

Timescape 221

Chapter 221: Seven Blood Eyes' Big Secret

In the east of South Phoenix, in Antlerville, a teleportation portal glittered with bright light as Xu Qing and the Captain materialized.

Like usual, Xu Qing had disguised himself, as had the Captain, who looked like a middle-aged man. As he walked off the teleportation portal, his legs seemed to be shaking.

Xu Qing was shocked. "Captain, why are you trembling?"

"Trembling? I would never! You're seeing things, Xu Qing." Clearing his throat, the Captain smacked his thighs.

Xu Qing didn't say anything. It didn't take much imagination to speculate that the Captain must have done something big back in the sect. And it must have been really big. Otherwise, the Captain, who was used to doing crazy things, wouldn't still be shaking.

But since the Captain didn't want to talk about it, Xu Qing wasn't going to pry. After leaving the teleportation portal, he looked around at Antlerville, which seemed both familiar and unfamiliar. This was the very same place he had passed through after razing the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect.

Thinking back to those days, he led the way through the city. Although the place was owned by Seven Blood Eyes, it was in a remote location surrounded by rugged terrain. Because of that, the place was a lot dirtier and more chaotic than the capital city. Noxious things could be seen everywhere, and on most street corners, emaciated figures huddled, staring with vacant eyes up into the sky. A constant pressure seemed to weigh down on everything.

As they walked along, no one caused problems for them. Though inhospitable places like this were usually full of violent people, those people also wanted to stay alive, and they weren't stupid. People like that usually instinctively knew who they could pick on and who they should avoid provoking. Xu Qing and the Captain were the latter.

"Aren't you curious, Xu Qing?" the Captain said as they reached the city's main gate. Producing an apple, he took a bite. He didn't seem concerned at all about their surroundings, and was more interested in why Xu Qing wasn't asking any questions.

"I'm curious," Xu Qing said, not bothering to look back at him. After leaving Antlerville, he looked in the direction of the city where he had lived for over six years until the eyes of the god above opened and turned the place into a forbidden region. Antlerville wasn't very far from that little city.

"You don't look curious at all.... Ah, whatever. Considering you used to work for me, and also owe me 50,000 spirit stones, I suppose I can let you in on the secret."

Looking furtively left and right, he lowered his voice and continued, "The patriarch is involved in a very complicated game of Go! I can't say more than that. If I did, the patriarch would most certainly skin me alive!"

“Oh,” Xu Qing said. Then he started moving faster. He didn’t plan to go to the ruined city. There was nothing for him there, and besides, during the Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior incident, he had settled matters with the grues there. There was no point in going there. Instead, he headed toward the scavenger basecamp.

The Captain kept pace. Spring had just come to the wilderness, but there was still a bit of snow on the ground. And the wind didn’t contain any of the pleasantness of spring. It wasn’t freezing, but it was cold.

Seeing that Xu Qing wasn’t going to ask any questions, the Captain couldn’t hold it in and said, “Let me tell you, Xu Qing, Master Sixth... is quite the old trickster. Everything that happened back on Seastar Island was actually an act!”

The Captain really wanted to explain what he had seen, but obviously didn’t dare to reveal everything.

Xu Qing nodded.

“Aiyaa! Xu Qing, I have to offer you some constructive criticism. This attitude of yours just won’t do!” Looking a bit irritated, he took a bite of his apple. “You really have no idea. What I saw in the Sixth Peak was absolutely astonishing. Completely unexpected. I’m telling you, this game of Go is being played on a board as large as heaven! I suppose it makes sense. The older someone gets, the more clever they become. The old fogies in Seven Blood Eyes are all the same. They can toy with you with their eyes closed.”

The Captain sighed emotionally.

Xu Qing frowned. He had no idea what the Captain was getting at, but could tell it had something to do with his latest escapade, whatever that was. Presumably it was related to the Sixth Peak. Then he thought back to how the Captain’s eyes had glittered when he looked at the Sixth Peak, and his heart started to pound.

“Captain, did you take a bite out of something on the Sixth Peak?”

The Captain’s eyes shot up in displeasure. “What do you mean ‘take a bite,’ huh? Is that the way you talk to your superiors, Deputy Captain?”

“I’m the director of the Seventh Peak’s Violent Crimes Division,” Xu Qing said.

“Furthermore, I’m your Elder Brother!” The Captain finished his apple and took out a pear, all the while looking at Xu Qing knowingly.

“I haven’t been formally accepted as an apprentice,” Xu Qing replied.

Ignoring the comment, the Captain looked down his nose and said, “Beyond all that, you still haven’t paid respects to Grand Highness!”

Xu Qing didn't say anything. As it turned out, he was having trouble out-talking the Captain this time. Therefore, he pretended not to have heard. Moving quickly, he was able to get from Antlerville to the scavenger basecamp in about an hour.

In fact, as they reached this point in their conversation, they passed over a mountain crest and found themselves looking down at the basecamp, and the pitch black jungle beyond it. From this vantage point, the forbidden region seemed covered with black clouds, within which lightning danced, occasionally striking down into the jungle below.

The Captain took a look at the forbidden region, and he seemed surprised. "What a big forbidden region. And there are fluctuations of godliness in it!"

Xu Qing nodded. Before, his cultivation base had been too low for him to sense godliness. But now, he could clearly sense such fluctuations in the jungle.

After a moment, Xu Qing looked away and focused on the basecamp. It looked as chaotic as it had before, and he could hear faint, unscrupulous laughter even from this distance. As he started walking down the mountain, the Captain cleared his throat and followed.

"I could only say so much earlier, little Ah Qing. Don't feel discouraged. This matter is too important for me to reveal any of the real details to you. You see, it pertains to the war. Seriously, you have no idea how shocked I was to see what's in the Sixth Peak.

"Let me just say that, under the leadership of this group of crafty old-timers, the future of Seven Blood Eyes is going to be a bright one.... You're really not curious at all? How about this: you say a few nice things, and I'll risk being skinned alive to tell you more details."

Clearly, the Captain had a secret that he wanted to share, but considering Xu Qing wasn't interested in hearing the details, he was starting to get a bit flustered.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, didn't say a word as he walked down the mountain and into the basecamp. Things were basically the same as he remembered. There was trash in every corner. Everything was dilapidated. Scavengers in animal skin jerkins were everywhere, some grimy and dirty, some covered in scars.

When Xu Qing and the Captain entered, the noisy camp slowly went quiet. At the same time, the scavengers backed away from them with fawning expressions on their faces. Of course, Xu Qing knew that those fawning expressions were fake. The scavengers were really studying them in the hopes of robbing them.

Xu Qing ignored them. He didn't see anyone familiar here. Two years had passed, and for most scavengers, that was like a lifetime.

Xu Qing stopped in front of his old house. Someone had taken it over. Sighing, he turned and left. As for the Captain, he looked at the house, and guessed that it must have been where Xu Qing lived in the past. He followed Xu Qing through the camp, and they were just about to leave it when the Captain noticed one particular tent that stood out.

A feather hung above the entrance.

The Captain had not grown up like Xu Qing, so he had no idea how things worked in slums and basecamps. That made him curious about the feathered tent. However, he soon noticed someone stepping out of the tent and buckling the belt on their pants, and everything clicked.

So that's how it is. It's like a brothel. But in scavenger basecamps, they use feathers instead of official signs. He was about to look away, when suddenly his eyes locked onto one of the feathers for a moment before looking at Xu Qing.

"Say, Xu Qing, remember back in the Merfolk Isles when I lost my lower half, and you offered to give me a feather...?" The Captain's eyes went wide.

Xu Qing looked back at him, produced an apple, took a bite, then walked off.

The Captain snorted coldly, glanced at the feather again, then hurried over to the tent. It was hard to say what he said, but shortly thereafter, he hurried after Xu Qing with seven or eight feathers in his hand.

"These things are great. I'm going to give one to Zhang San when we get back."

Xu Qing left the scavenger basecamp and walked in the direction of the forbidden region. He only spared a glance for the feathers in the Captain's hand. When they were getting close to the forbidden region, he suddenly said, "What did you see in the Sixth Peak, Captain?"

A smile broke out on the Captain's face. This was exactly what he had been waiting to hear. He had been biting his tongue the entire trip and had been reaching the point where he couldn't take it any more. Putting the feathers away, he looked around furtively, then lowered his voice and said, "Before I explain, I want you to think back to how this war actually played out.

"It started with the Seventh Peak's Grand Competition on the Merfolk Isles. That drew out the Seazombies, and then the patriarch suddenly achieved his breakthrough.... After that, the Merfolk Isles became our forward base of operations.

"After declaring war on the Seazombies, we advanced step by step, taking over their fortified islands, and eventually reaching the point of attacking their ancestral land.

"Now, in your mind, draw a line on the Forbidden Sea. Originally, Seven Blood Eyes was a long way from Revered Ancient. But if we take over the Seazombies' ancestral land, we'll be very, very close to the mainland..."

Xu Qing's pupils constricted.

"So," the Captain continued quietly, "what exactly is the sect trying to accomplish? Is it just about defeating the Seazombies? There's no way. Defeating the Seazombies... is just part of a much bigger plan. When I was in the Sixth Peak, I saw... a zombie ancestor statue that *isn't* one of the nine from the Seazombie ancestral land. That thing is the real power source of the Sixth Peak fortress!"

Chapter 222: Supreme Vastness Daoist Temple

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed as he turned to look at the Captain.

The Captain looked back at him with an enigmatic smile.

“There are grues in this forbidden region,” Xu Qing said. “But they’re not that bad.”

“Right. Sounds good. I haven’t been to many forbidden regions. I spend more time at sea. I guess this’ll be a good opportunity for me to learn a thing or two.”

As they entered the forbidden region, the two of them dropped the previous conversation topic, leaving it behind as if they had forgotten it. Both of them knew that it was too weighty of a topic for them to be talking about openly. It related to Seven Blood Eyes as a whole. But even just thinking about it, it was obvious there was something very big going on behind the scenes.

After all, the Seazombies currently had nine ancestor statues. But that didn’t mean they had always had nine.... In the ancient past, there had been more of those divine likenesses. However, after certain events unfolded, some of those statues were taken by other species to research. And for whatever reasons, they were never returned. In the end, the Seazombies were left with only nine statues.

It was worth noting that Seven Blood Eyes hadn’t used the Sixth Peak fortress in the war. Furthermore, when Master Sixth exacted his revenge, he only resorted to ordinary tactics. There was deep meaning to be extracted from all that.

Now Xu Qing understood why the Captain had been so jumpy, and also why he had shamelessly invited himself to come along on this trip. For one thing, the Captain was the type of person who always felt the urge to talk. For him to know a secret like this, but be unable to brag about it, would be too much for him. Furthermore, if he stayed in Seven Blood Eyes, the sect would probably have locked him up in solitary confinement to make sure the secret didn’t get out.

Xu Qing shook his head and chose not to think about the matter anymore. It was too monumental of a situation. Besides, it didn’t have much to do with him personally. The war would end soon, and then things would become clear.

Taking a deep breath, he cleared his mind and walked into the jungle. It was hard to say how many times he had come into this place. He was very familiar with it. Maybe he couldn’t travel about with his eyes closed, but almost. He recognized the different types of plants and vegetation, all of which he had seen before.

He picked up speed as he moved, slipping like a specter through the jungle.

The Captain followed, looking around curiously. He really hadn’t been into very many forbidden regions. The only place he had been into was Forbidden by the Phoenix, next to the sect. He had gone there to seek enlightenment of a divine ability, but had failed to succeed.

Seeing how quickly Xu Qing was moving, he accelerated, making sure to step in the same spots. By observing closely, he started to get an idea of how to move about properly.

I had no idea he knew so many things. The Captain kept his eyes on Xu Qing, and didn’t seem worried at all about the mutagen. The mutagen out at sea was stronger, and Seven Blood Eyes’ techniques to extrude mutagen were very effective. Unless a disciple was stuck in a dangerous location, and was forced to push their mutagen levels to the limit, they usually didn’t even think about it.

Xu Qing wasn't paying attention to the Captain. He was lost in his memories. Images from times past played through his mind as he got closer and closer to his destination.

Before long, he slowed down and approached a solitary burial mound next to a big tree. There were a lot of weeds growing in the area, but the gravestone was still there, standing straight as before. Two years had passed, almost three, but it seemed people still remembered the things Xu Qing had accomplished here, and had treated this grave respectfully as a result. Maybe they hadn't cleared the weeds, but at least they hadn't disturbed it.

All scavengers knew that for someone to get a proper burial after death was considered a blessing. No one would take the risk of desecrating a scavenger grave, especially if there was no profit to be had out of it.

