

Time 571

Chapter 571: Strengths and weaknesses

Jiang Chen's determined voice resounded throughout the Assignment Hall, attracting the attention of many disciples around him, but he didn't seem to care about any of it as he kept staring seriously at Shun Long.

Shun Long shook his head since he knew that it was impossible to change their minds.

At the same time, he also understood that Jiang Chen was right.

If he could take on a D-rank faction mission by himself, especially one that required him to take down a middle rank 5 magic beast, how could the rest of them try and complete the easier missions?

In the end, all 4 of them could be considered geniuses even in the Holy sect, and even if they weren't monsters at the same level as Shun Long right now, they couldn't simply allow themselves to fall behind him.

If Shun Long could complete a faction mission by himself with his cultivation at the early rank 3 of the Nascent Soul, how could the rest of them shy away from it when they were more than 2 minor ranks higher than him?

This was also the same reason why Liu Mei had accepted the 'Blood Absorption art' from Little Black.

She didn't want to fall too behind from Shun Long, and she knew that that was the only way to keep walking by his side.

Besides, would the rest of the factions in the outer court really wait for them to gradually grow stronger? Which of the other disciples of the Holy sect wasn't doing their best to grow as well? After all, the sect itself was no different than a huge competition.

However, understanding which risks to take was still important. Although Shun Long understood Jiang Chen's and the rest's thoughts, he wasn't planning on letting them needlessly risk their lives in the future.

"Let's go!"

Shun Long's calm voice resounded in everyone's ears, as he turned around and left the Assignment Hall, heading towards the entrance of the sect.

When they arrived in front of the entrance of the enormous white palace at the peak of the Holy mountain, Shun Long turned around and looked at Liu Mei and the rest of his group before he said in a serious voice

"No matter what, make sure to stay alive. I don't care if you push yourselves to the limits or not, a month from now, I expect each of you to return safely here."

As he finished speaking, Shun Long stared at Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian for a few moments, before he turned his gaze towards Xie Xingyi and finally Liu Mei who was looking at him with a sweet gaze.

Shun Long clearly understood, that even though Jiang Chen was most likely the strongest one out of those 4 right now, he and Bai Longtian would be in the most danger during their missions, which was why he warned the 2 of them like this.

This was because both of them had actually chosen the same type of missions, to eradicate a den of thieves where the bandit leaders of those dens had much higher cultivation bases than them, while the bandit leaders' subordinates were also said to be strong as well.

However, that wasn't the only reason why Shun Long felt that the 2 of them were going to be in danger this time compared to Liu Mei and Xingyi.

After all, Liu Mei and Xie Xingyi had also chosen extremely difficult missions for their own levels, and their missions' difficulty didn't pale in front of Jiang Chen's and Bai Longtian's missions.

Instead, it was because Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian didn't have any powerful ways to escape from their opponents if they ended up in a tough spot.

Shun Long knew that Liu Mei not only had the pendant that Elder Xuan had given to her as a welcome present, but she was also wearing the peak rank 1 star-rank translucent armor beneath her robes, while Xie Xingyi actually had the Vanishing Shadows unique physique.

Xie Xingyi's physique was not only suited towards stealth and assassination, but it was also perfect when she needed to escape from a dangerous situation. Although nothing was truly perfect and there were plenty of ways to counter that as well, Shun Long understood that it wasn't easy to lock down someone who had the Vanishing Shadows unique physique if they were prepared.

However, Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian were completely different from the 2 girls.

Although each one of them also had a unique physique and they were also considered monsters in their own regards, they didn't have a way to escape like Liu Mei and Xie Xingyi did.

Even though Jiang Chen's attack, control, and speed were all at the peak of his level, especially when he activated both his 'Eternal Darkness physique' and used his 'Demonic Wings' to augment his speed, while Bai Longtian's attack, defense, and speed were practically unmatched for cultivators at the same level, especially when he activated his 'Golden Buddha unique physique', if they were caught in a bad situation and they didn't try to escape in time, they truly may die.

However, Shun Long wasn't willing to see either of them dying.

Almost as if they had guessed Shun Long's thoughts, Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian both nodded their heads as they looked at him, before Jiang Chen's lips actually formed a rare smile as his voice resounded in everyone's ears

"Don't worry. I promise that even without my bloodline, I still won't die to a bunch of trash regardless of their cultivation level. You shouldn't die either."

"Brother Shun, the same goes for me. My Golden Buddha unique physique isn't that soft for me to die so easily. I am more worried about you instead."

Shun Long shook his head and smiled when he heard Jiang Chen's and Bai Longtian's determined tones as they spoke.

Shaking his head, he turned his eyes towards Liu Mei and Xie Xingyi who were looking at him from the side, and with a smile on his face he said

"Alright, let's go then. If any of you return before the 1-month period is over, you can go and take a look at the Dao Tower inside the Holy city. One month later... we will take on the C-rank faction mission together!"

Chapter 572: Let's see who can climb the highest

"Long-ge, what is the Dao Tower?"

Liu Mei asked in a confused voice as she looked at Shun Long, obviously having never heard of this name before.

Xie Xingyi had a curious look in her eyes as well. For Shun Long to tell them to take a look at a certain place when they have enough time, that place must certainly have something extraordinary.

Nodding his head, Shun Long saw how everyone seemed to be curious about it as he started explaining

"The Dao Tower is an enormous tower at the center of the Holy city that allows one to train their own Dao.

One's cultivation base, qi purity, unique physique, their martial skills and everything else are all completely suppressed inside the tower, leaving you with nothing but your own Dao.

Inside the Dao Tower, you can fight with many other cultivators, not just from those inside the region of the Holy sect, but everywhere around the central region.

The more fights you win, the higher your rank will rise inside the tower, allowing you to fight with even stronger opponents.

Thousands of cultivators from the surrounding cities, and even the outer and inner disciples of the sect also go to train themselves there. So, if you finish your mission before the 1 month period is over, all of you should go and take a look at the Dao Tower.

The receptionists inside the Dao Tower will explain things to you in more detail when you get there."

A deep look flashed through everyone's eyes when they heard Shun Long explaining the Dao Tower's use, while Jiang Chen's and Bai Longtian's eyes seemed to be filled with fighting intent as they turned their eyes towards the Holy city at the foot of the Holy mountain.

