After a long time, he laughed.

"Actually, I've bought it a long time ago but I didn't tell you. You don't have to be so reluctant. In this world, there's no banquet that doesn't end." As Captain Lei spoke, he took another big gulp of alcohol.

"Come, let's eat."

Xu Qing looked at the aged Captain Lei and silently picked up his chopsticks to eat. The food today should be very delicious but it no longer had any taste in Xu Qing's mouth.

Captain Lei watched all of this and sighed softly in his heart. However, he still wore a smile on his face as he talked about the trivial matters on the campsite. After the time it takes for an incense stick to burn out, Xu Qing suddenly spoke.

"Aren't we going to wait for Cross and Luan Tooth? They should be back soon."

"I'm not waiting anymore. If I return, I'll probably end up like you, adding to my sadness. Besides, if you have time in the future, just come and visit me."

Captain Lei took out his pipe and took a puff. The smoke he exhaled covered his expression, making him look a little hazy.

Captain Lei finished this meal very quickly.

Even after he left to pack his luggage, Xu Qing still sat there silently. He looked at the food on the table and couldn't eat anymore. After a long while, he stood up. This was the first time he didn't wash the bowls and chopsticks. Instead, he went straight to Captain Lei's room.

"Are you really leaving?" Xu Qing asked softly.

"Don't be so sad. I'm going to stay in the city. You should be happy for me."

Captain Lei laughed and called Xu Qing over to help him fold his clothes.

Xu Qing walked over silently. He first washed his hands carefully before folding them neatly.

With his help, Captain Lei's luggage was packed very quickly. He didn't want most of his stuff and left them for Xu Qing.

"This house is also yours."

"I'll pay the rent." Xu Qing said seriously.

Captain Lei smiled when he heard that but he didn't talk about this topic. Instead, he pulled Xu Qing over and sat there. As time passed, he told Xu Qing about the characters of the scavengers at the campsite. He also emphasized on the camp leader.

"The camp leader of the campsite isn't a simple person. His background is the Diamond Sect."

"As for the Diamond Sect, it is the number one faction in this large area. Dozens of cities and campsites are under their control. Their ancestor is even a Foundation Establishment expert. In the future, you have to be vigilant against him at all times when you are here."

At that point, it was already very late at night outside. Xu Qing noticed the fatigue on Captain Lei's face and silently stood up to leave.

Looking at his figure, Captain Lei sighed softly after a long time.

This night was also the first night Xu Qing didn't cultivate during this period of time.

He sat there and stared blankly at the night sky outside until he saw the first rays of dawn.

"It passed so quickly." As Xu Qing mumbled, a sense of melancholy filled his heart. He didn't leave the room at this time like he usually did. Instead, he waited until he heard the sound of Captain Lei opening the door before he slowly walked out.

The first rays of the morning sun scattered down. The old and young people in the courtyard looked at each other.

"Kid, I'm leaving." After a long time, a smile appeared on Captain Lei's face.

"I'll send you off."

"No need. Hurry up and go to class."

"I'll send you off."

"You..."

"I'll send you off." Xu Qing looked at Captain Lei and reiterated.

Captain Lei looked at Xu Qing. After a long while, he revealed a helpless expression and nodded.

Just like that, the two of them, one old and one young, left the campsite in the early morning while the other scavengers were still unconscious. When they passed by Grandmaster Bai's tent, Xu Qing ran over.

Grandmaster Bai hadn't arrived yet, and the youth, Chen Feiyuan, wasn't around either. Only Tingyu was there, carrying the medical books on her back.

"I'll have to trouble you to help me apply for a day off." After seeing Tingyu, Xu Qing quickly spoke up. He then bowed and turned to leave.

Tingyu was a little surprised. When she walked out, she saw Xu Qing and Captain Lei's departing figures.

The light of the rising sun shone on the ground, illuminating the area in front of Xu Qing and Captain Lei. It also enveloped their figures as they moved further and further away.

On the way, Xu Qing took the baggage from Captain Lei and carried it on his back in silence.

Captain Lei had mixed feelings as he looked at the stubborn youth. He wanted to talk about the trivial matters of the campsite's neighbors as usual but after a few sentences, he couldn't continue.

In the silence, the two of them walked into the mountain where they had come from and to the place where they had once rested. At that time, it was also the two of them. Captain Lei stood tall and straight in front while Xu Qing cautiously followed behind.