Xu Qing looked at the gravestone, then sat down in front of it, right next to the tree. With the wave of a hand, he cleared the weeds. Then he produced some alcohol, took a sip, and poured some on the grave.

"Sergeant Thunder... Grandmaster Bai is gone too," he said quietly. Leaning up against the tree, he looked up at the dark clouds overhead.

The Captain didn't say anything. He looked at the gravestone, and looked at Xu Qing. And he kept his distance. He could tell that Xu Qing needed to be alone.

Leaning against the tree, Xu Qing drank until the sky grew dark. Then he looked out into the jungle and saw... absolutely nothing.

"Sergeant Thunder," he said quietly, "you once said that if someone hears the Singing and lives, then hears it a second time, they'll see the person they most want to see.... But there are a lot of people I want to see. If I ever hear the Singing again, I wonder if I'll see all of them."

He took another drink. Everything was quiet around him, and as the sky grew dark, the jungle also became pitch black. Xu Qing sat there in silence. After another hour passed, he sighed. After kowtowing, he stood and emptied the bottle of alcohol onto the grave.

"I still haven't found that lifespan flower." With one last look at the grave, he turned and walked off. Step by step, he disappeared into the darkness. Before long, he heard the sound of footsteps behind him. It was the Captain.

"If we have the chance one day, Xu Qing," he said, his voice soft and hoarse, "I'd like to take you to my home. It's been a while since I paid respects."

Xu Qing nodded.

As they moved through the dark jungle, no mutant beasts appeared. The beasts could instinctively tell that the two people who had appeared in the jungle on this night were different from the scavengers.

Late in the night, Xu Qing stepped into a canyon. The blood that had been spilled here years ago had long since disappeared in the overgrowth. There were plenty of seven-leaf clovers; clearly, no other scavengers had found this spot and harvested it. He looked over at the crumbled remains of

his laboratory, and thought back to all the times he had concocted poison here. His shadow seemed to be trembling with emotion, and Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior hadn't said much during the entire trip.

After all, the forbidden region had once been home to the shadow, and the larger area around it had once been controlled by the patriarch.

Xu Qing passed through the valley and eventually spotted the temple complex in the distance. It was late at night, but the occasional bolts of lightning provided some illumination. From what Xu Qing could see, the temple complex didn't look like it had changed at all. Most likely, even if a much greater span of time went by, and generations of scavengers came and went in the nearby basecamp, this temple complex would still be here, unchanging.

Suddenly, the Captain made an exclamation of surprise. "What? There's actually a Supreme Vastness daoist temple here?"

"Supreme Vastness daoist temple?" Xu Qing asked, looking over his shoulder at the Captain.

"I remember now. A while back, I saw you use a divine ability that resembled a heavenly saber. I remember it looking familiar. Well, now it makes sense. You little punk! You actually gained enlightenment of the Supreme Vastness Solitary Saber, didn't you?" The Captain's eyes got wider as he talked, until he looked flabbergasted. "There's no way. But the more I think back to that saber move of yours, the more it makes sense. Did I get it right?"

"My god! That was?the Supreme Vastness Solitary Saber! Do you know what the Supreme Vastness Solitary Saber is? This is incredible!"

Xu Qing looked deeply at the Captain. He knew full well that the Captain liked to be deliberately mystifying, and he also knew that if he asked a question, it was entirely possible that he would somehow end up owing the Captain spirit stones. The best strategy to use on people like this was to not ask any questions at all. If you let them stew long enough, then once you asked for details, they wouldn't hold anything back.

Therefore, he looked back at the temple complex and started walking. The Captain blinked a few times, then followed. Sighing, he started muttering occasionally.

"Incredible."

"Wowwww."

"Absolutely tremendous."

He continued on in that way until Xu Qing reached the temple complex, and eventually found the very same temple where he had gained enlightenment of the saber move. Entering, he looked at the statue for a moment, then sat down cross-legged in front of it.

In addition to paying respects to Sergeant Thunder, his other reason for coming back was to seek further enlightenment of the heavenly saber move.

“So, it really is a Supreme Vastness daoist statue!” the Captain said. He strolled around the statue, looking at it closely, then peered at Xu Qing sitting in front of it. Smiling mysteriously, he stepped to the side.

And thus, time passed. Soon, it was the next day.

Xu Qing felt a little disappointed. Perhaps gaining more enlightenment of the saber move was going to take more time. Perhaps months or even decades. As the morning sun grew brighter, he got to his feet.

Meanwhile, the Captain was grinning broadly. “Didn’t work, did it? Well, that’s to be expected. It would have been weird if it did work.”

Xu Qing was shocked. “What do you mean?”

“Can’t take it any longer? Just had to ask? Can’t hold it in any more?” The Captain seemed very pleased with himself.

Xu Qing just looked at him, not saying anything further.

The Captain blinked a few times and held his tongue.

After a moment, Xu Qing sighed. “Why, Elder Brother? Can you explain?”

The Captain laughed heartily, then cleared his throat.

“Fine, I’ll explain. However, don’t forget that you owe me 50,000 spirit stones.

“The Supreme Vastness daoist temple has its origin in the Supreme Vastness epoch, in the Supreme Vastness Daoist Empire. Not much is left over from that daoist empire, just some random temples in various forbidden regions. The divine likenesses in those temples all look the same, and some years ago, people realized that they contain a very shocking legacy. It’s an imperial-class technique that can be acquired by any species.

“However, it’s extremely difficult to gain enlightenment of it. It comes down to fate. The saber techniques in each temple are different, and nobody actually knows how many of those techniques any one person can master. As you have proven, it’s possible to gain enlightenment of one. I’ve heard of some people getting two or three, and supposedly it’s possible to get six or seven.

“Regardless, there’s no question it’s a mighty technique. If you can gain enlightenment of three saber moves, then that’s considered quasi-imperial-class. If you get six or seven, that’s true imperial-class.

“This isn’t the only Supreme Vastness daoist temple, of course. There are others. One of them is next to Seven Blood Eyes in Forbidden by the Phoenix. There are some ruins there with a temple in the middle. I even went there once hoping to gain

enlightenment, but it didn't work. Once we're back in the sect, you should go check it out."

At this point, an odd expression appeared on the Captain's face, and he continued, "Another thing. Once someone gains enlightenment in a Supreme Vastness daoist temple, the dao resonance in the statue disappears and doesn't return for half of a sixty-year-cycle. Only then can someone again seek enlightenment. There was no way you could have achieved any enlightenment last night. It's not that I didn't tell you. You didn't ask! In fact, I was curious about what was going on last night!"

A vein on Xu Qing's forehead suddenly started throbbing.

The Captain cleared his throat. "Well, it's not that it's totally impossible. If you're in the presence of the statue and kill someone who gained enlightenment from it, then the dao resonance will reappear, and you can immediately seek enlightenment."

Chapter 223: Won't Stay Dead

As the Captain explained these things, Xu Qing's eyes narrowed. After all this time, he finally had a bit of an explanation about the temple complex and the statue. Thinking back to when he originally saw the saber move, he felt like he understood it even better now.

Meanwhile, the Captain was sighing in his heart. He knew that a matter of good fortune like this didn't come down to simply taking a bite out of the statue. It required perception and fate. Of even greater significance was the fact that there was no dao resonance in the statue, plus there was no way he would even consider killing Xu Qing to get a chance at enlightenment.... And even if he would consider something like that, given how deeply deceptive Xu Qing was, there was no guarantee the Captain could defeat him in combat. In the end, the Captain was still interested in the Supreme Vastness Solitary Saber, but had no way to pursue it.

As the light of dawn grew brighter, Xu Qing chose not to go deeper into the forbidden region. Based on the level of his current cultivation base, he was able to sense that further in, there was a concentration of malicious divine will.

After staring for a time in that direction, he decided that the best thing was just to leave.

The Captain could also sense that divine will, and after looking in that direction for a while, he began to exude a frigid aura as he said, "Normally speaking, wherever you find a Supreme Vastness daoist temple, there will also be some vicious grues sealed nearby. Xu Qing, your home is next to a very complicated forbidden region!"

Without saying a word, Xu Qing stepped up into the air. He didn't plan to leave via walking, and instead, flew away at top speed. The Captain laughed heartily and flew up to follow him. When he was some distance away, he looked over his shoulder at the temple complex and the deep parts of the forbidden region.

There, the clouds stirring in the sky almost resembled the long, black hair of a woman. There was a strong rancorous aura in that part of the forbidden region, rising up and making that long hair even thicker. From a distance, the entire forbidden region actually resembled a woman's skull.

I wonder what grue is sealed here. I really feel like going to take a look....

After a moment of hesitation, he flew after Xu Qing. After catching up he stretched lazily, then got out an apple and took a bite. “Say, Xu Qing, where are you going? Back to the sect?”

“I’m going to a black market to sell some things.”

The Captain’s eyes lit up. “A black market? Sell some things? Like what? Stolen goods?”

Xu Qing looked at him and nodded.

“Oooh, let me see! Maybe you can just sell them to me. I love stolen goods!”

Xu Qing hesitated. It didn’t seem like a good idea to sell defective magical devices to someone he knew personally. If they used such an item, only to have it break down in a dangerous situation, that person would obviously come to him looking for answers and a reckoning.

“I’d rather dispose of them through a black market,” he said tactfully.

Glaring, the Captain said, “Little Ah Qing, I need to give you some constructive criticism. It’s never good to be stingy! If you have good stuff to sell, it doesn’t matter who buys it. You think I’m not worthy or something? I have money!”

An odd expression appeared on Xu Qing’s face. He really didn’t want to scam the Captain, so instead, he simply cleared his throat, ignored the ‘advice,’ and headed in the direction of Antlerville.

His ultimate destination was a black market that Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior had told him about earlier. It was in a city called Rimeshade near Church of Departure territory. It was surrounded by a wilderness even worse than the Crimson Wilds, and thus, none of the powerful groups in South Phoenix cared much about it. In turn, that meant that a lot of ruthless characters ended up there, and thus, a black market came to be.

The things he wanted to sell were the magical devices that Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior had absorbed seventy to eighty percent of, then smoothed over so they looked normal. Originally, Xu Qing hadn’t planned on selling them at all. But given how many resources he had gone through while working on the black beetles, he was running very low on spirit stones.

I’ll sell these things and then head back to the sect.

Having made his decision, he prepared to head to Antlerville as quickly as possible. Moving at that speed, it would only take half an incense stick’s worth of time to arrive. However, about halfway there, he stopped in midair and looked down.

Down below was a caravan heading in the direction of Antlerville. There were over thirty carts, all of them pitch black in color. And surrounding them were numerous guards, all clad in black robes. They seemed very somber and desolate, and also, out of place. Given the size of this caravan, there wasn’t any group in the area who would dare to cause trouble for it.

That was especially true considering that there were high-level Qi Condensation auras in the caravan, which would weigh down stiflingly on ordinary Qi Condensation cultivators.

Xu Qing also noticed an old man on one of the carts who had a Foundation Establishment cultivation base. However, he had not yet ignited his first life flame, and thus could not enter the profound radiance state. Given his cultivation base fluctuations, he probably had about 15 or 16 dharma apertures opened.

Most people who looked at the caravan wouldn't be able to see what Xu Qing saw; there were cages in the carts, within which were locked numerous scavengers. Most of them were unconscious young boys and girls, though there were some older ones who were awake. However, the conscious ones all looked dispirited and despairing as they leaned up against the bars of the cages.

"Night Dove is really annoying," the Captain said, looking down with revulsion at the caravan. "It just won't stay dead. No matter how many of them you kill, there are always more."

"I guess it's because there's always a demand for living treasures," Xu Qing said coldly.

"Exactly. Here in South Phoenix, the demand is primarily from the Church of Departure and the Violet Lands. Overseas... well, in Revered Ancient, there's an even greater demand.

"After all... living treasures aren't just used to absorb mutagen from magical treasures. Some magical treasure fragments, and even high-level magical devices, need pure life force to cleanse them. Because of that, even some of the so-called chosen from the Seven Sect Coalition secretly dabble in the trade of living treasures.

"And living treasures are even more effective when used in groups. As a result, virtually all species use them. What's more, humans native to South Phoenix usually have a bit of the blood of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan in them. As a result, they make unusually good living treasures. That's why Night Dove is so active here."

Without a word, Xu Qing looked at the caravan as his black iron skewer suddenly shot down toward it.

The crackle of thunder filled the air as the Night Dove operatives below looked up in shock. The skewer was like a black lightning bolt that rapidly pierced through the necks of one Night Dove operative after another.