It was too bad that the Holy city looked like nothing but a small dot in their eyes from the Holy mountain's peak.

Jiang Chen also felt slightly regretful that he had spent 1 week inside the Holy city holed up inside an inn increasing his cultivation, instead of taking a walk around the Holy city.

He had been planning to take a look around the Holy city after he broke through to the peak of rank 5 of the Nascent Soul, but by the time he finished his breakthrough, it was already the appointed time for him to meet with Shun Long and the rest at the peak of the mountain.

Liu Mei was the first one to return to her senses, as she looked at the small black dot at the foot of the Holy mountain, before she turned her eyes towards Shun Long and hugged him tightly as she said

"Long-ge... stay safe. I will be back in less than a month!"

Shun Long smiled warmly and hugged Liu Mei back for a few moments, feeling her gentle breath on his neck.

Turning her attention towards Xie Xingyi, Bai Longtian, and Jiang Chen, Liu Mei flashed a dazzling smile towards them before she said

"I will see you guys in 1 month. Hehe, let's take a look at the Dao Tower that Long-ge mentioned and see which of us can climb the highest."

Without even mentioning their missions, almost as if it was already assured that all of them would succeed, Liu Mei's eyes were filled with a rare look of fighting intent as she looked at Xie Xingyi, Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian, before she started flying towards the east.

A similar look appeared in Xie Xingyi's eyes a moment later as she stared at Liu Mei's figure that was flying on the horizon, before she turned her eyes towards Shun Long and flashed him a smile that could cause the downfall of a kingdom, her blond hair waving behind her as she said

"Brother Long... good luck! I will see you in 1 month!"

Without waiting for a response, Xingyi then shot to the sky, as she flew towards the northeast.

Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian both looked at the 2 girls, and unwilling to fall behind them, both of them looked at Shun Long and said

"Don't die! I will be waiting for you."

"Brother Shun, stay safe!"

Shun Long smiled as he saw Jiang Chen and Bai Longtian both turning around and leaving at the same time, almost as if they were competing against each other.

It had only been one month, but Shun Long could feel that it wasn't just himself, but each one of them as well that were also growing stronger.

He could also feel that his faction was growing stronger at such a rate, that even some of the stronger factions inside the sect would be alarmed if they knew about it.

After sensing Little Silver's figure above the clouds that followed after Liu Mei secretly, Shun Long turned his attention towards the Holy city as he thought to himself

"I need to buy a map first. Preferably one that covers the entire territory of the Holy sect!"

Thus, without any hesitation, he flew straight towards the small black dot at the foot of the Holy mountain.

Although he roughly knew the location of the 'Giant Crane forest' that he had to travel to in order for him to hunt the 'Poison-tongued Toad', since the mission on the 'Mission board' described where the 'Giant Crane forest' was located, in the end, it was only a rough description of the forest's location.

Obtaining a detailed map to be aware of the most dangerous places that one had to cross when traveling through the central region, like the 'Flame Lion's' canyon that Shun Long had crossed along with Ying Gui to get to Yanzhu city was extremely important.

Half an hour later, Shun Long had already entered the Holy city and arrived in front of the huge 'White tiger chamber of commerce'.

After taking a look at the third floor, Shun Long eventually spent 50.000 middle-grade spirit stones buying an extremely detailed map of the central region.

"50.000 middle-grade spirit stones for a single map... no wonder most cultivators don't even know where they are heading to when they travel with merchants!"

Although the map only covered the Holy sect's territory, it was precisely what Shun Long needed. Despite the price being extremely expensive, Shun Long still felt that it was worth it after taking a look at the contents of the map.

Chapter 573: Investigate everything!

The map itself covered a vast area of countless miles, showing more than a thousand cities within the Holy sect's territory.

After locating the 'Giant Crane forest' on the map and seeing that it was just a little more than 3000 miles away from the Holy city, Shun Long flew past the Holy city's gates as he headed towards the west where the forest was located.

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At the same time, inside the Holy sect, in a private room at the depths of the 'Administration Hall', the yellow-robed outer disciple from the 'Exchange counter' who had accepted Shun Long's mission, was now standing in front of a white-robed old man who had almost no hair left on his head.

The old man was staring at the young woman with a serious look on his face, before he asked in a solemn tone

"Did you find him?"

The yellow-robed young woman nodded her head seriously before she answered with a respectful bow

"I did, Elder Zhi. His name is Shun Long and he handed in the D-rank personal mission around an hour ago. Just like Elder Zhi requested, I have already verified that he is the person who killed Yan Wen from the Yan family before he eliminated the 2 slave traders, Dai Lim and Dai Hao."

Elder Zhi stood up from his seat with a furious look on his face as he looked at the young woman in front of him, before he said angrily

"Around an hour ago? Didn't I tell you to inform me immediately as soon as you learned of that bastard's name?"

The yellow-robed young woman trembled when she felt the aura of the furious peak rank 9 Dao King boring down on her, making her unable to breathe.

A few moments later, after the pressure that Elder Zhi emitted started to ease, the yellow-robed young woman from the Exchange counter gasped for a few moments as she tried to regain her breath, before she responded

"Elder Zhi, it's because Elder Gao was in the Assignment Hall today that I couldn't come earlier. Elder Zhi should understand, that if Elder Gao saw me leaving my post for no reason, I would be punished heavily!"

Indeed, although the young woman had informed Shun Long that Elder Zhi and Yan Xiang from the Yan family were both looking for him, she had only done that so that she wouldn't feel guilty when she ratted him out.

She wouldn't waste an hour before she informed Elder Zhi if there wasn't a good reason for that.

Elder Zhi seemed to have calmed down significantly when he heard the words 'Elder Gao', but he still snorted before he waved his hand, throwing a spatial ring towards the young woman.

Upon checking the contents of the spatial ring, the young woman was overjoyed as she hurriedly bowed and said

"Thank you Elder!"

"Leave."

Elder Zhi's cold voice was the only response that the young woman got, but she didn't seem to mind it as she accepted the spatial ring and left the Administration Hall without any delay.

After the young woman left the room, Elder Zhi took out a black-colored sect identifying token and injected his qi inside it.

A few moments later, a yellow-robed young man entered the private room at the depths of the Administration Hall, and looking at Elder Zhi who seemed to be waiting for him, the young man hurriedly bowed before he asked

"Master, did you ask for me?"