The former was as profound as a sword, while the latter was as reclusive as a wolf.

Today, Xu Qing was at the front while Captain Lei was at the back.

The former was tall and straight like a mountain peak, while the latter was in his twilight years.

Here, under Xu Qing's insistence, he carried the old Captain Lei, just like back then in the jungle.

Captain Lei sighed softly in his heart. He looked at the side profile of the youth in front of him and spoke softly after a moment of silence.

"After this, you have to pay more attention to those scavengers on the campsite."

"I know that your combat strength is very strong now but you can't underestimate them. Scavengers are desperadoes. To them, unscrupulous means are a common occurrence..."

"At night, don't forget to feed those dogs. These little fellows are the most trustworthy ones on the campsite."

"Also, you have to remember to eat. Don't eat cold food. Don't find cooking or heating troublesome. Eat it after it's hot... You're still growing, so you can't be careless."

"Otherwise, when you get older in the future, you'll know how tough it is. Oh right, don't sleep on the bed boards in the future. Don't be afraid of dirtying the bedding. Remember to bask in the sun after you're done bathing."

"And..."

Captain Lei spoke softly. His words were fragmented and contained deep concern.

Xu Qing carried Captain Lei on his back and nodded lightly, memorizing the other party's words.

As Captain Lei spoke, he fell into a deep sleep due to his weak body. As he listened to the snoring behind him, Xu Qing's footsteps also became gentler.

He tried his best not to jump. Even if he had to take a detour, he would maintain a steady pace.

Just like that, he walked through the wilderness with Captain Lei on his back and bypassed the basin. When dusk arrived, as the sky darkened, their silhouettes were elongated from the corner of his eyes. A city then appeared before Xu Qing's eyes.

It was also at that moment that Captain Lei woke up. He looked at the city gate and spoke softly after a long time.

"We're here."

Xu Qing let out a soft 'uh-huh' and felt a tightness in his chest. Under Captain Lei's request, he gently put him down.

After taking the baggage from Xu Qing, Captain Lei looked at the city gate and then at Xu Qing. After a moment of silence, he smiled and lifted his hand to stroke Xu Qing's head, messing up his hair a little.

"Kid, you can go back now. If you miss an old man like me in the future, you can come over anytime. I live in the southern part of the city, on Shuiqing Road, with the number 'Three'." With that, Captain Lei took his luggage and walked toward the city gate.

Xu Qing stood there and looked at Captain Lei who was walking further and further away. He had so many things to say in his heart but he didn't know what to say. He could only stare blankly.

It wasn't until he reached the city gate and submitted his entry permit that Captain Lei suddenly turned his head.

He cast a deep glance at Xu Qing and waved his hand. Under the urging of the city guards, he walked into the city and disappeared.

Xu Qing's expression was desolate. He waited for a very long time... When dusk fell and the city gate closed, his heart instantly felt empty.

"Take care..." After a long while, Xu Qing mumbled and turned around bitterly. The feeling of loneliness once again filled his entire body.

As night fell, his lonely figure was gradually covered.

He walked toward the wilderness alone, toward the basin alone, and toward the mountains alone.

Further and further...

[Outside Of Time](#)

Chapter 49: A Noblewoman Is Like Jade

In the mountain forest at night, wolf howls echoed.

However, this sound only appeared for a moment before gradually dissipating. It was as though an existence even more ferocious than them was walking over alone.

As Xu Qing walked in the pitch-black darkness, the disappointment in his heart couldn't be quickly suppressed. He, who had grown up in the slums, was already used to parting ways. However, this time, it was exceptionally deep.

That feeling of emptiness in his heart caused his mood to sink. In the silence, his figure grew increasingly bleak.

When dawn was about to arrive, he, who had been walking the entire night, saw the campsite under the dawn.

At the campsite, the lights were sparse.

Xu Qing thought back to the past. No matter how late it was when he returned from the forbidden zone, he would still be able to see the lights of a residence lighting up for him.

However, today, one lamp was forever missing in that direction.

The feeling of loneliness grew even stronger. Xu Qing silently entered the campsite and walked to the pitch-black residence. He pushed the door open and saw the dozen or so wild dogs in the courtyard. They were also looking at him quietly.