The Qi Condensation cultivators couldn't even see it moving, much less dodge out of its way. In the blink of an eye, they were killed. From a distance, it looked like a black streak zipping about, leaving behind a spray of blood. Not even the Foundation Establishment cultivator could defend himself, and was pierced through.

However, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior didn't kill the man. Instead, he dragged him up in the air to Xu Qing.

The old man trembled, his eyes shining with terror. He was clearly scared out of his mind. Though Xu Qing and the Captain were in disguise, they currently radiated terrifying fluctuations that caused the old man's vision to swim. He could sense that either of these two people could wipe him out of existence with the flick of a finger. Not all Foundation Establishment cultivators were the same.

"Seniors, I—"

“Where were you heading with this caravan?” Xu Qing asked coldly.

When Xu Qing saw the old man hesitating, an expression of impatience overtook his face, and he was about to resort to torture when the Captain grinned.

“Allow me,” he said. He waved his hand, and countless streams of frigid energy swept forth to form a needle. Then, the needle stabbed into the body of the shocked old man. As it moved about in him, the pain was so intense that the old man nearly passed out. Moments later, he was explaining everything he knew.

They weren’t the only Night Dove operatives on the move. Members throughout South Phoenix had received orders to secretly take all of their current stock to Seven Blood Eyes. Apparently, it wouldn’t be long before customers from afar showed up there, with very deep pockets. In other words, there were caravans just like this one all over South Phoenix, all of them figuring out ways to get into Seven Blood Eyes territory.

When Xu Qing heard all of that, his eyes flickered with cold light. He absolutely hated Night Dove. Meanwhile, the Captain’s eyes were narrowed as he waved his hand, causing the old man to explode into a mass of frozen chunks.

“It looks like the Violent Crimes Division has its work cut out for it,” the Captain said. “I’m especially curious about who these customers are. And what does ‘afar’ mean? They’re outsiders?”

Xu Qing didn’t say anything in response, but the vicious look in his eye grew deeper. With that, he waved his hand, causing all of the cages to open up. The prisoners inside them were now free.

Xu Qing didn’t pay them much attention. They were strangers met by chance, like patches of drifting duckweed, and would have to care for their own lives. He had attacked the caravan because of his loathing of Night Dove, nothing else. With that, Xu Qing and the Captain continued on to Antlerville, where they took the teleportation portal to Rimeshade.

Rimeshade, located in the wilderness just on the border of Church of Departure territory, was small but bustling. There was no sense of order in the city, and the place was full of criminals and outlaws. There were quite a few Foundation Establishment cultivators present, and even a few Gold Core experts. Most of them were here to trade in items that they normally wouldn’t want to be seen buying.

Normally speaking, only very confident people would come here to do business. That said, despite the general chaos in the city, it wasn’t a place where wanton slaughter was common. It was a place where profit ruled, and deals were made. Because of the prosperity to be had in Rimeshade, it was quite well-known throughout South Phoenix, and cultivators from just about every group could be found there.

The main rule that governed it was: the weak are the prey of the strong.

Therefore, when Xu Qing and the Captain stepped off the teleportation portal, they were met by suspicious eyes that kept an eye on everyone who came and went. Some were children native to Rimeshade, who were always on the lookout for newcomers who needed the service of a guide.

Chapter 224: Weapons for Treacherous People

Even in South Phoenix, black markets were places where dragons and snakes mingled. In other words, they were a mix of good people and scumbags.

Considering that Seven Blood Eyes was an apex power in South Phoenix, it was no surprise that wicked people could be found in it. Given that, and also how cautious Xu Qing was in general, there was no way he would go into a black market without being disguised. He now looked like a gaunt, middle-aged man, and he even made sure to conceal his aura.

The Captain, being the smooth operator that he was, now looked like a hunch-backed old man. He seemed sickly, but at the same time, clearly wasn't the kind of person to casually trifle with. In fact, his disguise was actually better than Xu Qing's.

Glancing at him, Xu Qing realized that he still had a thing or two to learn about disguises.

Looking around Rimeshade, the Captain cleared his throat and then, in a very raspy voice, said, "What a nice place. I have a few items to take care of. Once we're both done, let's meet back here."

Strolling over to the group of children, he chose a young boy to hire as his guide. The boy's eyes lit up as he raced to join the Captain.

Xu Qing chose not to get a guide. He had Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior, who was very familiar with black markets. As Xu Qing walked off, a number of malicious gazes followed him. Some of them shifted away from him, but others seemed to be completely focused on him.

"Brilliant plan, milord," the patriarch said fawningly. "As you know, black markets are full of greedy people, and getting their attention early is good. That way, when it comes time to sell your goods, you can make even more profit. I suggest that you take your time offering things for sale. That way you can avoid attracting the attention of Gold Core cultivators, and stick to the trashy Foundation Establishment people. Milord, these jackals all have very fat purses."

The patriarch had really been feeling useless lately. One reason for that was that the Captain had been around the entire time, giving him few opportunities to come out. The other reason was that the bratty shadow had really been throwing its weight around. All of it left the patriarch feeling very wary. And thus, he decided that this black market trip was the perfect opportunity to make the Fiendish Xu realize how important he was. Under no circumstances could he allow the Fiendish Xu to think that he was worthless.

"Sure," Xu Qing said, looking around at the shops and crowds. Most people present were hiding their identity. The majority wore voluminous clothing, and some even had masks on their faces. The truth was that Xu Qing was more focused on his surroundings than the patriarch, and hadn't even been listening to him.

However, his simple answer left the patriarch feeling incomparably shaken.

The Fiendish Xu only answered with a single word. That means he's not pleased. Don't tell me... I just said the wrong thing? Or does the Fiendish Xu not want to simply sell a few things? Maybe

he's not satisfied with me personally! No. I can't let this stand. I have to think of something to do, otherwise I'm going to be turned into cannon fodder!!

As an intense sensation of crisis caused the patriarch to tremble, he said, "Milord, I've been thinking. If we just sell the magical devices outright, we might not get that much money. I have a better idea!"

Xu Qing had been just about to enter a rather busy equipment shop. But upon hearing the patriarch's words, he stopped curiously.

"Honest people don't do underhanded things. So we shouldn't try to pass off defective wares. Instead, let's explain what they are when we sell them! I've thought it all through. You see, this can be our specialty! This place has all sorts of people, all working on their own plots and schemes. Some people come here, not to buy things for themselves, but in order to lay treacherous traps for others! Our magical devices are exactly what people like that need! Therefore, we shouldn't sell our items to a shop. No, we should set up our own vendor stall!"

Upon hearing this, Xu Qing thought about it for a bit and then came to the conclusion it wasn't a bad idea. As the saying went, the rarer something is, the greater its value. There were always people with unique needs looking for unique wares. Thus, Xu Qing accepted the patriarch's advice and headed to Rimeshade's open market area, which was full of even more cultivators than the area he'd just been in.

Thankfully, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior was very familiar with the process. With his help, Xu Qing rented a space in the market, where he erected a large wooden sign.

Xu Qing didn't need to write on the sign. The patriarch did so with the iron skewer, carving out four characters in calligraphy as flamboyant as dancing dragons and swirling phoenixes.

Weapons for Treacherous People!

When Xu Qing saw the finished calligraphy, he raised his eyebrows but didn't say anything. Sitting down cross-legged, he waited. People came and went in the market, and the hubbub of shopping echoed out in all directions. Before long, people noticed his sign, but no one approached. Xu Qing was already starting to get impatient.

"Keep calm, milord. We can do this! I'm very confident. Completely certain! Remember, I used to go to black markets all the time, specifically to look for things like this. Items like this aren't very common, so I'm sure there are people here willing to buy them."

The patriarch was so wrapped up in the current situation that he didn't notice the shadow off the side, eying him like it was looking at its arch-nemesis. At the same time, it was studying the patriarch and learning a lot.

Xu Qing didn't say anything in response. He just closed his eyes. Time passed, and the patriarch started getting more and more anxious. After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, the patriarch's eyes glittered. Xu Qing noticed the same thing the patriarch had, and opened his eyes.

A tall cultivator stood over him, wrapped in a black cloak with a hood that made it impossible to see even a hint of the facial features within. The cultivator glanced at the sign, then spoke in a hoarse voice.

“How treacherous?”

Xu Qing didn't say a word. He just tossed the cultivator a jade slip and took out a fan-shaped magical device that he placed on the ground in front of him.

The black-cloaked cultivator took the jade slip and examined the contents.

The patriarch had created the contents of the jade slip. It explained how the fan worked, notably how it was essentially an empty shell that looked normal, and even operated normally, but would explode at a critical moment of usage. The description was very vivid and lively. The jade slip made it seem like the device had been specifically created for this purpose, and was the perfect item for a treacherous person.

“The price is good. Not too expensive. What an interesting little device....” The black-cloaked cultivator deliberated for a short time, then took out a spirit note and handed it to Xu Qing.

Xu Qing accepted it, then flicked his sleeve, sending the fan flying to the black-cloaked cultivator. When the cultivator reached out to take it, a single glance at her hand made it obvious she was a young woman. After examining the fan, she seemed pleased, and disappeared into the crowd.

Xu Qing was pleased at the transaction, and off to the side, the patriarch breathed a sigh of relief.

“Don't worry, milord. I'm an expert when it comes to people like this. Our special magical devices might seem useless to some people, but to other people, they're perfect for treachery. They're not common, and thus not easy to guard against. If you can figure out a way to get one of these things into the hands of an enemy, you can kill them before they realize what's happening.”

“Not bad,” Xu Qing said encouragingly.

His words thrilled the patriarch.

The Fiendish Xu actually upgraded to two words this time! He really thinks I'm helpful!

The patriarch's previous assessment was completely correct. Not everyone who came to this black market came to buy things for their own use. Each person had their own unique circumstances, and for many, things that could be used treacherously weren't very common.

It didn't take long before Xu Qing got a second customer, a nonhuman. After examining the jade slip Xu Qing provided, he unhesitatingly bought three items.

And thus, the day passed. By the time evening fell, Xu Qing had sold all eight of the items he had prepared. After settling accounts for the vendor stall, he started walking through the market with the intention of finding the Captain and heading back to the sect.

As the city got darker, more cultivators arrived in the market. And as Xu Qing walked along, he scanned some of the items for sale at various stalls. Suddenly, he noticed something and stopped walking.

There were no items on display, just a wooden sign with two characters on it.

Soul Pills? he thought.

The vendor wore a black cloak that made it impossible to tell if they were male or female. Furthermore, a mask covered their face. Seeing Xu Qing approach, the cultivator looked at him coldly and said, "100,000 spirit stones per pill."

Xu Qing frowned. He knew that soul pills were expensive. They could be used in equipment forging, in special cultivation methods to open dharma apertures, as well as in other nefarious ways. That said, unless these pills were extremely high quality, they shouldn't be that expensive.

Seemingly guessing what Xu Qing was thinking, the vendor coolly said, "They're high quality. All were concocted using Foundation Establishment souls."

Xu Qing mulled it over. If the pills were made with Foundation Establishment souls, and there were enough of them, they could be helpful in opening dharma apertures. And right now, he only needed to open 11 apertures before he could ignite his third life flame.

Xu Qing had to admit that he was in a hurry to do that, so he tossed out a roll of spirit notes. The vendor scanned the notes, then handed him a jade box.

Xu Qing examined them, and his pupils constricted.

They were indeed Foundation Establishment souls, and what was more... they were Seazombie Foundation Establishment souls! There were some random Qi Condensation souls as well, but even those were also from Seazombies.

Xu Qing looked more closely at the vendor. Whoever they were, he didn't detect any of the Captain's aura on them. But considering that this person had so many Seazombie soul pills, it seemed highly likely they were from Seven Blood Eyes. Only someone from Seven Blood Eyes could have so many Seazombie souls.

"How many more do you have?" Xu Qing asked. He remained casual, but kept the black iron skewer ready in the fold of his robe.

"A lot," the vendor replied, looking up at him with icy arrogance.

Xu Qing thought about it for a bit longer. "I want forty more!"

The vendor was so surprised that the icy arrogance vanished, and they inhaled hesitantly. "I don't have that many. But if you wait a moment, I have some friends nearby. If we pool our collections, we can give you that many."

"Fine, but considering I'm buying so many, you'd better throw in a few for free," Xu Qing said, sounding very serious.

The vendor was clearly a straightforward person. Nodding in response to Xu Qing's words, the vendor took out a jade slip and used it to send a voice message. Before long, six similarly dressed individuals approached from different directions, all of whom took time to size up Xu Qing. Among

them was a tall cultivator with powerful energy fluctuations, whose gaze lingered on Xu Qing the longest.