Nodding his head, Elder Zhi stared at the young man in front of him and said

"Changming, investigate an outer disciple named Shun Long. I want you to find out everything about him, including any faction that he may have joined, which people he has come in contact with, and if there is any family or clan, or some other power that is backing him. I want you to find everything about him within the next 2 weeks!"

The young man's eyes widened at Elder Zhi's sudden request, as he hadn't even heard of a person in the outer sect named Shun Long, so how could his master who didn't pay any attention to outer disciples know about a small fry?

His eyes however lit up a moment later as he remembered the young woman who had left his master's room a few moments ago, before he asked in a tone that was filled with realization

"Master, is this related to Yan Xiang's cousin, Yan Wen?"

The yellow-robed young man clearly knew his master's relationship with the Yan and the Zhu families of Yanzhu city, so it wasn't hard for him to put the pieces together and guess the reason behind his master's sudden interest.

Indeed, Elder Zhi nodded his head with a solemn look before he said

"He is the person who killed that little shit, Yan Wen. I still owe a favor to the Yan family's patriarch, so find out everything about that brat and let me know at once.

If it's not too hard, I may help them a bit, but if it's too hard, they can solve their own problems by themselves. I will simply provide them with a name and they can do the rest by themselves."

The yellow-robed young man bowed when he heard his master's words, as he hurriedly left the room.

He knew that although his master had a good relationship with the Yan and the Zhu family patriarchs, he wouldn't do anything that would risk his own life.

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4 days soon passed before Shun Long who was flying at full speed finally saw the outline of a huge forest in the distance ahead.

The forest seemed to span for thousands of miles, with huge black trees that reached more than 100 meters(330ft) in height.

As he approached closer and closer to the forest, Shun Long also noticed that tens of other cultivators that were gathered in groups were either entering or leaving the huge forest, or they had already set up camp a few hundred meters away from the forest's entrance.

A minute later, Shun Long had already arrived in front of the forest's entrance, when his eyes suddenly widened as his gaze fell on a group of 6 that was walking out of the forest.

5 of these 6 people were dressed in yellow robes that were identical to his own, indicating that they were disciples of the Holy sect as well, but what surprised Shun Long the most, was the 3 familiar faces that he spotted in this group.

The moment that those 3 saw him, auras that were filled with killing intent exploded out of their bodies as they locked on Shun Long all at the same time!

Chapter 574: Warm attitude?

The cultivators around them were startled when they felt the auras from the group of disciples from the Holy sect that were filled with killing intent, before they hurriedly opened up the distance between them, unwilling to be caught in the middle of a fight.

Shun Long narrowed his eyes as he looked at the 3 young men in front of him who were obviously emitting hostile auras filled with killing intent, and yet, he wasn't in a hurry to make a move, as he simply observed the rest of their group for a few moments.

The spiky-haired young man as well as the chubby-faced silver-haired young man who was standing next to him at the very front of the group, along with the blue-haired young man who was standing a step behind those 2 and was actually the only one who wasn't wearing the yellow robes of an outer disciple of the sect were all completely ignored by Shun Long, as he focused his gaze towards the rest of their group.

Even a month ago when he was just at the peak of rank 1 of the Nascent Soul, Shun Long had never been wary of the prince of the Shengtian dynasty, Sheng Huang, or Zhong Fang, the 'young lord' of the 'Mercenaries' Association'.

Even when Sheng Huang had threatened him to hand over his black, star-rank sword, right in front of the inner court's entrance, Shun Long had never viewed him as anything else but an idiot. Of course, anyone who lusted over his treasures was bound to not have a good ending.

As for the blue-haired young lord of the 'Golden Exchange firm' of the Night star continent, Hu Liu who was standing behind those 2, although Shun Long was surprised to see him here since he still

remembered that Hu Liu was actually the first one to fail the Holy sect's fourth test, after a moment of hesitation, a look of realization appeared in his eyes as he realized that Hu Liu had probably chosen to become a 'follower' of either Sheng Huang or Zhong Fang, and follow them inside the Holy sect.

For a genius who was previously ranked 4th in the 'Night star continent's' rankings, to lower his head and become someone else's follower, it was obvious how much allure the Holy sect held towards him.

"Eh? A fellow disciple?"

A young man's surprised voice broke the silence in front of the 'Giant Crane forest's' entrance, as he looked at the 2 young men by his side who were emitting an intense aura filled with hostility towards the newcomer, before he spotted the yellow robes that Shun Long was wearing.

The young man wasn't surprised that another outer disciple from the Holy sect would appear in this place, since the 'Giant Crane forest' was a place that many disciples traveled to, either to hunt magic beasts or look for rare treasures or other medicinal herbs.

Instead, he was surprised by Sheng Huang's and Zhong Fang's sudden change in their attitudes. As for Hu Liu, the yellow-robed young man didn't seem to care about him, as he looked at Sheng Huang and asked curiously

"Junior brother Sheng, do you know him?"

At the same time that the young man spoke, Shun Long turned his attention towards him as well, and looked at him seriously for a few moments.

Unlike Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang who had only recently advanced to the middle of rank 4 in the Nascent Soul, or Hu Liu who was still at the early rank 4, Shun Long could sense that the yellow-robed young man who had spoken just now was on an entirely different level, as he had clearly reached the middle of rank 6 in the Nascent Soul, forcing even Shun Long to look at him seriously.

After all, an outer disciple of the Holy sect who had reached the middle of rank 6 in the Nascent Soul, was definitely a genius who could easily fight against normal cultivators at the peak of rank 6 in the Nascent Soul as well.

Aside from this young man, Shun Long also noticed a young woman standing next to him, who was actually at the early rank 6, as well as a robust young man who seemed to be almost as big as Zhong Fang himself, and his cultivation was at the peak of rank 5 in the Nascent Soul.

From the 6 people in their group, Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang, as well as Hu Liu, were definitely the 3 weakest.

Turning his eyes towards the young man who had just spoken Sheng Huang nodded his head, but he didn't retract the hostile look from his eyes as he answered

"Yes senior brother. His name is Shun Long! He is the person who has stolen something that's mine and refused to give it back!"

The young man's eyes lit up when he heard the name Shun Long, as he inspected the yellow-robed young man in front of him seriously for a few moments. As for Sheng Huang's claim that Shun Long had stolen something from him, the young man didn't seem to have even heard it.