He lifted his head and saw that the three houses were completely black.

There was no sign of human habitation, no lights, no breath.

Yesterday's dinner was still lingering in the kitchen.

Xu Qing walked in and looked at the three sets of chopsticks and bowls on the table. After being in a daze for a long time, he sat there silently and lowered his head to eat the cold food.

One mouthful, one mouthful. After he slowly swallowed it, he washed the tableware and cleaned the kitchen. He then took a deep breath and returned to his room.

He closed his eyes and started cultivating.

At that moment, outside the courtyard, the purple-robed old man and his servant were standing there. Their gazes seemed to be able to penetrate everything and saw Xu Qing inside.

They were all silent. After a long time, the purple-robed old man sighed softly.

"He's a loyal child."

"Old Master Seventh, should we give him a token?" The servant looked at the purple-robed old man.

"Wait until we get the Cloud Dream Flower that Grandmaster Bai wants from the forbidden zone." With that, the purple-robed old man's body slowly dissipated. The servant beside him nodded and also dissipated.

...

Just like this, a night passed.

The next morning, when Xu Qing walked out of his room, he instinctively glanced at Captain Lei's residence. However, he quickly retracted his gaze and silently headed to Grandmaster Bai's place for lessons before returning quietly.

He cooked a meal by himself. There were still three sets of chopsticks and bowls on the table as he ate silently.

From time to time, he would raise his head and look at the seat that Captain Lei used to be in. There... was one less person there, as well as fewer voices.

The entire meal was very quiet. The feeling of loneliness once again filled Xu Qing's heart but he forcefully suppressed it.

After he finished eating alone and cleared the table, he took out the food for the wild dogs and threw it in the courtyard.

Xu Qing returned to his room and continued to meditate as he watched the pack of wild dogs eat.

Days passed just like this. Very soon, it was the sixth day since Captain Lei left.

Xu Qing had already buried the disappointment in his heart and regained his usual coldness. However, if one were to take a closer look, they would discover that his coldness had become even colder.

Other than when he went to Grandmaster Bai's class, Xu Qing's sense of vigilance had always existed during other times. He wasn't unfamiliar with this state of vigilance because in the past six years, this... was his normal state.

Like a lone wolf.

He cultivated more diligently than before. It was as though this was the only way he could find the loneliness he was familiar with as soon as possible. On the seventh night, Xu Qing's cultivation broke through.

He had broken through from the fourth level of the Mountains and Seas Art to the fifth level.

As the thumping sounds echoed in his body, the wild dogs outside also felt the suppression and retreated while trembling. It was as though there was an aura in Xu Qing's room that caused them to revere in fear.

This time around, the ringing in Xu Qing's body continued for a very long time.

In fact, from the perspective of time, it surpassed the previous time.

A full hour later, when the filth seeping out of the pores of Xu Qing's body had reached its limit, his eyes suddenly opened.

At that moment, a flash of purple light appeared in the entire room.

At the instant he opened his eyes, cracking sounds echoed out from Xu Qing's body. It was as though his bones were growing and his flesh and blood were being pulled. The feeling of being torn apart was also felt.

However, to Xu Qing, all of this was still within his tolerance.

Amidst his calm tolerance, another hour passed. When all of this slowly ended, Xu Qing stood up. The clothes he was wearing had shortened by a portion.

His slender body didn't look like it had been reborn but there were major changes. It was very refined.

This was especially so for his appearance. As there were no anomalous substances in his body, it was completely pure.

This made his original delicate appearance even more obvious. Coupled with his coldness, there was a strange charm that even dirt couldn't conceal.

However, Xu Qing didn't care about this. He walked out of the house and tested his speed. After that, he threw a punch into the air and there seemed to be muffled thunder echoing. His strength was so great that it was more than twice that of the previous four levels!

What was even more shocking was that when his fist landed, the spirit energy fluctuations were intense and there was a faint shadow of a wolf with fangs in its mouth. It looked like a malicious, powerful ghost!

"This is the power of one xiao?" As the surrounding wild dogs trembled, Xu Qing glanced at his fist and muttered.

It was mentioned in the Mountains and Seas Art that for every level, one's strength would grow by that of a tiger's and the five tigers would form one xiao. Two xiaos would form one kui.

However, after some thought, Xu Qing felt that his description didn't match the Mountains and Seas Art.