Xu Qing looked back at them.

After a short time, the tall cultivator chuckled quietly. "Seventh Peak?"

"First Peak?" Xu Qing replied calmly.

The tall cultivator laughed again. Not asking any more questions, he took out a bag of holding and handed it to Xu Qing.

Forty pills!

After inspecting them, Xu Qing handed over the spirit stones he had made from selling his magical devices, then turned and left.

The black-cloaked figures watched him leave, then squatted together to confer. The vendor quietly said, "Second Elder Brother, who do you think that Seventh Peak fellow was? The sect hasn't handed out any rewards for the war, so how could he be so rich?"

"It's hard to say. Seventh Peak disciples are experts at deception.... After we're back, we can ask around. Someone with that much money surely needs dao protectors, right? Maybe we can get him to hire us for long-term work. There are less fat cats nowadays, which make them more of a target. He'll probably be happy to hire us."

"Forget that for now. We need to sell the rest of our loot. The war is almost over, so after we get back, we probably won't even need to go to the battlefield again."

Chapter 225: A Tempest Builds

Leaving the public market area, Xu Qing walked through the night and thought back to the encounter with the other disciples.

One of them was one of the First Peak's highnesses, though I'm not sure which one.

Though they had taken precautions to conceal their auras, Xu Qing had still been able to sense a sword energy on them that reminded him of Wu Jianwu. To any other person, that aura would have been difficult to identify. But Xu Qing had chased Wu Jianwu for days on end, and thanks to all the techniques he had used, was very familiar with his aura. That same sense had come across strongly just now, so Xu Qing was certain of his assessment.

The war is still going on, but they're out here...?

Xu Qing thought back to what the Captain had told him, and also the rumors he'd heard earlier about the Seven Sect Coalition interfering with the war. He already had some speculations of his own about what was going on.

It seems the war really is about to end.

He had been waiting for a long time for this. After all, he had a lot of battle accomplishments that would earn him rewards after the official conclusion of the war.

Truth be told, he felt poor right now. He had just earned a nice sum of spirit stones, only to spend them all on soul pills. Although his investment in Harbor 176 would earn him some profit, the development still wasn't complete, and he would have to wait for that.

Money will be coming my way soon.

Taking a deep breath, he hurried toward the teleportation portal complex. Along the way, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior had something to say.

"I made a recording of the transaction just now," he said excitedly. "I got everything! Your humble servant thought milord might want evidence. I realized it the moment you tapped me."

Xu Qing was pleased. He'd had no specific plans for the recording, but considering he had been dealing with some First Peak disciples acting furtively, having a recording of them might be useful later. With that matter out of the way, Xu Qing continued on his way.

It was nighttime, so other than certain specific locations, the streets had much fewer people on them than during the daytime. Meanwhile, gazes from the shadows locked onto Xu Qing as he walked. He ignored them, and as he made his way to the teleportation portal complex, no one caused any trouble for him. Xu Qing was actually a bit disappointed by that.

People here aren't fools. Unless they're completely confident, they won't do anything.

Upon arriving at the teleportation portal, Xu Qing shook his head when he didn't see the Captain. Taking out a jade slip, he sent a voice message asking where he was.

"Don't wait for me, little Ah Qing. You'll never guess who I ran into. Hahaha! Some of the highnesses from the First Peak! They're secretly fencing some stuff from the war. I'm going to record some images of them and send them to Sect Granduncle and see what I can blackmail him out of."

Xu Qing shook his head. From what he could tell, both the Captain and Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior were equally underhanded. Xu Qing himself would never act like that. He would never dirty himself in that way, and thus, always had a clean conscience.

Entering the teleportation portal, he disappeared into the glowing light.

It was night in Seven Blood Eyes, and as usual, the moon shone in the sky, and a cold wind blew. The capital city seemed quiet and peaceful at nighttime, but there were actually many people about. In some alleys, local gangs struggled for supremacy, and in other places, disciples fought and killed each other. None of that had stopped because of the war.

But that was of no concern to Xu Qing. He had risen above such struggles, having slaughtered his way to his current high standing.

Xu Qing walked along quickly, taking note of the Violent Crimes Division constables on patrol. He also happened to pass by Plankspring Way. There, he stopped for a moment. The inn had been closed for quite a while. Looking at it, Xu Qing suddenly found himself thinking of that anaconda.

After a moment, he cleared his mind and moved on. Back at his berth in Harbor 176, he took out his dharmaskiff, stepped aboard, and sat down cross-legged. Finally, he took out the soul pills he had just bought.

He did one more inspection to make sure there was nothing unusual about the pills. Then he selected one and melted it with balefire. Within moments, the soul power from the pill was sweeping through his body toward his 80th dharma aperture.

If one wasn't enough, he would use four. If two wasn't enough, he would use ten!

Before long, rumbling sounds filled him, and dharma force fluctuations rolled out. His 80th dharma aperture was open!

He didn't stop there. Over the course of the next two hours, he assimilated forty-three soul pills, which enabled him to open up to his 83rd dharma aperture.

He was only 7 dharma apertures away from this third life flame.

Sadly, these First Peak soul pills weren't even close to being as good as the pill Master Sixth gave me. It makes sense considering the souls were on a much lower level.

Though Xu Qing was slightly disappointed, that disappointment was outweighed by anticipation.

At this rate, it won't be long before I ignite my third life flame. And when I do that....

His heart pounded as he thought about the astonishing battle prowess he would attain with that third flame.

With the addition of my life lamp, that'll be power equivalent to four life flames. With Golden Crow Assimilates Myriad Spirits, it'll jump to the equivalent of five flames. I'll be able to crush anyone else in Foundation Establishment... as long as they don't have a life lamp!

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed as he looked at the two wish boxes in his bag of holding. After checking them, he continued to send dharma force into them.

"I'll be able to open them soon," he murmured.

He was now in a much better mood than before. However, that only lasted until he started thinking about the Night Dove caravan he'd encountered. Then, killing intent flickered in his eyes.

However, he was only the director of the Seventh Peak's Violent Crimes Division. Furthermore, in doing work with his black beetles, he had clashed with some of the other Violent Crimes Divisions. Because of that, getting them to cooperate with him wasn't going to be easy.

After thinking about the situation, he took out his identity medallion and sent a message to Master Sixth. After explaining what he'd learned from the Night Dove caravan, he awaited a response.

It didn't take long.

"Xu Qing, I give you complete authority to deal with Night Dove. You may take command of the forces of all the Violent Crimes Divisions from all of the mountain peaks. Get rid of Night Dove. If you run into any trouble, contact me immediately!"

Master Sixth had come to really like Xu Qing, and treated requests from him as if they were from his own child.

“Many thanks, Master Sixth,” Xu Qing replied solemnly. He had sensed the approval in Master Sixth’s message, and was very grateful.

Over the course of the following days, Xu Qing was in constant communication with the Violent Crimes Divisions from the other mountain peaks. He sent them documents, and requested help from their constables in inspecting all of the watercraft in the Seventh Peak’s Port District.

They also kept a close eye on everyone who teleported in.

Night Dove and the Violent Crimes Division already had a history of animosity, and thus, the other divisions didn’t have any reason not to cooperate. Besides, Night Dove was rich, which created an added incentive. And thus, constables from all of the various Violent Crimes Division were put to work.

In the initial buzz of activity, quite a few Night Dove operatives were found and arrested. Night Dove was immediately forced to work harder at staying hidden, while at the same time, the Violent Crimes Division prisons filled back up with inmates.

Meanwhile, big news hit that quickly spread, not just through the sect, but throughout the entire Forbidden Sea.

The war between Seven Blood Eyes and the Seazombies was over!

The reason for the end of the war was that the Seven Sect Coalition had stepped in to prevent Seven Blood Eyes from outright taking over the Seazombie ancestral land. Though rumors had been spreading for a while about that subject, it still angered everyone in Seven Blood Eyes. Given how the war was going, it shouldn’t have taken more than half a year to completely defeat the Seazombies.

Yet right in that critical moment, the Seven Sect Coalition put an end to things. Although Sir Bloodsmelter was apparently furious at their heavy-handedness, he had no choice but to follow orders. After all, Seven Blood Eyes was still officially considered a subsidiary branch of the Seven Sect Coalition, and had to follow orders. Sir Bloodsmelter had no grounds to refuse.

However, Seven Blood Eyes would not give up on the profit it was owed. Even as Xu Qing was taking stock of the rumors, Sir Bloodsmelter issued four stipulations to the Seazombies to end the war.

First: Seven Blood Eyes would own all of the territory it had captured.

Second: The Seazombies were required to pay war reparations totaling 100,000,000,000 spirit stones.

Third: The Seazombies had to surrender eight of their zombie ancestor statues. The only one Seven Blood Eyes didn’t want was the one without a nose.

Fourth: All Seazombies in the Gold Core level or higher were prohibited from leaving their ancestral land for a hundred years. In addition, all members of the Seazombie echelon were to be sent to Seven Blood Eyes as hostages.

The Seazombies obviously didn’t want to agree to those stipulations, and thus things remained at a deadlock for half a month. During that time, there were heated negotiations. And every time there were negotiations, the details would be leaked to the disciples in the sect.

After all the negotiations were complete, a final agreement was reached.

The Seazombies would cede two of their fortified islands, and three districts in their ancestral land. Instead of 100,000,000,000 spirit stones, they would pay 80,000,000,000. And cultivators in the Gold Core level or higher would be confined for a sixty-year-cycle. As for the zombie ancestor statues, they were the foundation of Seazombies in general, and simply too important. Therefore, the Seazombies would only give away two of them.

After Seven Blood Eyes agreed to those terms, the war which had dragged on for over a year was finally over. When the patriarch and other high-level cultivators finally returned to the sect, a huge period of celebration began, and the entire sect bustled with noise and activity. Official orders were passed down that the period of rejoicing was to last for three months.

During that time, various allies and nonhuman envoys could come to offer congratulations. Of course, that would bring a big economic boost to the Seven Blood Eyes port, and would help things get back to normal even more quickly.

In no time at all, the Seven Blood Eyes' capital city was once again a bustling place.

However, Xu Qing didn't take part in any of the festivities. When he wasn't working on his cultivation or researching his black beetles, most of his attention was focused on directing the Violent Crimes Division activities against Night Dove. Xu Qing detested Night Dove, and since he knew that there were so many of them coming to Seven Blood Eyes, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to feed his beetles and get souls for his cultivation.

Several days passed, whereupon the first group of nonhuman envoys arrived to offer congratulations.

Among the group was an old woman in a green robe. Her arrival caused a huge stir in Seven Blood Eyes, to the point that Sir Bloodsmelter himself went out to receive her.

The smile in his voice was obvious as his words echoed through all heaven and earth. "Welcome to Seven Blood Eyes, esteemed Fellow Daoist Eastnether!"

This old woman was the ruler of Eastnether Isle, also known as Guru Eastnether. And she was also the grandmother of black-garbed Yanyan. [1]

Chapter 226: Dark Serenity's Ancient Road

Xu Qing knew the moment Guru Eastnether arrived. She didn't come to Harbor 176, but thanks to his authority over all the Violent Crimes Divisions during the Night Dove crackdown, he was notified immediately.

The Night Dove operation had eased the tension that arose between Xu Qing and the other six divisions because of how far out of his jurisdiction he had gone before. After all, credit was given for every arrest, and every Night Dove operative taken down brought in a good haul of spirit stones. More relevant than that was that the directors of the other Violent Crimes Divisions were all willing to follow Xu Qing's lead. If they weren't, then it wouldn't matter how much battle prowess or prestige Xu Qing commanded, if they didn't want to give him face, there were plenty of ways to do so. After all, they didn't owe him anything.

True, Xu Qing was in the echelon. But there had been situations in the past in which echelon cultivators mysteriously died. And the other directors were all people who had struggled from the

bottom through a sea of blood. They were intelligent people with many resources at their disposal. But as long as there was profit involved, everyone was happy to be friends. And thus, it was no surprise that Xu Qing was notified of the development right away.

When Xu Qing got the news, his guard went up. That said, he had already analyzed the situation fully, and taken all precautionary measures, so nothing about his daily routine changed much.

Meanwhile, Sir Bloodsmelter had invited Guru Eastnether to the Fourth Peak. Sir Bloodsmelter had started out on the Fourth Peak, and it was where he normally stayed when in the sect. After dismissing his attendants, the two of them discussed important matters.