At the same time, the young woman that was standing next to the young man looked at Shun Long with a renewed look of interest in her eyes before she said

"Shun Long? Are you the person who rejected Qian Tao's invitation only to form your own faction in the sect? Hehe, how cute.

Eh? Why can't I sense your cultivation?"

The young woman was even more surprised when she realized that she couldn't sense any qi at all coming from Shun Long's body. Naturally, since he had completely retracted his aura, forget about an early rank 6 Nascent Soul stage cultivator like her, even peak Dao Kings wouldn't be able to sense the slightest bit of qi fluctuations coming from Shun Long's body right now.

At the same time, Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang looked at Shun Long with gazes that didn't conceal their killing intent, but they knew that they couldn't do anything to him right now.

Since they had come to the 'Giant Crane forest' for a mission, their senior brother had already activated the 'Memory recording formation' on his sect identifying token, and they knew that they couldn't simply attack a fellow disciple of the Holy sect in broad daylight.

Besides, even if they managed to persuade the yellow-robed young man, there were too many cultivators around them who would see that scene.

However, the yellow-robed young man didn't seem to have even noticed Sheng Huang's and Zhong Fang's hostile gazes towards Shun Long as he kept inspecting him with a serious look in his eyes. A moment later, the young man suddenly smiled as he took a step forward forward and spoke in a warm tone, his next words stunning both Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang who turned to look at the yellow-robed young man with gazes filled with disbelief

"Junior brother Shun Long huh? I heard that you and a kid named Jiang Chen both have immortal-grade bloodlines. How enviable. I suggest that you be careful inside the 'Giant Crane forest', since there are many rank 5 and even rank 6 magic beasts lurking in this place."

Without waiting for a response, the yellow-robed young man waved his hand, as he stepped past Shun Long and flew away, with the yellow-robed young woman and the robust young man following right behind him.

Chapter 575: Furious Sheng Huang

Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang, as well as Hu Liu, were all stunned when they saw their 'senior brother' suddenly leaving along with the other 2.

A moment later, Sheng Huang gritted his teeth as he and Zhong Fang ignored Shun Long and followed behind them as well.

As for Hu Liu, he was the only one who stood there in a daze as he looked at Shun Long with an expression of disbelief on his face.

He had already heard about Shun Long from Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang, and he already knew that he had somehow managed to pass the test to enter the Holy sect with a cultivation at the peak of rank 1 in the Nascent Soul.

For someone like Hu Liu who had failed to pass the test with his cultivation that was at the peak of rank 3 in the Nascent Soul, this wasn't something that he could accept so easily, especially when it was done from someone from the same continent as him.

He could accept Sheng Huang, Zhong Fang, Bai Longtian, and even Xie Xingyi who had managed to pass the fourth test, since Xie Xingyi had a unique physique that she hadn't shown to anyone for so many years, and Bai Longtian had comprehended the Dao of the Buddha which he had kept hidden from everyone as well, but a peak rank 1 Nascent Soul stage cultivator passing the test was an entirely different thing.

At the same time, the moment that he saw Shun Long's face, Hu Liu's eyes had instantly widened, as he recognized him as the person who was riding on the 'Silver-winged panther king' back in the 'Golden Exchange firm' in the Night star continent.

Although Hu Liu was someone arrogant who usually didn't put almost anyone from the Night star continent in his eyes, he clearly remembered Shun Long's face due to how rare the magic beast that he was riding on was.

After all, a peak rank 5 'Silver-winged panther king' was extremely rare, not inferior to rarity or strength when it was compared to his own 'Blue-tailed thunder leopard', and both magic beasts were actually at the peak of rank 5 as well, which made Hu Liu take a few more looks at the 2 people on the panther's back.

And yet, it was still nothing but a few more looks in the end.

Even though Hu Liu had heard of Shun Long's name from Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang already, and he knew that he was someone who also came from the 'Night star continent' just like them, he had never expected that it would be the same person he had randomly met in the 'Golden Exchange firm' and he had even bullied his magic beast!

Regardless of how unwilling he was to accept this though, Hu Liu knew that this abnormal situation was the truth.

Staring at Shun Long for a few more moments, he then snorted before he shot to the sky, chasing after Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang who had already started to disappear on the horizon.

Although he wanted to completely destroy Shun Long, Hu Liu knew that his identity as a follower of an outer disciple didn't allow him to lay a hand on another disciple of the Holy sect.

If he did so, forget about staying in the Holy sect, the disciples of the Enforcement Hall would come to him and would personally take his life without any hesitation.

Besides, he had also clearly heard just now that Shun Long had an immortal-grade bloodline, and Hu Liu could easily guess that this was the reason why Shun Long had managed to pass the Holy sect's test.

Additionally, although he didn't want to admit it, Hu Liu knew that even if Shun Long was just at the peak of rank 1 in the Nascent Soul, he still wouldn't be his match if Shun Long activated his immortal-grade bloodline.

"No, perhaps even Zhong Fang wouldn't be able to fight against him. If anyone, it's most likely going to be just Sheng Huang who would be able to match him in terms of strength!"

This thought appeared in the blue-haired man's mind as he threw one last look at Shun Long, and chased after Sheng Huang at full speed.

At the same time, Shun Long had a cold look in his eyes as he stared at Hu Liu's disappearing figure, without saying anything during the entire time.

Unlike Hu Liu who had never put that incident in the 'Golden Exchange firm's' entrance in his mind, Shun Long hadn't forgotten about it or the injuries that the 'Blue-tailed thunder leopard' had caused to Little Silver just for Hu Liu's own amusement.

He could also clearly feel the intense hostility coming from Hu Liu's body, that was only inferior to the hostility that Sheng Huang had towards him.

However, despite the fact that Hu Liu was just a follower and not an outer court disciple, Shun Long knew that he was still considered a member of the Holy sect.

"It doesn't matter. Even if you leave the Holy sect in the future, I will still come and find you myself."

Shun Long's voice was practically inaudible, but the surrounding cultivators who had turned their gazes towards him all trembled when they felt the dense killing intent coming from his body.

It was obvious that whether it was Sheng Huang or Hu Liu or even Zhong Fang, he wasn't planning to let any of them live in the future.

Without any hesitation, Shun Long stopped staring at Hu Liu's disappearing figure, as he turned around and flew towards the 'Giant Crane's forest's' entrance.