Right now, his strength had probably reached the level of seven or eight tigers and his speed was the same. He was even confident that when he cultivated the Mountains and Seas Art to the sixth level, he would possess the strength of two xiaos in advance.

"It should be due to the effects of the purple crystal and the knife strike from the statue in the temple."

Xu Qing mumbled in his heart and looked at his right hand. After a moment of silence, he slowly lifted his hand. The image of the divine statue striking out with its blade appeared in his mind and the airflow in the surroundings seemed to be gathering towards him.

A long time later, Xu Qing didn't continue but instead, he lowered his right hand.

"Just a little more."

Xu Qing could sense that his attempt at copying wasn't enough. At this moment, he took a deep breath and was about to return to his room. However, under the moonlight, when he turned around, he lowered his head and saw his shadow.

When he broke through earlier, all the anomalous substances had fused into his shadow as usual. At that moment, his entire body was pure from the inside out and there was no hint of anomalous substances at all.

Staring at the shadow, Xu Qing suddenly had an idea.

"I wonder if I can control this shadow..."

After this thought appeared in his mind, it grew deeper and deeper, causing Xu Qing to keep staring at it. In his heart, he tried to make the shadow flick his fingers but after trying for a long time, he still couldn't do it.

This made Xu Qing sigh softly. He felt that he was too greedy and was about to give up. However, at that moment... the hand of the shadow suddenly trembled!

This scene caused Xu Qing's eyes to widen abruptly as his breathing grew hurried.

He was sure that his eyes weren't playing tricks on him. Also, he didn't move his hand earlier, so he increased the intensity of his gaze and tried it out.

A long time later, when Xu Qing didn't lift his hand, his shadow's hand... lifted slightly!

In just a moment, Xu Qing felt as though his head was about to explode. It was completely empty.

It took him a long time to recover from the headache. As he panted, his eyes revealed an intense light.

"I can control it!" Xu Qing lowered his head and stared deeply at the shadow.

He knew that although it was very difficult to control it now, the emptiness in his brain earlier and the headache now told him that this matter had consumed a lot of energy.

However, he believed that as he became more proficient and his cultivation improved, sooner or later, he would be able to flexibly control his shadow.

By that time, the shadow... would become his unexpected weapon!

"I hope that day will come soon." Xu Qing took a deep breath and rubbed his aching forehead. He then returned to his room and sat cross-legged in meditation.

He only recovered halfway in the morning and his expression was somewhat dispirited.

He forcefully pulled himself together and changed into a set of slightly larger old clothes before rushing to Grandmaster Bai's tent.

Chen Feiyuan wasn't around and Grandmaster Bai wasn't here yet. Only Tingyu was there, carrying the medical book on her back. When she saw Xu Qing coming, she casually raised her hand to greet him before continuing to recite.

It had been like this during this period of time. Xu Qing had heard from Tingyu that some time ago, among the young men and women who came from the outside world, there were friends of Chen Feiyuan. Hence, he often applied for leave to go over and play.

As for Grandmaster Bai, it was unknown what he was busy with during this period of time. He would arrive later every day and would leave very quickly after the lesson ended.

Xu Qing nodded and sat at the side. He then took out his bamboo slip and silently reviewed yesterday's homework. Tingyu, who had lowered her head after greeting him, suddenly lifted her head and looked at Xu Qing suspiciously.

"Why do I feel like there are some changes to your body?"

Xu Qing didn't lift his head and continued revising.

Tingyu's bright eyes widened as she carefully inspected it.

Very soon, Grandmaster Bai arrived, so she could only give up. However, during the lesson today, she glanced at Xu Qing many times.

If it was in the past, Grandmaster Bai would be strict. However, he seemed to have something on his mind today. After giving a few words of reprimand, he ignored it.

After he finished his lesson and arranged the content for tomorrow's assessment, Grandmaster Bai left in a hurry.

After the teacher left, Xu Qing got up and was about to leave when Tingyu's body moved and blocked the door.

Xu Qing frowned slightly and looked at Tingyu.

Tingyu wasn't willing to be outdone. She lifted her head and stared at Xu Qing with her large eyes that were like the stars and moon. Her beautiful eyes swept across his height and face as she spoke in a daze.

"I know it. You've grown taller."