When that was done, Guru Eastnether said, "I heard my granddaughter made a new friend here in Seven Blood Eyes. Someone named Xu Qing. This Xu Qing seems like a really nice kid, so I brought a gift for him." A smile covered Guru Eastnether's wrinkled face as she produced a jade box and held it out to Sir Bloodsmelter.

Sir Bloodsmelter laughed heartily, and didn't even attempt to pretend that he didn't know what this was about. Given the extremely high level of their cultivation bases, people like Sir Bloodsmelter and Guru Eastnether tended to handle matters very shrewdly. For example, in the matter at hand. Guru Eastnether didn't need to openly make any sort of request. She just offered a gift, and that was enough to make her stance clear.

Continuing to laugh, Sir Bloodsmelter accepted the gift and put it away. There was no need to see what he did with it. The two of them continued to chat for a while, until a sound like whistling wind could be heard.

Yanyan, who had just been released from prison, burst into the room. All of the injuries she had sustained had healed, and she was now completely back to normal. She didn't look the least bit upset. In fact, when she saw her grandmother, her eyes glittered, and she rushed over to hug her arm.

Pouting a bit, she said, "Grandma, what are you doing here?" [1]

When Guru Eastnether saw that her granddaughter looked fine, she smiled faintly. Though she was glad her granddaughter hadn't been harmed, she felt bad for how she had suffered. And of course, she wasn't very pleased with Xu Qing. Stroking Yanyan's hair, she opened her mouth to speak. However, before she could, Yanyan jumped in to speak.

"Grandma, I want to marry Xu Qing!"

Guru Eastnether was visibly stunned. She knew her granddaughter was an odd one, but to hear her suddenly say something like this took everything to an even more astounding level of oddness.

Sir Bloodsmelter was similarly stunned. Not even he could have anticipated that something like this would happen. He knew his old friend had an unusual granddaughter. But who could have guessed that after Xu Qing beat that granddaughter up and imprisoned her for several months, that she would say something like this upon being released?

Looking incredibly serious, Yanyan shook Guru Eastnether's arm and said, "He's the only person in the entire world who's a good match for me, Grandma. I want to marry him! I have to marry him!"

“This is outrageous!” Guru Eastnether barked angrily. “Don’t act so scandalously in front of your elders!”

Yanyan slumped visibly.

Despite Guru Eastnether’s harsh words, she was actually amazed. Turning to Sir Bloodsmelter, she said, “Fellow Daoist Bloodsmelter, if you have the time, do you mind arranging for me to meet this child Xu Qing?” [2]

Sir Bloodsmelter hesitated briefly. This whole thing was very bizarre. However, if Guru Eastnether really wanted to arrange a marriage, it could be a really good thing. Laughing heartily, he nodded his agreement. That said, he didn’t go into any specific details about it.

It was hard to say exactly how rumors started spreading, but in less than a day, everyone in the sect was talking about it. Ding Xue had the biggest reaction; she was incensed. On the other hand, Zhao Zhongheng was delighted. On the Second Peak, Gu Muqing was in her mansion grotto concocting some pills. After she heard the news, she ended up detonating several pill furnaces.

As for Xu Qing, when the rumors reached him, he frowned at how absurd it seemed. As far as he was concerned, romance just took time away from cultivation. Besides, it didn’t lead to any profit. When he was younger, one of his scholar teachers had explained a bit about how things worked between men and women. But Xu Qing had never experienced it, and had no idea what it felt like. He had always lived alone, whether it was in the slums or the scavenger basecamp.

“Completely ridiculous,” he muttered.

Over the course of the next few days, he refused multiple requests from Yanyan to meet up.

Right now, he had the wish boxes to worry about, as well as the Night Dove operation. Time was precious, and he was in no mood to be dealing with unimportant matters.

As time passed, more and more nonhuman envoys and allies came into the Seven Blood Eyes port. The sect bustled with more noise and excitement than ever. Then, for the first time, cultivators from Revered Ancient arrived!

There were three of them, all women in green gowns with veils covering their faces. They were attractive, with a faint mist surrounding them that was obviously a fantastic technique unlike anything that Seven Blood Eyes cultivators used. Their long gowns were embroidered with immortal mountains, and the clouds drifting between their peaks seemed to contain a dao resonance. Because of that, these women appeared to exist on a higher level of being. Especially noteworthy was that they seemed to have very little mutagen in them. It wasn’t completely lacking. But their mutagen levels were so low that unless you carefully examined them, you wouldn’t notice it.

All of that attracted a lot of attention from the Seven Blood Eyes disciples.

For years on end, no one from Revered Ancient had come to Seven Blood Eyes. To the disciples here, the mainland was an amazing and mysterious place. And many people automatically assumed that cultivators from there were on a higher level. In some ways, that was true. Whether it was their spirit power, their techniques, their perception of the world, or their core teachings and doctrines, people from the Revered Ancient mainland were generally on a different level compared to those from Seven Blood Eyes, and by a wide margin. As a result, it was only natural that cultivators from there would seem superior.

What was more, these three female cultivators didn't just look ethereal. They also exuded a fragrant aroma that made them seem unearthly. They also had astonishing cultivation bases. Of the group of three, two had opened roughly 100 dharma apertures, putting them just on the verge of having four life flames. The other was the superior of the group, and had 120 dazzling dharma apertures open. Even when she wasn't in the profound radiance state, anyone in her presence felt like they were in front of a burning star. The three women were like bright moons that made the other heavenly bodies seem dim in comparison. Almost immediately, they were the talk of Seven Blood Eyes.

Xu Qing was privy to the details about them thanks to the files he had access to, though he didn't get a chance to see them in person and get first-hand information.

What he did know was that the three women were chosen disciples from an organization on Revered Ancient called the Supreme Arbiter Immortal Society.

Around this time, the sect suddenly sent out details to all Foundation Establishment disciples regarding some previously secret information about Revered Ancient.

Normally speaking, the sect wouldn't casually reveal this information, and thus, most disciples didn't know much about Revered Ancient. But considering people from there were now showing up in the sect, it was necessary to reveal the details. As of now, the veil of secrecy regarding the mainland was being lifted.

The Revered Ancient mainland was a sprawling place that was generally divided up into large regions. A region was divided up into counties, and counties were divided into prefectures. There were countless species and all sorts of other strange things on the mainland. It was so large that no human could ever walk the entire continent. In fact, its size defied imagination.

The human species originated in the depths of the sprawling Revered Ancient mainland, in a location incomparably far away from Seven Blood Eyes in the Forbidden Sea. It was the same place where the last of the human Ancient Emperors had established an imperial capital. Because of it, humans considered it a holy land.

That Ancient Emperor was called Dark Serenity. He had conquered all other species during the epoch in which he lived, unifying Revered Ancient and establishing a road from his imperial capital all the way to the Forbidden Sea. That road passed through thirty-seven regions on its way to the shore.

In those days, it was called Dark Serenity's Imperial Highway. However, as epochs came and went, it later came to be known as Dark Serenity's Ancient Road.

Later, the human species declined, and innumerable other species rose to prominence. Also, countless forbidden regions had formed. Because of that, humans were no longer as glorious as they had once been, and had lost control of much of the territory they once owned. But they still maintained that ancient road.

Furthermore, other species proliferated and developed the area surrounding the road.

Over the years, the ancient road became home to seven human counties. Within those counties, human sects and organizations rose and fell. Though humans' overall strength and power deteriorated, the seven counties and the imperial city made humans one of the top species on Revered Ancient.

As for the seven counties, they all existed in different regions. The seventh county occupied the spot where the ancient road reached the Forbidden Sea, and was in the Holytide Region. It was called Sea-Sealing County. It was called a county, but in reality it was vastly more majestic than all of Seven Blood Eyes. It contained five prefectures, each of which was ten times larger than the entire continent of South Phoenix.

Within Sea-Sealing County, the prefecture closest to the Forbidden Sea was called Emperor-Receiving Prefecture. According to the stories, after Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity went out to sea to corroborate his dao, he returned to conquer Revered Ancient, and made landfall on that spot. That was the origin of the prefecture's name, and it was still used to this day.

Emperor-Receiving Prefecture was full of powerful organizations that tended to balance each other out. There were also nonhumans who had established camps and cities in the prefecture. Over the years, after countless wars and treaties, six powerful groups rose to the top.

They were...

A collection of numerous smaller sects and groups, with seven sects in charge. It was a colossal monster of an organization known as the Seven Sect Coalition.

The Church of Departure was present in the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture as well. They venerated Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity, and had carried out all sorts of insane plots, shedding blood left and right to make sacrifices to the Daoist Rite of Departure.

Cultivators native to the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture had a secret legacy, which was essentially the dao of the prefecture. They were... the Supreme Arbiter Immortal Society!

The fourth group focused on collecting grues. They gave them food in the form of flesh and drink in the form of souls. They were a vicious lot that were known to strike despair into the hearts of all other cultivators. They controlled 137 human cities, all of which were littered with corpses and rotting flesh. Unfortunately, none of the other groups could do anything about them. They were Three-Spirits Dao-Suppressing Mountain.

The fifth group considered themselves supreme. Their entire organization was centered around a relic that had been passed down for many epochs. The name of their organization was the same as the name of the relic they venerated: the Supreme Beginning Netherflight Pillar. Supposedly, the Supreme Beginning Netherflight Pillar was so tall it pierced the clouds, and no one knew the full extent of its height.

The sixth and final group made their home on a 300,000-meter-tall mountain that resembled a vicious ghost. He sat cross-legged in the middle of Emperor-Receiving Prefecture, wearing a suit of armor and holding a massive blade in his hands. A world rested on each of his shoulders, making him seem like a god from ancient times. The two worlds on his shoulders were the sixth and final group. They were called South Tor Ghost Mountain. The vicious god upon whose shoulders they rested was called the South Tor Ghost Emperor.

In addition to these groups, there were many nonhumans as well as plenty of forbidden regions, as well as two forbidden grounds that were kept under control, but were constantly expanding on a yearly basis.

Chapter 227: Master Shengyun

All disciples in Seven Blood Eyes were stunned by the new information about the Revered Ancient mainland. They felt as if a veil covering their eyes had been lifted away, expanding their minds and opening up the world to them.

It was the same with Xu Qing. However, there was more to it than that for him. The fact that this information had been publicly revealed had deeper implications. To Xu Qing, it felt like the sect was preparing the disciples for things to come.

Obviously, he wasn't the only one to be thinking that. The disciples of Seven Blood Eyes were like venomous bugs in a jar, and as a result, all had similar instincts. The truth was that he was absolutely right.

Of particular note was that there were only general descriptions of five of the groups from the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture, whereas one group had much more detailed information. And that group was... the Seven Sect Coalition.

The Seven Sect Coalition was actually a composite organization made up of 137 other sects, some of them large, some of them small. And there were seven of them that were the leaders of the group.

That was the origin of the name Seven Sect Coalition.

One reason those seven groups reign supreme was that their high-level cultivators had amazing battle prowess, they had a solid group of strong mid-level cultivators, and their low-level cultivators were numerous. However, there was a more important reason.

And that was... of the 137 sects that made up the coalition, they were the only ones who had 'taboo treasures.'

Ordinary magical treasures weren't very common, not even in Revered Ancient. Each and every one could be considered heaven-shaking and earth-shattering, beyond the comprehension of ghosts and gods. However, they could only be used sparingly, as each use would cause it to be contaminated with mutagen to a certain degree. And if used too many times, they would become 'crippled treasures.'

As a result, anyone who possessed a magical treasure had to be careful about how many times it was used, and at the same time, constantly maintain it in an effort to cleanse it of the polluting mutagen.

As for the 'taboo treasures'... that was a term applied to magical treasures that reached a higher level of development. They were much rarer than ordinary magical treasures, and were so powerful that even one of them had the capacity to destroy an entire sect.

In the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture, only groups with a magical treasure capable of wiping out another sect would qualify to be in a leadership position. The taboo magical treasures were how the seven sects rose to prominence, and were how they commanded an apex level of battle prowess. Furthermore, it was how the Seven Sect Coalition came to be one of the six most powerful groups in the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture.

With the taboo magical treasures, the Seven Sect Coalition had the capacity to inflict serious damage onto the core essence of the Daoist Rite of Departure or the Supreme Arbiter Immortal Society.

That capacity was also related to ranking.

The seven strongest sects in the Seven Sect Coalition were... the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect, Spiritgloom Valley, House of Grue Hunters, the Lunisolar Dao Palace, the Heaven-Fate Pavilion, the Heavenmirror Treasure Sect, and the Dark Serenity Sect!