The most important thing right now was still to locate the middle rank 5 'Poison-tongued Toad' and complete the mission.

At the same time that Shun Long entered the 'Giant Crane forest', Sheng Huang and Zhong Fang had just caught up with their 2 senior brothers and their senior sister, when Sheng Huang turned to look at his senior brother in the lead, before his angry voice sounded in everyone's ears

"Senior brother Feng, I clearly told you that there is enmity between me and that bastard, and yet, not only did you not help me, but you even told him to be careful inside the 'Giant Crane forest'? Are you trying to insult me, or is it that you don't care about my opinion at all?"

Chapter 576: Senior brother Feng's anger

'Senior brother Feng' snorted as he looked at the furious Sheng Huang, while the young woman who was at the early rank 6 and the robust young man who was at the peak of rank 5 in the Nascent Soul both looked at him with cold gazes.

Seeing that Sheng Huang wasn't willing to back away until he received an answer, 'Senior brother Feng' stopped activating his 'Memory recording formation' on his sect token now that they were a distance away from the 'Giant Crane forest', before he said in a cold voice

"Junior brother Sheng, I think you have been too used to get everything happening the way that you want them to, that you clearly don't realize what's going.

Didn't I just give you a chance to deal with junior brother Shun Long just now?

It's you who wasted that chance by chasing after me and asking me for an explanation instead of stalking him when he enters the forest!

You have already lost your chance, because your pride made you think that everyone else needs to listen to your wishes.

However, this isn't the 'Night star continent', and you are nothing more than an ordinary new outer disciple of the sect! Know your place!"

As he finished speaking, senior brother Feng's aura at the middle of rank 6 in the Nascent Soul exploded out from his body, forcing Sheng Huang to circulate his cultivation to the fullest to try and resist it.

However, even when he used his Dao of Destruction along with his cultivation at the middle of rank 4 in the Nascent Soul to protect himself and resist the powerful aura coming from 'senior brother Feng', Sheng Huang realized that he was still unable to resist it completely as he was actually being pushed back just from senior brother Feng's aura alone.

Zhong Fang and Hu Liu were both terrified as they immediately stepped back, unwilling to get caught in all of this.

Senior brother Feng had only shown a gentle side so far, but it seems that his anger wasn't something that they could deal with!

If even Sheng Huang who was known as the strongest genius of the Night star continent couldn't resist this, then they wouldn't fare much better than him either!

Taking a few steps forward in the sky, 'senior brother Feng' kept pressuring Sheng Huang with his aura forcing him to step back repeatedly before he continued

"You think I'm trying to insult you?

So what?

Do you want me to kill him in broad daylight in front of hundreds of other cultivators simply so that I can solve your so-called enmity with him?

Don't forget, it's you who has enmity with junior brother Shun Long, not me! Why would I offend him for no reason?

No, why would I offend someone with an immortal-grade bloodline for you in the first place?

Even if you are stronger than him right now due to your cultivation and your Dao of Destruction, I heard that that kid isn't inferior to you even in terms of the Dao that you have both comprehended, since he has comprehended the Dao of Space as well.

Do you understand now?

Your value in my eyes isn't enough to make me help you against someone like that!"

Sheng Huang's gaze widened in disbelief as he looked at 'senior brother Feng' who had finally stopped advancing towards him.

At that moment, the yellow-robed young woman who was at the early rank 6 in the Nascent Soul looked at Sheng Huang and said mockingly

"Junior brother Sheng, you probably think that you are some genius who only appears once in every thousand years, but the truth is that you are not.

This is the central region, not your tiny Night star continent.

Although your Dao of Destruction is rare, there are far too many geniuses inside the sect who have comprehended rare Daos, some of which are actually far beyond your imagination!

The only reason we are traveling with you right now, is to help you get experience in faction missions since we are members of the same faction.

However, don't be mistaken. You are nothing more than a slightly more talented junior brother in my eyes! Your comprehension of your Dao of Destruction isn't enough yet to put you at the very top of the sect to compete with the strongest disciples. Perhaps you may be able to do so in the future, but right now... hehehe, you need to start using your brain a little more."

Sheng Huang's face was flushed red, unknown if it was due to anger or embarrassment, as he looked at his 2 senior brothers and his senior sister who were all staring at him with different looks in their eyes.

A moment later, the look in his eyes had turned cold as he suddenly shot forward all by himself, leaving the group of 5 behind him.

After a moment of hesitation, Zhong Fang followed after him as well, and Hu Liu did the same.

...

At the same time, Shun Long had already entered the 'Giant Crane forest', as he spread his soul sense around him, looking out for any potential dangers.

He had already learned from the 2 years that he and Liu Mei had spent in the 'Ten-thousand beasts' mountain range', that the most dangerous things in these types of forests weren't the magic beasts that were lurking around, but the groups of other cultivators instead.

As long as they met someone who they believed was carrying enough wealth to take such a risk, regardless of that person's identity, those groups would immediately attack him.

Thus, Shun Long knew, that in this place, his identity as a disciple of the Holy sect wouldn't help him in the slightest.

After staying still and looking at the trees around him for a few moments, Shun Long mumbled to himself in a surprised voice

"This place is probably even bigger than the 'Ten-thousand beasts' mountain range'. No wonder others find it almost impossible to locate specific magic beasts in this place!"

Chapter 577: Searching for the 'Poison-tongued Toad'

With how big this forest was along with the huge black trees that reached over 100 meters(330ft) in height and completely blocked everyone's vision, it was only natural that most outer disciples would struggle to locate specific magic beasts in this place.

This was even more so for those disciples that had no idea about the environment that each magic beast chose to live in or the habits that those beasts naturally had.

They would most likely end up looking for days, or perhaps even weeks without finding the magic beast that they were looking for.

After all, hunting specific middle rank 5 magic beasts was completely different from hunting any random middle rank 5 beast.

The first required knowledge of that certain magic beast, that was on par with that of most beast tamers', and wasn't something that any random disciple could do at a whim.

This was why those missions that required disciples to hunt certain magic beasts rewarded them with many more sect points compared to other missions at the same rank, since the faction that accepted that mission would require at least a talented alchemist who had plenty of knowledge about that specific magic beast, or a beast tamer to help guide them!