"Yea." Xu Qing nodded and bypassed Tingyu, wanting to leave. However, Tingyu's body swayed and stopped him once again. Her eyes which were as bright as the stars contained curiosity.

"Kid, your face is so dirty every day. I don't even know what you look like. You've changed again today. No, I have to wipe your face for you and see what you look like."

As Tingyu spoke, she took out her handkerchief and was about to act.

Xu Qing was repulsed and was about to retreat when Tingyu snorted.

"Kid, I helped you apply for leave. This is a favor!"

Xu Qing's movements paused. Taking advantage of the moment where he paused, Tingyu's body instantly arrived. The handkerchief in her hand fluctuated with spirit energy and became moist, gently wiping Xu Qing's face.

His wiped cheeks instantly revealed his fair skin. Xu Qing grew impatient and wanted to forcefully leave.

"Kid, I'm your senior sister!" Tingyu shouted again and the weight of the word 'senior sister' was clearly very heavy, causing Xu Qing's body to involuntarily stiffen.

Tingyu's eyes were curved like crescent moons, hiding a hint of spirit and craftiness. This time, her speed was even faster. She took a handkerchief and wiped Xu Qing's face here and there.

Although Xu Qing strongly rejected the term 'senior sister', he ultimately didn't dodge it.

Just like that, as Tingyu wiped, Xu Qing's face was slowly revealed.

Tingyu's movements also gradually slowed down. Her eyes were wide open as she stared blankly at Xu Qing's appearance. For some reason, sunlight appeared in her mind.

This was the first time in six years that Xu Qing's face was clean. This made him feel extremely uncomfortable. Taking advantage of the fact that Tingyu was still in a daze, he immediately circled around and quickly exited the tent.

As the sunlight shone on his face, Xu Qing's discomfort grew even more intense. He felt as though he was walking naked outside.

Hence, he lowered his head and picked up the mud on the ground, smearing it on his face. Only then did he heave a sigh of relief. He felt much more comfortable in his heart and regained his indifference as he walked toward the forbidden zone.

It was only after he left that Tingyu, who was in the tent, let out a long breath and muttered.

"Mm, he looks pretty good."

As she spoke, she subconsciously lifted the tent's door and looked at Xu Qing's back view which was far away. Her elegant and exquisite little face was slightly red as she looked around in confusion.

"He's much better looking than Chen Feiyuan. No, Chen Feiyuan is completely incomparable to him."

Outside Of Time

Chapter 50: Walking in the Night Without Needing Light

On that day, Tingyu, who had lived in Purple Earth since she was young, rarely knew the hardships of the human world, had a dream.

In the dream, Chen Feiyuan was fiercely making things difficult for Xu Qing. She was very angry.

It was early in the morning when Tingyu woke up from her dream. Her mood was a little different from the past. When she arrived at Grandmaster Bai's tent, she sat there and recited the pharmacopoeia, feeling a little distracted. From time to time, she would raise her head and look outside the tent.

Until she saw... Chen Feiyuan.

Tingyu's eyelids fluttered as she recalled the dream from yesterday.

Chen Feiyuan yawned and rubbed his eyes as he lifted the tent flap. Just as he was about to sit down beside Tingyu, the futon was moved away by her.

Chen Feiyuan was stunned and looked at Tingyu.

"What are you doing?"

"Sit there." Tingyu couldn't be bothered with Chen Feiyuan and pointed to where Xu Qing usually sat.

"Why?!" Chen Feiyuan instantly got annoyed and his eyes widened.

"Based on the fact that you don't work hard in your studies, based on the fact that you've been taking leave frequently during this period of time, I'm annoyed by you sitting here. Is that enough?"

Tingyu glared at him with her almond-shaped eyes and spoke very quickly, causing Chen Feiyuan to be stunned once again. After a while, he mumbled a few words to himself as though he didn't dare to provoke the other party. He then sat at Xu Qing's seat gloomily.

"Sigh, Tingyu, you..." After sitting down, Chen Feiyuan was about to speak but before he could finish, Tingyu's eyes revealed hostility.

"Don't say the word 'sigh'. What if someone hears it and misunderstands?"

"Ah? What's wrong with the word 'Sigh'?" Just when Chen Feiyuan was at a loss, the tent's door opened and Xu Qing walked in.