Almost immediately, this information became much more hotly discussed among Seven Blood Eyes disciples than the three female cultivators from the Supreme Arbiter Immortal Society.

Zhang San even had a long discussion with Xu Qing about it via voice message.

That said, Xu Qing wasn't very interested in the subject. His attention was currently focused on the process of opening his wish boxes. He had two wish boxes, one that he had acquired from the young merman he'd killed, which had already been infused with enough dharmaforce that it was halfway open. The other was from Horsefour, which had been completely untouched.

As a result, it was going to take longer to open the latter. As for the former, it was now ninety-nine percent ready, and all Xu Qing needed was another four or five days and he would be able to open it.

I wonder what I'll find inside...

Xu Qing was really looking forward to finding out. That was especially true when he thought about how Wu Jianwu had seemingly gone into a trance after opening that other wish box.

What did Wu Jianwu find in that one?

Though he was curious, he doubted the idiot would ever explain. [1]

Time passed. Outside cultivators and members of other species showed up on a daily basis. Eventually, on the fifth day, just when Xu Qing was about to open his first wish box, seven enormous ships appeared outside of Seven Blood Eyes.

They were luxurious ships, each of them fully 3,000 meters in length. They pulsed with dazzling energy, and if one looked closely, it became obvious that they had been constructed with sea beasts that were godly entities. Each ship looked different. One resembled a godly bluegreen dragon, another looked like a terrifying jellyfish. Another resembled a vicious turtle, while one... looked like a three-clawed black-scaled dragon.

Their arrival brought a huge tempest into the Seven Blood Eyes port, causing countless watercraft to bob violently in the surging waves. It almost seemed like a tsunami had hit the sect.

It was an incomparably majestic event that led to widespread shock throughout the sect.

In fact, the ships completely ignored the Seven Blood Eyes Formation, sailing right into the port in shocking fashion. It was as if the formation wasn't effective against them at all. That made it clear that this new group of cultivators had a higher level of authority than the Seven Blood Eyes Formation. It was the first time in many years that any Seven Blood Eyes disciples had seen someone enter the sect without being announced. And in very rare fashion, the sect didn't do anything about it.

The seven huge ships entered seven different harbors. Then cultivators disembarked from six of the ships, and they radiated such immense glory and radiance that all Seven Blood Eyes disciples were struck to the core.

These huge ships came from the Seven Sect Coalition, and the people disembarking from them were envoys from the seven top sects. Specifically, they were chosen disciples. Among them were both men and women, and all of them were young. They wore extravagant clothing and imparted a sensation that surpassed anything mortal. What was more, their auras were dazzlingly mighty.

Astonishingly, they were all four-flame cultivators!

Every single one had 120 dharma apertures, like glittering stars. Anyone who looked at them would be shaken deeply, and would feel like they were sordid and unworthy.

These people really did seem like the children of gods descended to the mundane world.

The six people stepping off of the six giant ships were obviously outstanding chosen. However, after they were on shore, the first thing they did was look toward the ship that resembled a three-clawed black-scaled dragon.

A roar echoed out from that ship, like heavenly thunder that shook everything far and wide. And as the dragon roared, its head dropped down, and its forehead split open.

Out walked a young man wearing golden formal court attire. Around his waist was a golden silk belt with a spider motif, and his black hair was bound in a golden crown inlaid with jade. [2]

He stood tall and straight, and his facial features were inherently noble-looking. The moment he strolled out into the open, the other six god-like chosen all bowed their heads. It was as if this young man's arrival made them all feel as inferior as dust.

What was even more amazing was that seven-colored light swirled above his head into the form of a canopy. It was an umbrella that also seemed to pulse with the chanting of wind. From a distance, it was actually possible to see a seven-colored wind-chanting lamp in the umbrella! The lamp's seven colors were dazzling to the utmost degree, and emanated a mighty pressure that caused all onlookers to be flabbergasted.

“Life lamp!”

It was impossible to say who uttered the words first, but in only a moment, everyone was shouting it.

That seven-colored wind-chanting lamp was none other than... a legendary life lamp!

This young man with the life lamp had opened 120 dharma apertures! What was more, behind him was the faint image of a strange bird with a green body and a red tail, and it also emanated crushing pressure. Shockingly, it was an image projected by an imperial-class technique!

All of these things created an absolutely astonishing moment. With his life lamp, he seemed like a person who could crush all the chosen disciples in an entire epoch.

This person was the number one chosen of this generation in the Seven Sect Coalition. He was... Chu Shengyun from the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect. Although he wasn't in the Gold Core level, he actually surpassed Gold Core! And his grandfather, the patriarch of the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect, had bestowed upon him the name Master Shengyun! [3]

He was the pride of the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect, and was the dao child and highest-ranking member of their echelon, someone who they hoped would tread the path of the Ancient Emperors and Imperial Sovereigns. He had an extremely high position in the Seven Sect Coalition, and had

been groomed to be pitted against the dao children of the other five leading organizations in the Emperor-Receiving Prefecture.

Furthermore, among the countless disciples in the Seven Sect Coalition, he was the only one who had a life lamp and an imperial-class technique. It wasn't just his cultivation base that was amazing. He had extraordinary facial features, with fair and radiant skin, angular features, and an otherworldliness that made him so extraordinary he was comparable to Xu Qing.

However, he also radiated a sense of indifference when he looked at people, as if they were mere bugs to him. In that regard, he was very different from Xu Qing. Xu Qing was always calm, and the main thing he did when looking at other people was examine their throats.

The figurative tsunami that hit the port, and the sudden crushing pressure that resulted, caused waves to reach Harbor 176.

Xu Qing, who was working with his wish box, frowned. Standing, he walked out of the cabin and looked toward Harbor 1. Given the level of his cultivation, he could clearly see the newly arrived chosen, and of course, the young man with the seven-colored wind-chanting lamp and the green-bodied, red-tailed bird. The moment he saw the lamp, his heart skipped a beat, and his eyes glowed with profound light. At the same time, the green-bodied red-tailed bird caused his golden crow tattoo to emanate intense heat, as if it wished to emerge and crush the bird.

From that reaction alone, Xu Qing could tell that the strange bird was a projection created by an imperial-class technique. This was his first time encountering someone else with either a life lamp or an imperial-class technique. After taking a close look, he turned and went back into the cabin. It didn't really matter to Xu Qing who this person was, so long as he didn't exhibit any killing intent. As long as he didn't, the only thing Xu Qing was interested in focusing on... was opening the wish box!

Sitting down cross-legged, he looked at the lump of metal, his eyes shining with intense anticipation. He didn't open the box in the strange way Wu Jianwu had. Instead, he just took a breath, closed his eyes, calmed himself, and then opened his eyes. Putting his hand on the box, he pushed.

CRUNCH!

A wish box left behind by someone in a previous epoch was now opening in front of Xu Qing! Looking down, his eyes began to shine, and he inhaled sharply. There were two things inside the wish box.

A black medicinal pill.

And a jade slip that was covered with black blotches!

Chapter 228: Poison to Shake All Life, Eradicate a Myriad Worlds

Xu Qing stared into the wish box, his eyes glittering.

As Wu Jianwu had explained, wish boxes could have anything in them. If you were lucky, it might be an imperial-class legacy. On the other hand, you could also get nothing more than some dried-up leaves. It all came down to chance.

Based on Xu Qing's understanding, the fact that the very first wish box he opened had a medicinal pill and a jade slip meant that he was very lucky.

Settling his thoughts, he prepared to pick up the jade slip and examine it. However, before he did, his expression flickered, and he reached out and slammed the wish box shut. The aura from within the box was therefore cut off, yet his skin was already starting to turn dark.

"Poison?" Xu Qing's pupils constricted.

It wasn't just his flesh that was being affected. Even his internal organs were starting to rot. What was particularly shocking to Xu Qing was that he wasn't experiencing any sensation of pain. Whether externally or internally, the symptoms were unlike anything he had ever seen. It almost seemed like he was hallucinating. He got absolutely no sensation from the darkening of his skin or the withering of his organs, and couldn't detect any dharma force at work within him.

Yet based on what his eyes were telling him, and his understanding of the dao of poison, he knew that he had been poisoned.

What kind of poison is this...?

Flesh was starting to peel off of his face and drop to the ground, causing him to bleed profusely. In fact, it wasn't just his face. It was happening to him all over. Yet even still, he felt absolutely no pain.

Mulling the situation over, he observed what was happening for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Though the rot had filled his entire body, the violet crystal's powers of regeneration were combating the effects.

Another incense stick's worth of time passed, and the rotting had ceased. Yet another incense stick's worth of time passed, and violet light had spread to fill him, and was working on regenerating him. After about an hour had passed, he was back to normal. Keeping his breathing steady, he looked down thoughtfully at the wish box.

It's a poison pill! A poison pill that's been sealed away for countless years. And its mere aura is enough to kill someone in body and mind.

After some thought, he carefully opened the wish box again.

Even with his violet crystal, the poison was still shockingly effective against him, so he didn't dare to actually pick up the pill and look at it. He was worried that if he touched it, the violet crystal might not be able to keep up with the effects of the pill, in which case he would be in danger. That said, he was no amateur when it came to the dao of poison, and was aware of the general principles of how to deal with the situation. After opening the box for a short time, he closed it again while the rotting effects spread through him.

Normally speaking, once you're exposed to a poison a few times, your body will naturally start to resist it.

Ignoring the rotting that was spreading through his body, he took a large quantity of medicinal plants off of the rack next to him and started experimenting with a concoction to counter the symptoms. He had no idea what the primary ingredient in the poison was, so he had no way to even consider how to create an antidote. But he could counter the symptoms of rotting by creating a medicine focused on life force, energy, and blood.

Before long, he had a medicinal liquid prepared. When he took a mouthful, the symptoms disappeared almost immediately. Following this pattern, he repeatedly opened the box to do tests. The night passed quickly, and by daybreak, he had begun to build a resistance to the effects of the poison.

At that point, he put on a pair of gloves and then took out the jade slip. When he sent some dharma force into it, an ancient and weak voice spoke into his mind from the slip.

“What makes a great dao?”

“Three thousand great daos, all may be holy. Might one of them be the dao of poison?”

“People of the world disdain the treacherous and vicious. They disdain the poisonous and vile. How could those who mock it as a minor dao turn it into a great weapon?”

“In the past, I did think the same, and spurned the vile methods of poison. One day, I cut down a nonhuman who emerged from a god domain. This cultivator commanded shocking battle prowess, and walked an incredibly treacherous dao. Before dying, his poisonous eyes glared at me, causing my cultivation to drop by an entire realm in a single day. Ten days later, I was a mortal. I lived for a sixty-year-cycle in the mundane world, experiencing endless torment and suffering. I wasted endless precious materials, but finally drove the poison from my body and collected it into a pill.

“Afterwards, I researched that pill until the apocalypse began. I never fully succeeded, and thus, am leaving behind this partially completed pill.

“This pill is a poison, and it is also taboo! If you are a high-level cultivator, do not attempt to use it. You will be damned by myriad tribulations and will die beyond the shadow of a doubt. Seek a low-level Gold Core cultivator with one heavenly palace, then use this poison pill as their gold core. That person will become a poison core cultivator like no other in existence. [1]

“Only in this way can one transform the soul and truly walk the path of the taboo pill!”

“Based on my calculations, the path of the taboo pill uses poison to shake all living beings. Use the taboo to eradicate myriad worlds. Ultimate dread and terror! Or perhaps, fathom the magic of god domains to be the archenemy of all peoples!”

Waves of astonishment filled Xu Qing’s heart and mind as he stared at the jade slip. At the same time, he once again filled with rot.

As the power of the violet crystal worked within him against the poison, he closed his eyes and contemplated the contents of the jade slip. By the time he opened his eyes again, day had passed, and it was night again.

After repeatedly exposing himself to the strange poison in the wish box, he had slowly but surely improved his natural resistance by a small degree. And yet, it was still with extreme caution that he opened the wish box. As of now, he still didn't dare touch the pill, not even with a glove on.

It's a consummate poison pill from a previous epoch, but it's not designed to be given to someone to consume. Instead, it can be assimilated and turned into a Gold Core.

His eyes sparkled as he looked at the pill for a time, then closed the box again. After he had recovered, he opened it again to continue his research.

By the time it was light again, he had gone through numerous rounds of research, and was starting to get an idea of what he was working with. This poison pill seemed like it was a destined opportunity to achieve a great dao, and also a turning point in the Gold Core level. It was different from the Gold Core level in the current epoch; if someone really practiced cultivation with this pill, their killing power would be shocking. However, the process of doing so would be incredibly dangerous.