Taking a deep breath, Shun Long completely suppressed his aura, not emitting the slightest qi fluctuations from his body while minimizing the area of his soul sense to the bare minimum, making sure that he wouldn't be accidentally spotted by any powerful magic beast, before he headed deeper inside the forest.

As he carefully walked deeper inside the forest, Shun Long saw more than a few aerial peak rank 4 and early rank 5 magic beasts flying in the sky above him, but he avoided every single one of them as his eyes kept examining his surroundings seriously.

"The Poison-tongued Toad' prefers to live in environments close to water, since that's its only way to hunt other magic beasts. As long as there is a lake or a pond in this place, the toad shouldn't be too far away from it either."

Unlike most other outer disciples, Shun Long's knowledge of the 'Poison-tongued Toad' was more than sufficient for him to hunt down the magic beast.

The only thing that was restricting him, was his current knowledge of the layout of the 'Giant Crane forest'.

Regardless of whether he felt confident to even take on a peak rank 5 magic beast with the remaining bottles of poison from the 'Soul Poisoning hell grass' that he had inside his herb garden, Shun Long also knew that there were chances for rank 6 magic beasts to live in this forest, so he wouldn't carelessly head deeper inside if he could avoid that.

3 hours later, Shun Long's eyes lit up as he spotted a small lake not too far away from his location.

However, he didn't head towards the lake right away, but instead, he climbed on top of one of the huge black trees around it, before he started to carefully examine the area around the lake instead.

A few minutes later, Shun Long shook his head with a disappointed expression as he thought to himself

"There are no traces of poison in this place and even the lake itself seems to be crystal clear. How unlucky..."

Shun Long had been hoping for the lake's waters to have been tainted with a slight purple color or for a few of the trees around the lake to have been affected by the toad's poison and start to decay, since those were the signs of a 'Poison-tongued Toad' living in this place.

Once the 'Poison-tongued Toad' hunted a magic beast, the poison from its tongue would spread through the lake itself, and Shun Long knew that in that case, it was simply impossible for the waters of the lake to be clear like this.

Knowing that the chances of a 'Poison-tongued Toad' to live here were practically zero, Shun Long didn't care if there was another rank 5 magic beast living inside the lake, as he turned around and left without any hesitation, heading deeper inside the forest.

Even though he felt slightly disappointed, he knew that the chances of finding the toad so quickly were extremely low.

In the blink of an eye a week passed.

During these 7 days, Shun Long had walked through more than half of the 'Giant Crane forest's' outer region but he had yet to spot a single 'Poison-tongued Toad'.

At this point, he had already started to wonder whether there were really any 'Poison-tongued Toads' inside the forest or if they had already been all hunted by others.

A few minutes later however, Shun Long's eyes abruptly lit up, as he spotted a few of the gigantic black trees in the distance ahead of him that seemed different from the others around them, as they were slowly turning into a purplish color instead.

As he walked closer to the trees, Shun Long noticed that the 'corroded' trees were surrounding a small pond whose waters had already turned into a deep purple color.

And yet, this purple color seemed to be extremely alluring for some reason, almost as if it was inviting everyone who laid his eyes on them to approach closer to them and enter the pond.

Even Shun Long was stunned for a moment, feeling as if something was trying to affect his spiritual sea and guide him to enter inside the small pond.

However, he simply snorted as his enormous spiritual sea easily dispersed the alluring effect of the purple waters without any issue.

What a joke!

Even if it was a middle rank 5 magic beast, it was simply impossible for it to bypass Shun Long's mental defenses so easily and affect his spiritual sea like that, after Shun Long had broken through to the Nascent Soul stage in body his qi and his body refinement.

After all, his spiritual sea had already doubled in size, and if another Nascent Soul stage cultivator could actually see it, it was very likely that they would piss themselves from terror, since its current size was far bigger than the spiritual sea of any middle-stage Nascent Soul stage cultivator as well.

Staring at the small pond in front of him, Shun Long actually smiled before he mumbled to himself "Finally found you!"

Chapter 578: Hunting the Poison-tongued Toad

Although he couldn't see the figure of the toad past the purple waters, Shun Long was completely certain that there was a 'Poison-tongued Toad' inside the pond in front of him.

With a deep look in his eyes, Shun Long first waved his hand and consumed a top-grade rank 5 'anti-toxin pill', and after circulating his 'Monarch's Hourglass', he actually flew straight towards the purple waters barely a moment later.

Perhaps if the 'Poison-tongued Toad' was a middle rank 5 magic beast that focused on mental attacks, like the rank 5 'Spellsinger bird' that had attacked Shun Long and Liu Mei in the past, then it was possible for its mental attacks to pose some trouble to the current Shun Long, but with just the mental effect that its poison had on the water of the pond, it was simply impossible for the toad's 'attack' to succeed.

Shun Long knew that the 'Poison-tongued Toad' wasn't directly attacking him just now, but that this was the way that it hunted its prey.

Any magic beast that entered the pond would immediately be affected by both its mental attack and the poison in the pond's waters, before the toad appeared and attacked as well.

This terrifying killer combo could take care of even other unsuspecting middle rank 5 magic beasts without too much trouble!

A few moments later, Shun Long entered the purple waters, when he suddenly felt the alluring effect that the water had in his mind become even more intense.

However, he didn't seem to mind as he headed deeper inside the pond! His spiritual sea churned the moment that he entered the pond, resisting the second wave of this mental attack almost effortlessly.

At the same time, Shun Long could feel the poison that had seeped inside the water that was now trying to slowly corrode his body, both from the inside as well as the outside.

His 'Monarch's Eternal body' however was strong enough to resist the effects of the poison from the 'Poison-tongued Toad', as most of the poison couldn't even break past his skin and entered his body. As for the tiny amounts of poison that successfully entered his body, that was equally futile as well, since Shun Long's top-grade rank 5 'anti-toxin' pill could even resist the poison from peak rank 5 magic beasts without any problems!

Even without consuming a top-grade rank 5 'anti-toxin' pill, Shun Long still believed that his 'Monarch's Eternal body' was strong enough to completely dispel the poison from the toad as well.

Suddenly, Shun Long's golden eyes lit up with a bright blue light, before another scene appeared in his mind.

With a smile on his face, Shun Long unhurriedly dodged to the side, only to see a long, dark purple tongue appearing in the spot where he was standing a moment ago.