Upon seeing Xu Qing, two shallow dimples appeared on Tingyu's face. She then revealed a smile and patted the futon that originally belonged to Chen Feiyuan.

"Junior Brother, sit here."

Xu Qing was stunned and so was Chen Feiyuan.

"What are you waiting for? Teacher is coming. Hurry up and come over." Tingyu urged.

Xu Qing was a little hesitant. He looked at Tingyu and then at Chen Feiyuan who was sitting in his seat in a daze.

At that moment, it was indeed time for Grandmaster Bai to arrive. Hence, Xu Qing could only walk to Tingyu's side and sit at the seat that used to belong to Chen Feiyuan.

Chen Feiyuan was dumbfounded. He pointed at Xu Qing and was about to speak when Tingyu turned and glared fiercely at him.

"Shut up!"

"I haven't even spoken yet." Chen Feiyuan was about to cry. He felt that it was unfair and was about to continue speaking when the tent door opened and Grandmaster Bai walked in.

Chen Feiyuan could only hold back what he wanted to say and sat there angrily. On the other hand, Tingyu seemed to be very comfortable. As for Xu Qing, he felt a little uncomfortable and felt like he was sitting on pins and needles.

As for Grandmaster Bai, after he walked in and saw where Xu Qing was sitting, he then looked at Tingyu and Chen Feiyuan who looked like a punching bag. A hint of a smile appeared on his face but he didn't disturb them and started the assessment.

As usual, Chen Feiyuan stuttered as he was reprimanded. As for Tingyu, she proudly completed the assessment and looked at Xu Qing with anticipation.

Xu Qing's answer was even more perfect. He even asked some of his questions during the assessment.

The entire process made Chen Feiyuan extremely depressed.

So, when today's lesson ended, he was the first to run out of the tent. He felt that he had been discriminated against today.

Xu Qing felt uncomfortable sitting there during class. At that moment, he stood up and bowed to Grandmaster Bai. Just when he was about to leave, Tingyu called out to him.

"Junior Brother, why is your face dirty again?"

Tingyu took out her handkerchief and wanted to try wiping his face. However, Xu Qing frowned slightly and immediately dodged, leaving in a hurry.

After he left, Tingyu's expression was a little aggrieved as she looked at Grandmaster Bai, who was watching the show.

"Teacher, why is this kid so dirty every day? I helped him out of goodwill."

Grandmaster Bai laughed and patted the girl's head dotingly.

"Because for people who live in misery and danger, it's not a good thing to attract too much attention."

Tingyu fell into deep thought and nodded.

Xu Qing didn't hear Grandmaster Bai's words but his thoughts were the same as what Grandmaster Bai said.

Growing up in the slums, he understood that the less attention he attracted, the safer he would be. Also, the people around him were mostly filthy. If he was different from the others, he would be like a torch in the dark night, adding to the danger.

This was his rule of survival since he was young. As for those who didn't do so, unless their strength was extremely high, they wouldn't be able to live for long.

It was precisely because of this that Xu Qing developed the habit of not cleaning. He needed to blend into the environment and make himself inconspicuous.

For example, the hunter hiding would only show his edge when he attacked.

At that moment, Xu Qing, who had left the campsite and arrived at the boundary of the forbidden zone was the same. He picked up some rotten leaves from the jungle, crushed them and smeared them on his body. He tried his best to blend into nature as he slowly stepped into the forbidden zone.

Although Captain Lei had gone to the city to stay, Xu Qing didn't give up on searching for the heavenfate flower.

Also, with the increase in his cultivation base and strength, coupled with his increasingly rich experience and knowledge about plants, as well as his usual vigilance, he encountered fewer dangers in the outer perimeter of the forbidden zone's jungle.

Hence, the range of Xu Qing's exploration no longer stopped at the temple. Instead, he slowly probed deeper.

Even though the danger was greater, this tempering also allowed his combat strength to continuously increase. His herbs harvest also became richer.

However, just like the outer region, although there were more herbs in the depths, the majority of them were still evil yin poison grass.

As there was a lot of poisonous grass, Xu Qing's knowledge of herbs was mostly on the concoction of poison. As he improved, he also gained a few more types of poison powder.

For this reason, he specially went to a clothing shop and bought a jacket filled with pockets. Each pocket contained a different poison.