As Xu Qing considered what the jade slip said, he thought about how he actually wasn't very far from the Gold Core level himself.

Unfortunately, the pill isn't complete. It's also experienced the baptism of ancient time, to the point where it's in danger of crumbling into nothing....

Based on Xu Qing's skill with poison, he could tell that the black pill was itself beginning to decay, and using it properly would require reconcocting it. The process of reconcocting it would also be a step in researching and understanding it.

To reconcoct the pill, to bring it to life... will require a massive amount of poison ingredients!

Xu Qing closed the box again and carefully put it away. He took a deep breath as anticipation swirled in his heart. From what he could tell, this particular wish box contained very amazing contents. And that made him even more interested in finding out what was in the other wish box.

I wonder when the wartime rewards will be distributed. If he wanted to reconcoct the pill, he would need a massive amount of spirit stones to buy all of the poisonous plants he would need. Given that he was embarrassingly short of money right now, he couldn't help but think of the rewards the sect had promised.

The rewards for the Seazombie war had not been distributed, though, so there was currently nothing he could do on that front. Taking out his identity medallion, he checked the division files to see what had been going on in the past few days.

Almost immediately, his eyes narrowed.

During the time he had been researching the taboo poison pill, he hadn't paid any attention to anything else. Therefore, he had been completely unaware that there was a huge commotion among the sect disciples. It was a dramatic situation related to the chosen visitors from the Seven Sect Coalition! Those chosen had been acting very overbearingly, and as a result, were the center of attention among all of the Seven Blood Eyes disciples.

On the day after they arrived, the chosen from the seven sects, following certain missions and orders, began issuing dueling challenges to the highnesses from the various mountain peaks! It seemed they wanted to establish prestige!

That was especially true of Master Shengyun from the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect, who was the number one chosen in the Seven Sect Coalition, highest ranking member of his sect's echelon, and whose cultivation base was so high he could crush any other cultivator in the same level as himself. He was incredibly famous, not just in Emperor-Receiving Prefecture, but also in the other prefectures in Sea-Sealing County. As for his duel challenge, he had issued it to the First Peak.

After all, the First Peak's supervisory sect was Master Shengyun's Soaring Cloud Sword Sect.

On the day he issued the challenge, he went to the First Peak, offered formal greetings to the patriarch and peaklord, and had challenged the First Peak's grand highness to a duel.

Unfortunately, the First Peak's grand highness was in seclusion trying to break through to the Gold Core level, and thus could not accept the challenge. As a result, the one to fight was the second highness, who was in the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Master Shengyun only made one move in the duel. Using that, he crushed the second highness' bones, nearly killing him, and leaving his cultivation base half-crippled. A Gold Core elder tried to interfere with the fight, but was unable to help the second highness. In fact, Master Shengyun slammed into him and knocked him back 300 meters.

This event stunned Seven Blood Eyes, especially when Master Shengyun ignited all four of his life flames against a Gold Core expert. Given that he had a life lamp and an imperial-class technique, it gave him the shocking and legendary battle prowess equivalent to six flames. That type of battle prowess was a thing of legend among Foundation Establishment cultivators, and was inaccessible to the vast majority of people. It was a level of strength fully deserving of being called 'the absolute peak' of Foundation Establishment.

That was why it was said that Master Shengyun would probably be an Ancient Emperor one day. Stories of the duel spread throughout the continent of South Phoenix, and of course left the disciples of Seven Blood Eyes feeling very powerless. Master Shengyun was just too strong.

At the same time, other chosen from the Seven Sect Coalition issued dueling challenges to other mountain peaks, though none of them could devastate their opponents like Master Shengyun.

Though there were victories and defeats on both sides, overall, the Seven Sect Coalition chosen had the upper hand. That said, not all of the mountain peaks received dueling challenges. The Seventh Peak... did not receive a single challenge.

Unfortunately, one mountain peak couldn't represent the entire sect. Therefore, as time passed, Seven Blood Eyes, despite having come out victorious in the war against the Seazombies, began to fill with frustration.

Furthermore, the challenges were witnessed by all of the visitors to the sect, enabling everyone to see first-hand how mighty the Seven Sect Coalition was. Everyone could tell that the Seven Sect Coalition had come to establish prestige and put Seven Blood Eyes in place.

This was not a contest between high-level cultivators. That was because the battle prowess of high-level cultivators didn't need to be tested. Sir Bloodsmelter had shocking aptitude and mysterious destined opportunities. Unexpectedly, he had recently broken through from the Spirit Trove level into the Void Returning level, just the same as the other patriarchs from the seven sects. However, he was only one person.

What was more, the Seven Sect Coalition's true battle prowess didn't come just from those seven patriarchs, but most importantly, from their taboo magical treasures! There was no question that they possessed superior battle prowess. Therefore, the patriarchs didn't need to come. Instead, they sent their chosen disciples with the goal of... crushing the spirits of the Seven Blood Eyes disciples, and making them feel powerless down to the core of their being.

That was obvious to Xu Qing. That said, it wasn't a concern to him. He wasn't one of the highnesses. Though he had accomplished something amazing and thus been placed into the echelon, he wasn't the mastermind behind that event. Thus, with the highnesses around, there was no reason anyone would cause trouble for him.

Days passed.

The chosen from the seven sects continued to act aggressively, and the Seven Blood Eyes disciples got more frustrated. One evening when Xu Qing was researching his new poison pill, he looked up when his identity medallion vibrated. It was an urgent message from the Violent Crimes Division.

"Sir, there's a large gathering of Night Dove operatives in Harbor 79. There's some sort of deal going down. And the customer... is a chosen from the Seven Sect Coalition's House of Grue Hunters. It's Sima Ling! How do we handle this, sir? Please advise!" [2] [3]

Chapter 229: Arrogant and Despotic

The message also contained details about this Sima Ling from the House of Grue Hunters. Xu Qing looked it over quickly.

"Sima Ling is a chosen disciple from the House of Grue Hunters. His cultivation base is in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, with four life flames. He has no life lamp and no imperial-class technique. He cultivates the Nether-Sealing Grue Index.

"He's vicious and ruthless, and has numerous grues sealed within him. He's incredibly strong; he severely injured the third highness of the Third Peak in a duel, using vicious tactics. A few days ago, he fought the Third Peak's grand highness to a draw, and scheduled a follow-up match tomorrow morning at dawn.

"Investigation has revealed that Sima Ling is the big customer that caused so many Night Dove agents to converge on Seven Blood Eyes.

"Sir, how shall we handle this situation?"

Xu Qing's eyes glittered as he coolly responded with a text message.

"Arrest them all, even if they resist. Bring them in alive or dead!"

"Sir, yes sir!"

In response to Xu Qing's orders, all seven of the sect's Violent Crimes Divisions sprang into action. Thousands of constables went out into the night and headed straight toward Harbor 79. Two of the divisions sent their directors in as leaders, specifically, the directors from the First Peak and the

Third Peak. As for the director from the Third Peak, he was personally dissatisfied with this chosen from the House of Grue Hunters.

After issuing his orders, Xu Qing walked out of the cabin, collected up his dharmaskiff, and then flew up into the air toward Harbor 79.

The moon hung bright in the air, so even though it was night, Harbor 79 was well-illuminated. In one particular berth was a very large ship, fully 3,000 meters long, making it seem like some hulking beast. Numerous horse carts were lined up to deliver goods to the ship.

Standing on the shore was a young man in extravagant clothing, his hands clasped behind his back as he coldly looked at the big ship. He appeared to be about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. His eyes sparkled like stars, and his entire person exuded a gruish aura. In fact, the area around him seemed particularly strong with mutagen. What was more, his eyes didn't match in terms of color. His left eye was red, while his right eye was azure. Because of the two different colors, anyone who looked at him would realize he was extraordinary. Especially noteworthy was that, if you looked closely into his eyes, you would find yourself looking into two hells, each of them burning with either red or azure flames. And within those flames were a haze of countless grues, screaming in agony as they burned. The sound wasn't audible to the ear, but anyone who got close to him would feel their mind and heart trembling.

The young man looked icily arrogant as he stood there. He wasn't hiding his identity in any way, as though he wasn't worried at all that someone might see him. He apparently believed that, even if someone did see him, they wouldn't do anything to him.

This person was Sima Ling, chosen from the House of Grue Hunters.

Standing in front of him were a few dozen people in black garments, who were all Night Dove operatives. All of them had extraordinary cultivation bases, but at the same time, they looked nervous. They kept looking around, and urging the cart-drivers to work faster.

Not too far away, atop a building, was an old man, also dressed in fine clothing, standing in the moonlight as he looked on, radiating the energy of a Gold Core cultivation base. His eyes were focused solely on Sima Ling. Obviously, he didn't care about anyone else. He was, of course, Sima Ling's dao protector during his time here in Seven Blood Eyes.

As the night wind blew, it stirred Sima Ling's hair. In his hands, which were clasped behind his back, he held a string of black pearls that he fiddled with impatiently.

"This is it?" he said. "I expected more goods from Night Dove."

The black-garbed man who seemed to be the leader smiled bitterly and said, "Your Highness Sima, there's really nothing we could do. You demanded that we bring our goods to Seven Blood Eyes, except this sect is extremely displeased with us. Over the past few years, there have been several very violent crackdowns on us. The reality is that we brought much more with us, only to have about thirty percent of it confiscated by Seven Blood Eyes. Their Violent Crimes Division has been a real problem."

"Violent Crimes Division?" Sima Ling said. He snorted coldly. As a chosen from the House of Grue Hunters, and a cultivator from the Revered Ancient mainland, he despised this backwater Seven Blood Eyes. That was especially true after he

challenged the Third Peak's highnesses, and found them to be very weak. This wasn't his first time hearing of the Violent Crimes Division. He knew that the division had been causing problems for Night Dove, and that had him feeling very irritated.

"Your Highness Sima, I urge you... to cover your face, sir. The Violent Crimes Divisions here in Seven Blood Eyes are no joke. That's especially true after the Seventh Peak's Violent Crimes Division got a new director named Xu Qing. He doesn't hesitate to shed blood, and is both brazen and bold..."

"Xu Qing?" Sima Ling said coolly. "He's a nobody. If they show up here, they'll find out what happens when a bunch of subsidiary sect disciples dare to interfere with the affairs of their superiors. That's not to mention that this Xu... what's his name? Xu Qing? He's not even one of the highnesses from the Seventh Peak. Not even Huang Yikun from the Seventh Peak's supervisory sect, the Dark Serenity Sect, would dare to stick his nose in my affairs! [1]"

The black-garbed leader hesitated for a moment, and was about to say more when a piercing noise could be heard off in the distance. At the same time, a signal light shot up into the air and exploded, creating the words Violent Crimes! [2]"

Simultaneously, figures rushed in from all directions, accompanied by a cold voice.

"The Violent Crimes Division is here to arrest all Night Dove operatives and accomplices. Don't even think of fleeing!"

The faces of the black-garbed men fell, and they backed up as Violent Crimes Division constables raced toward them. However, Sima Ling simply chuckled coldly and took a step forward.

"How impudent!"

The moment his foot landed, his four life flames burned to life, causing a terrifying aura to ripple out in all directions. The burning of his four life flames was like an entire world on fire, creating pressure so mighty it was almost tangible. Rumbling sounds echoed out everywhere, and the first wave of incoming Violent Crimes Division constables coughed up blood and were sent tumbling backward.

A massive tempest now raged on the shore, with Sima Ling at the center of it.

"Keep loading up the ship," Sima Ling said, glaring contemptuously at the Violent Crimes Division constables who didn't dare to get any closer.

There were Foundation Establishment cultivators among the constables, and there were two who stood out among them. One of them had the aura of the Soaring Cloud Sword Sect on him, and the other emanated the grue fluctuations of the House of Grue Hunters. Those two were the directors of the Violent Crimes Divisions from the First and Third Peaks. But not even they dared to get any closer, and simply stood, waiting. The cultivation techniques of Seven Blood Eyes were all derived from the techniques of the Seven Sect Coalition, but obviously existed on a different level.

“I really don’t understand why my sect was worried about rabble-rousers like this.” Sima Ling had always been an arrogant person, even back in his own sect. Now that he was in Seven Blood Eyes, he was even worse.

The surrounding Night Dove operatives were shaken. They were scared of the Violent Crimes Division, but seeing how easily the division had been cowed, they now breathed sighs of relief. They were now thinking that the Violent Crimes Division wasn’t that impressive after all; once a supervisory sect showed up, they had no choice but to bow their heads.