The tongue had shot forward with extreme speed and so much power, that it could probably kill an early rank 5 magic beast in one hit, and yet, after failing to hit Shun Long, it retracted back at the speed of light.

Although he couldn't clearly see the dark purple tongue that had mixed with the purple waters almost seamlessly, Shun Long knew that this was the tongue of the 'Poison-tongued Toad'.

Shun Long knew that the poison that covered the Toad's tongue was strong enough to kill other middle rank 5 magic beasts as well, in less than a minute after it affected them.

Taking out the pitch-black, star-rank sword from the 'Stone of Time', he held it in front of him with his right hand as he headed deeper inside the pond.

A few moments later, another attack soon followed, as the long purple tongue appeared from the depths of the pond for the second time.

With a smile on his face, Shun Long didn't dodge the tongue's attack time, and instead, he grabbed the hilt of the black sword with both of his hands before he injected his qi inside it.

The mysterious runes and patterns on the sword's surface lit up at the same time, before a gigantic black-colored sword slash emerged from the sword's edge, heading towards the massive tongue in front of Shun Long!

"Thundergod's slash!"

Shun Long's Saint low-grade martial skill erupted from the black sword, colliding with the purple tongue head-on!

"GRAAAAAAAHHHHHH"

A cry filled with pain and rage resounded from the depths of the pond, as the dark purple tongue was instantly cut in half from Shun Long's terrifying slash.

Blood splattered from the dark purple tongue at the same time, making the water around Shun Long turn into a darker shade of purple, almost as if the poison around him had turned even more potent than before.

Shun Long however had a calm look in his golden eyes that were shining with a light blue light, as he headed deeper inside the pond even faster than before.

Although the tongue of the 'Poison-tongued Toad' was its strongest weapon, its strength lied in the power it held behind its attacks as well as its poison. In front of Shun Long's 'Thundergod's slash' and his star-rank sword, the Toad's tongue was effortlessly cut in half.

As he reached the depths of the pond, Shun Long finally saw the silhouette of a magic beast that was more than 4 meters (13ft) tall, with a fat body and a mouth full of blood.

The 'Poison-tongued Toad' instantly turned its 2 red eyes towards Shun Long and stared at him with a look of extreme rage and bloodlust, before it suddenly jumped towards him with its large mouth wide open, almost as if it was intending to eat him alive.

Shun Long's golden eyes lit up with an azure light that was even brighter than before, as he mumbled to himself

"Time Prison!"

The giant toad was instantly frozen in place, as Shun Long forcibly halted the flow of time around it, placing it in a temporary time prison.

Swinging the black sword in his hand for the second time, the runes and patterns on the sword's surface lit up once again, before a gigantic black-colored sword slash that was even bigger than the first one emerged from the sword's edge, and headed directly towards the toad's neck.

Blood splattered in the depths of the purple pond, as the head of the large middle rank 5 magic beast was severed from its body with a single sword slash.

Chapter 579: A terrified Liao Changming

Shun Long watched as the 'Poison-tongued Toad's' headless body seemed to have lost its balance, as it slowly floated upwards towards the pond's surface, along with its severed head.

Just like that, a middle rank 5 magic beast that normally needed a whole group of outer court disciples of the Holy sect that were at least at the early rank 6 of the Nascent Soul in order to hunt it down, had actually died.

Not staying inside the pond any longer Shun Long first swam toward the surface. before he collected the body of the 'Poison-tongued Toad' and removed its beast core.

"Sigh, no wonder those faction missions reward so many sect points for those magic beasts. I had to look for an entire week just to locate a single 'Poison-tongued Toad', and I only found one by luck in the end."

Staring at the beast core in his hands, Shun Long let out a long breath before he placed it in his spatial ring, as he then turned around and headed towards the forest's entrance.

Even though he had spent the past week inside the 'Giant Crane forest' looking for the 'Poison-tongued Toad's' location, he had mostly walked around the forest's outer region and hadn't gone too deep inside.

Otherwise, the risk of meeting with powerful magic beasts would be much higher, and even with the poison from the 'Soul poisoning hell grass', Shun Long wasn't confident in taking care of those magic beasts.

In less than 4 hours, Shun Long had arrived back at the forest's entrance, as he once again looked at the groups of cultivators that had set up camp outside the forest.

However, he wasn't the only one who looked at them, as the cultivators who had set up camp around the forest stared at him with wide eyes!

"Hey, did that person just come out from the forest by himself?"

"What? How is that even possible? This is the 'Giant Crane forest'! Even peak Nascent Soul stage cultivators would be careful to not wander too far by themselves in this place. Don't tell me that this person is actually a Dao King!"

"Wait! Look at his robes. Isn't he a disciple of the Holy sect? But... I can't seem to sense his cultivation at all!"

Although Shun Long could hear the crowd's discussions about him, he didn't pay any attention to them as he headed straight towards the Holy city's direction.

4 days quickly passed in the blink of an eye, as the outline of an enormous mountain finally appeared in Shun Long's eyes, along with the huge, familiar city on the mountain's foot.

Knowing that he still had 2 more weeks until he met up with Liu Mei and the rest in front of the Holy sect's entrance, Shun Long entered the Holy city and rent a courtyard inside an inn, as he decided to enter seclusion and start cultivating.

He wanted to spend the next 2 weeks trying to reach the peak of rank 3 in the Nascent Soul stage, as well as purify his qi balls.

Entering his room, Shun Long sat on the meditative cushion on the ground and closed his eyes, before he entered the foggy space in the 'Stone of Time'.

Taking out the 'Heaven Swallowing vine', Shun Long waved his hand, causing a mountain of middle-grade spirit stones to appear in front of him, before he let the enormous vine munch on hundreds of them all at once.

However, the Heaven Swallowing vine itself seemed to have been growing bigger and bigger as time passed, looking like it was also growing after eating so many spirit stones for so many years.

Of course, just like in the past, it didn't seem to matter if Shun Long fed the vine with low-grade or middle-grade spirit stones, as the vine absorbed them all at a speed much faster than any cultivator possibly could before it turned the qi inside them into an even purer type of qi that filled the foggy space around Shun Long.

...

At the same time that Shun Long had entered the inn and was cultivating inside his room in the Holy city trying to increase his cultivation quickly, inside Elder Zhi's private room in the depths of the Administration Hall in the Holy sect, a yellow-robed young man had entered inside and was standing in front of Elder Zhi with a fearful expression on his face.