As for the black gloves he had obtained from the Bloodshadow Team Captain's leather pouch, Xu Qing put them on as well. He gradually felt that they were more comfortable to wear.

Not only could this glove increase the lethality of his punches but it also had a certain degree of anti-poisoning effects. Therefore, together with the dagger Cross had given him, it became a daily weapon like the iron stick on him.

At that moment, as the sun was about to set, Xu Qing, who had ended a day of tempering and researching poison, walked out of the small lab in the canyon. After tidying up his weapons and poison powder, he bent down and headed straight for the temple.

Every time before he left the forbidden zone, he would make a trip to the temple to search for the scar removal stone.

Although he had failed many times before, he had inquired about this stone and knew that it was naturally formed. It was colorful and could occasionally be seen. Hence, he persisted until this time...

When he arrived at the temple, under the afterglow of the setting sun, he saw that there seemed to be a flash of seven-colored light between the brows of the stone statue head in the distance.

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed as he rapidly surveyed his surroundings. He then checked his hidden arrangements from before. After discovering that everything was fine, he jumped to the top of a temple and squatted down to observe again.

After confirming that there was really no danger here, he headed straight for the stone statue's head.

When he arrived, he saw a seven-colored stone growing in the crack between his brows.

This stone should have been ordinary in the past but in this mysterious temple, it had changed over time.

Xu Qing hurriedly took it down and quickly searched the entire temple cluster. He found six such stones.

Looking at the stone in his hand, Xu Qing let out a long sigh of relief. He had finally found one of the two items, the scar removal stone.

After Xu Qing carefully kept the six small stones, he cast a deep glance at the cluster of temples. After that, he bent down and bowed before quickly leaving, disappearing into the distant jungle.

As he sped along, Xu Qing's figure leaped up and down on the tree crowns.

As the night fell and the roars of the ferocious beasts echoed, his pace didn't change. His speed was sometimes fast and sometimes slow as he got closer and closer to the edge of the jungle.

Not long later, when Xu Qing jumped onto a tree trunk and wanted to borrow the momentum to move forward, the silt on the ground at the side suddenly exploded. A giant-horn python suddenly rushed out and opened its mouth, wanting to devour him.

Its body was even larger than what he had encountered back at the campsite.

Faced with such a surprise attack, Xu Qing's expression didn't change at all. He merely lifted his right hand and flicked out a finger, tapping on the head of the giant-horn python that was trying to devour him.

With a bang, the giant-horn python couldn't endure it anymore. As soon as it let out a mournful roar, it abruptly stopped. Its tough skin was unable to block Xu Qing's strength and its head was torn apart, its flesh crumbling.

This collapse spread throughout his body in the blink of an eye until he turned into a ball of blood mist.

Only his gallbladder... remained unscathed as it fell from the blood mist. Xu Qing then grabbed it and left.

Just like this, at dawn, Xu Qing walked out of the jungle and returned to the campsite.

At the pitch-black campsite, there were very few lights at this time. As Xu Qing walked, the happy mood that he had when he obtained the small stone also became gloomy as he got closer to his residence.

His residence was also pitch-black. Only the dozen or so wild dogs lay on the ground and wagged their tails after sensing his return.

After Xu Qing entered the courtyard, he habitually glanced at Captain Lei's room and silently walked into the kitchen.

He heated the leftover food from yesterday and swallowed it as though it was to fill his stomach. After he was done, he returned to his room and sighed softly.

"I wonder how Captain Lei is doing in the city. He should be doing very well. If I still can't find the heavenfate flower in the end, I'll save up some spirit coins and buy a spot too."

Xu Qing mumbled and closed his eyes, allowing himself to sink into cultivation.

The next day, Xu Qing went to class as usual.

Tingyu returned to normal but the seat was still left for him. As for Chen Feiyuan, he had also resigned himself to fate and could only watch as Xu Qing sat in his original seat.

As the lesson ended, Tingyu no longer spoke up to wipe his face. There was more understanding in her gaze.

Xu Qing felt this understanding. He lowered his head slightly and bid farewell to Grandmaster Bai.

When he left the tent, Xu Qing touched the small stone in his leather pouch and walked toward the general store where the little girl was at.

However, before he could get close, he saw a group of strangers outside the general store from afar!

Their clothes were very special. Their black robes were embroidered with blood-colored suns and a murderous and bloody aura was especially obvious on them.