Stirring back into action, they sent cart after cart into the big ship. However, just as they were redoubling their efforts, a black streak appeared noiselessly off in the distance, moving like a lightning bolt.

Actually, in some ways, it was a lightning bolt.

Streaking forth, it pierced through the necks of one of the black-garbed Night Dove operatives. Before he could even scream, the black lightning bolt pierced through the necks of seven additional black-garbed men. As the black iron skewer zipped back and forth, its lightning symbols flared, creating something like a web of electricity that filled the area. As the screams rang out, the rest of the Night Dove operators looked around in shock.

Sima Ling’s eyebrows shot up. Ignoring the iron skewer, he looked off into the distance.

What he saw was someone speeding in his direction over the water, standing atop a bluegreen dragon. This person wore a violet daoist robe, and his black hair whipped behind him, revealing his fair face, with handsome features that would leave just about anyone breathless. He had cold, aloof eyes that were so calm and peaceful they almost looked bored. As his hair danced in the wind, he almost looked like an immortal. With him came a baleful aura that was so cold it caused Sima Ling’s hair to stand on end, and only enhanced the placid look in his eyes. It was like this person could crush anything and everything in his path, as easily as dried weeds.

Sima Ling’s eyes narrowed.

Meanwhile, all of the Violent Crimes Division constables who had been holding back at a safe distance dropped to their knees and kowtowed. It didn’t matter if they were from the Seventh Peak or not.

“Well met, Director!”

Their voices echoed like thunder. As for the constables from the Seventh Peak, their eyes shone with fervor, and they shouted even louder than the others. All of the Night Dove operatives in the area were shaken.

The directors from the First and Third Peaks all breathed sighs of relief as they clasped hands and bowed.

“I advise you not to stick your nose in my business,” Sima Ling said slowly, his eyes burning with displeasure.

Xu Qing didn’t even look at him. Turning to the other two directors, he coolly said, “Start arresting people.”

“Sir, yes sir!” Instantly, the surrounding constables rushed toward the Night Dove cultivators. Some of them also took the fighting right into the big ship.

Xu Qing’s arrival left the Night Dove operatives deeply shaken, and there were some who now just wanted to get away. Sadly for them, the Violent Crimes Division had the entire place locked down. In the blink of an eye, the sounds of fighting and killing filled the air.

“Feeling suicidal, Xu Qing?” Sima Ling growled, his eyes lighting up with killing intent. His cultivation base then surged, and he became like a lightning bolt that shot right toward Xu Qing, his hands reaching toward his eyes to pluck them out.

Chapter 230: Crushing Sima Ling

The House of Grue Hunters was one of the lead organizations in the Seven Sect Coalition. Given that Sima Ling had been selected by his sect to represent them here, it was obvious he wasn’t someone to be taken lightly. After all, he was responsible for maintaining face for the House of Grue Hunters. To a great sect, face was an extremely important thing, as it directly related to both their current ranking and their prospects for future growth. The weak generally didn’t qualify to survive in a brutal world.

Thus, it made sense that the House of Grue Hunters’ number one chosen in Foundation Establishment, Sima Ling, was outstanding in battle prowess, cultivation base, and fighting experience. With the help of the sect, he was abundantly prepared in all respects.

His voice was icy cold, and his words were still echoing out as his fingers neared Xu Qing’s face to pluck his eyes out. However, what was waiting for him was Xu Qing’s cold gaze, as well as a fire raging from inside.

Xu Qing’s battle prowess, cultivation base, and fighting experience all came from his experience as a venomous bug in a jar. He had risen through slaughter. That was a stark contrast to Sima Ling. If Sima Ling lost a fight in the coalition, he wouldn’t die. But every single fight Xu Qing had experienced had been a life-or-death struggle. Had he failed a single time, he would be dead.

Therefore, his experience was carved in his bones and engraved in his heart!

In the blink of an eye, Xu Qing entered the profound radiance state. All of his 82 dharma apertures lit up at once, like eighty-two massive furnaces. As the intense heat spread out, the golden crow materialized behind him, its heat also filling him, pushing his battle prowess to the level of four life flames. With his imperial-class technique bolstering his fleshly body, his battle prowess reached a barbaric level. Compared to the last time he fought someone in the four-flame level, the Seazombie dao child Vastworld, he now had nearly 20 additional dharma apertures. His dharma force was even more robust, and his life flames more astonishing. Clenching his right hand into a fist, he unleashed a devastating blow.

His fist landed directly on Sima Ling’s right hand. A massive boom rang out, causing the water in the harbor to seethe, and crushing the soil on the shore. A massive wave rolled out as Sima Ling’s face fell, and he staggered backward with disbelief in his eyes.

He hadn’t even considered the possibility that Xu Qing would be able to power up so quickly. This was a level of strength that, as far as he was concerned, wasn’t common at all. Yet he wasn’t able to

pick up on any clues about how it was possible. All he could sense was Xu Qing's life flames. Everything else... was a blur.

"You—"

Before Sima Ling could say anything else, Xu Qing stepped toward him, eyes flashing coldly. Within his right hand appeared a dagger of balefire which he slashed viciously toward Sima Ling's throat.

Sima Ling's eyes glittered with killing intent as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and pushed down on his chest. As Xu Qing's dagger neared, Sima Ling opened his mouth and let loose a roar.

The roar contained a gruish power that caused a projected image to appear around Sima Ling. It was a partially decomposed grue wearing a tattered black robe, pulsing with a frigid aura as it lunged toward Xu Qing.

In almost exactly the same instant, the shadow beneath Xu Qing's feet twitched. Transforming into the shape of a tree that no one else could see, it opened its mouth and inhaled sharply. The grue projection instantly collapsed! Then, a black lightning bolt shot toward Sima Ling from off to the side.

Frowning, Sima Ling flew backward and simultaneously threw a blue scale out toward the skewer to block its path. When the two items clashed, the scale erupted with countless gray threads that wrapped around the skewer. However, it couldn't stop the skewer from exploding with numerous lightning bolts that continued onward to Sima Ling.

Sima Ling was about to dodge out of the way when Xu Qing closed in, his right fist viciously rocketing forward surrounded by an intense sea of flames. A boom rang out as Sima Ling was once again shoved backward. Eyes gleaming viciously, he was about to launch a counter attack when the image of a golden crow looked at him and inhaled deeply.

"This technique..." blurted Sima Ling, his eyes widening with shock. He performed another incantation gesture, causing a host of long hairs to erupt from his chest, which rapidly surrounded him like a defensive shield. In the blink of an eye, intense rumbling sounds filled the air as Sima Ling, surrounded by the shield of hairs, was slammed by Xu Qing down onto the ground.

With the initiative in his hands, Xu Qing didn't hesitate to unleash another blow.

However, before his fist could land, the hair surrounding Sima Ling snapped out into the shape of countless arrows that shot toward Xu Qing. Thumping sounds could be heard as the arrows pierced Xu Qing. However, he didn't so much as frown. His expression was the same as ever as he reached up, grabbed the hairs, and yanked them violently.

Sima Ling's face filled with shock as he realized he couldn't fall back. Instead, he was dragged toward Xu Qing. Expression turning vicious, he howled as the image of a green-skinned, long-fanged grue emerged from within him and lunged toward Xu Qing.

Ignoring the grue, Xu Qing tilted his head back slightly, then, without uttering a single word, head-butted Sima Ling in the face. This was how Xu Qing fought. His style was to lead with ruthlessness, and it was something that even the crazy Captain was apprehensive of.

A boom rang out as blood splashed all over Sima Ling's face. Meanwhile, the green-skinned, long-fanged grue was shoved back inside of him, and the countless hairs collapsed. Sima Ling staggered backward. Inside, he was surprised, but outside, all he revealed was killing intent and a vicious smile.

"I underestimated you. Good thing I was just warming up."

Sima Ling shoved his hand to his forehead, causing rumbling sounds to fill him as all of the grues in the hells in his eyes vanished. Then, his entire body structure changed as the face of grue after grue appeared on his skin. The huge number of grues sealed inside of him were now bulging out of his skin, and as their auras spread out, it made it seem like he was an entire world engulfed in flames. The air around him rippled and distorted from the heat, and the nearby seawater evaporated.

Cracks and crevices spread out on the ground. The sheer might created a tempest that swept everywhere, causing both Night Dove operatives and Violent Crimes Division constables to cough up blood as they staggered away in astonishment.

Before, Sima Ling had taken a step forward and released some intimidating pressure. But this time he wasn't holding back, and as such, those who were hit by the pressure felt their souls burning. They were grievously injured! Everyone was flabbergasted!

As for the directors from the First and Third Peaks, they were two-flame cultivators, and they knew exactly what was happening. In fact, they could sense that their life flames were teetering on the verge of being extinguished. Although both knew all along that they weren't on the same level as Sima Ling, they were still very surprised.

Only Xu Qing's facial expression was the same as ever as he looked coldly at the explosive Sima Ling.

"I hate those eyes of yours!" Sima Ling shrieked like an evil ghost.

Then, just as he was about to charge forward in attack, his expression flickered, and a tremor passed through him. All of a sudden, his skin was turning black, and intense pain swept through him. It was being caused by the black beetles! Innumerable black beetles had been released by Xu Qing during his attacks, and they had just been waiting for the right opportunity to burrow into Sima Ling. They had found that chance when Xu Qing unleashed his barrage moments ago. As soon as they were inside, they started voraciously devouring Sima Ling's organs, while at the same time releasing massive amounts of mutagen and highly toxic poison.

This poison had caused the Seastar chieftain to react with surprise, and Sima Ling wasn't even close to that level. As he reacted with shock, so did the faces of the grues. They screamed sharply, and almost seemed on the verge of being born again as they tried to break free from his fleshly body.

Sima Ling was nearly driven mad by that. He knew exactly what was happening. The massive amounts of mutagen suddenly introduced into his body were weakening the seals on the grues, and causing him to lose control. Furthermore, the poison being released caused his vision to swim, and

was rapidly weakening him. Shrieking, he coughed up a mouthful of blood. And at long last, terror appeared in his eyes as he backed away and prepared to flee.

Xu Qing didn't hesitate to take a step forward and raise his right hand. His energy erupted, and a sea of flames spread out from behind him, rushing toward Sima Ling with crushing might.

"Help!!" shrieked Sima Ling in terror.

Meanwhile, the surrounding Night Dove operatives and Violent Crimes constables were all staring at Xu Qing in abject astonishment. They all knew that Xu Qing was strong, and had guessed that he had a reason for confidence in issuing an order for Sima Ling to be arrested. But none of them could have guessed that he would be able to crush a four-flame chosen with such apparent ease. After all, in recent days, many chosen from the Seven Sect Coalition had challenged the highnesses from various mountain peaks. And the result was that the Seven Blood Eyes disciples felt like they couldn't hold their heads up high. They had to admit that the Seven Sect Coalition disciples were outright terrifying.

But today... things were changing.

Just as Sima Ling cried for help, and right as Xu Qing was making his next move, a cold harrumph echoed out from nearby, accompanied by waves of mighty pressure.

"What outrageous gall you have!" It was Sima Ling's dao protector, who had been waiting on a nearby rooftop this entire time. Glaring coldly at Xu Qing, he took a step forward. "You good-for-nothing idiot. Be suppressed!"

Xu Qing turned to look at him. He had sensed this man earlier, and had assumed he would step in. Lifting his hand and pointing to the sky, he spoke for the first time during the entire encounter.

"The Violent Crimes Division, operating under orders from Master Sixth to arrest all Night Dove operatives in the city, has caught the culprit red-handed. According to Section 9 of Seven Blood Eyes law, and Section 3 of Violent Crimes Division regulations, any person who interferes with an officer of the law or assists a criminal shall be crushed. I hereby request the sect's spell formation to uphold the law and crush this interloper!"

The visitors from the Seven Sect Coalition qualified to supersede the spell formation. However... they didn't qualify to violate the laws of Seven Blood Eyes! When they simply passed through the spell formation upon arriving, that was the spell formation acknowledging them as friends and allies. But not even friends and allies could interfere with the carrying out of justice. In Seven Blood Eyes, sect law was the foundation of everything!

This dao protector was different from a chosen disciple. He had a higher cultivation base, but his status was actually lower. He was not in any echelon, and didn't have a lot of authority. Using the Seven Blood Eyes Formation to deal with chosen might not work, but Xu Qing was confident it could handle a dao protector.

What was more, the Violent Crimes Division's actions against Night Dove were approved by Master Sixth, and there was no way this dao protector's authority could surpass a peaklord.

And thus... an emotionless voice rang out through the night.

“The judgment shall be executed!”