Elder Zhi seemed surprised when he saw his disciple's reaction.

Although he knew that his personal disciple, Lian Changming was always respectful in front of him, the fear that he exhibited right now wasn't something that Elder Zhi was used to seeing, making him furrow his brows in confusion.

"Liao Changming, what's wrong? Do you have something to say or are you here to stare at me?"

Elder Zhi's angry voice resounded throughout the silent room, immediately bringing the yellow-robed young man back to his senses.

Naturally, Elder Zhi wasn't used to his disciple staring at him and daydreaming, and neither was he interested in staring at his disciple's face for so long either.

However, Liao Changming simply trembled as he looked at his master who seemed to be getting more and more displeased with him, before he took a deep breath and said in a grave voice

"Master... 2 weeks ago, you told me to investigate an outer disciple named Shun Long, remember?"

Elder Zhi nodded his head with a cold look in his eyes, before he asked in a serious voice

"What about him? Are you really that afraid after investigating a single, outer court disciple who has entered the sect for less than 3 months? Don't tell me that he has actually managed to join one of the top 100 factions in the outer court within just a couple of months of joining the sect. No, you still wouldn't be this afraid if that was the case..."

Elder Zhi seemed to have suddenly fallen into serious thoughts after seeing his disciple's face that had turned completely pale, before he looked at him and asked with a curious look in his eyes a moment later

"Could it be that that kid is actually backed by one of the big families and clans around the sect's territory?"

Chapter 580: A terrified Liao Changming (2)

Shaking his head vehemently, the look of fear in Liao Changming's eyes had turned even more intense as he looked at his master, before he took a deep breath and said a moment later

"M-Master... it's much worse than that!"

"Even worse?"

Elder Zhi's brows furrowed once again as he looked at his disciple, not understanding what was going on this time.

In his mind, Elder Zhi was already certain that he had already mentioned the worst-case scenario when he said that Shun Long was backed by one of the big families and clans around the Holy sect's territory.

Especially if it was one of the families that was ranked much higher than the Yan and the Zhu families, Elder Zhi knew that the Yan family would face quite a lot of trouble getting rid of Shun Long.

However, Liao Changming's words had given an uneasy feeling to Elder Zhi who turned to look at his trembling disciple with a cold look in his eyes, as the aura of a peak rank 9 Dao King burst out from his body before he said in a voice that shook the entire private room

"Changming, just spit it out!"

Liao Changming seemed to have regained his senses after feeling Elder Zhi's aura that was on the verge of exploding, and after taking a deep breath to press down his fear, he looked at Elder Zhi and said in a hesitant manner, as if he couldn't believe his own words

"Master... from what I found out, that Shun Long isn't backed by any powerful family or clan around the Holy sect's territory.

He is just a new outer disciple who joined the sect from the continents surrounding our central region 2 months ago... and he is just a rogue cultivator without any backing!"

"A rogue cultivator?"

Elder Zhi mused to himself, becoming even more surprised at how weak's Shun Long's background was.

However, Liao Changming didn't stop, as he then continued speaking despite seeing Elder Zhi's questioning gaze

"Not only that, but he is not a member of any of the top 100 factions either! Forget about the top 100 factions, he didn't even join the factions in the middle of the pack! He actually made his own faction instead, just a few days after he entered the sect..."

"Hahahaha!"

Elder Zhi's boisterous laughter resounded throughout the room, as the white-robed Elder looked at Liao Changming and said in a mocking tone

"A new disciple without any backing, and he simply decided to create his own faction after entering the sect for a few days? HAHHAHAHA! What kind of problem could a brat without any background pose?"

However, a moment later, Elder Zhi noticed that the look of fear hadn't disappeared from Liao Changming's eyes and had only grown more intense instead. Liao Changming then took another breath to calm himself down before he continued speaking in a slightly hesitant manner, almost as if he didn't know how to breach this subject

"M-Master... I found out that when that Shun Long passed the fourth test and entered the sect 2 months ago, he was just a peak rank 1 Nascent Soul stage cultivator!"

Before Elder Zhi could interrupt him, Liao Changming ignored the surprised look in his eyes as he then continued

"However, this is not everything! I heard that during the fourth test of the sect 2 months ago, that kid revealed an immortal-grade bloodline when he fought against a disciple at the peak of rank 4 in the Nascent Soul and even won against him!"

Elder Zhi's face instantly paled when he heard the words immortal-grade bloodline!

Even if most outer disciples didn't know about it, Elder Zhi clearly knew that the number of disciples who had an immortal-grade bloodline within the Holy sect could be counted on one hand... and Shun Long was actually one of them?

"No... it is certain that this will attract the attention of an inner-court Elder sooner or later! If that happens, things will be really bad. Forget about the Yan family, I may even lose my life if I am involved in this!"

Elder Zhi seemed to have lost his usual calmness as his eyes finally showed hints of panic when he heard that Shun Long actually had an immortal-grade bloodline.

He knew that the inner-court Elders of the sect wouldn't ignore someone with an immortal-grade bloodline for no reason.

Even if they hadn't taken note of Shun Long yet, they were bound to do so sooner or later!

"No wonder he didn't care about the Yan family! As long as he reveals his bloodline and attracts the attention of an inner court Elder, the Yan family will truly be nothing! Things are too complicated..."

Elder Zhi seemed to have understood why Liao Changming was so afraid just now, as he looked at his disciple and nodded his head as he waved his hand, before he said seriously

"I understand what's going on. You can leave!"

However, Elder Zhi's thoughts seemed to be just the beginning of all this, as Liao Changming shook his head and said in a voice that could no longer contain his fear

"Master... this is not everything!"

Before Elder Zhi could berate him, Liao Changming actually continued speaking, while even his legs had started to shake as he continued his next sentence

"Although that Shun Long created his own faction instead of joining another faction, his faction actually has 4 other members, and all of them are new outer disciples who entered the sect 2 months ago, just like him.

However, in these 2 months that they have been in the sect... all 4 of them have been accepted by 4 inner court Elders of the sect as personal disciples!"

Liao Changming's next words were like a bomb that exploded inside the private room, making Elder Zhi's eyes widen in disbelief.

Standing up from his seat, Elder Zhi's face had turned completely pale as he stared at his disciple who was now kneeling in front of him, almost as if he was waiting for his instructions.