

# Beyond the Timescape

## Chapter 33: Eternal Darkness

The Sea and Mountain Incantation was an ordinary technique, and the way it separated mutagen from spirit power wasn't anything special. There were many such techniques throughout the continent of South Phoenix, most of them cultivated by small clans or minor organizations. Even cultivating it to the peak didn't provide any amazing level of battle prowess. After all, the parts of the technique description that made it sound amazing were mostly exaggerations.

The saying about goblins can move mountains, hobgoblins can transport seas was a perfect example.

However, Xu Qing was unleashing power that had never before been seen in the Sea and Mountain Incantation. In fact, not even the person who created it had ever done something like this.

His fifth-level spectral goblin was actually as strong as what would normally appear in the sixth or seventh level. And today, his sixth-level goblin had already advanced to the form of a spectral hobgoblin. Though it was a young hobgoblin, its power vastly surpassed that of a goblin.

One could only imagine what Xu Qing's Sea and Mountain Incantation would be like when he reached the seventh level. Most likely, that hobgoblin would completely transform.

For most cultivators, the hobgoblin was the end of the line for the Sea and Mountain Incantation. But Xu Qing still had further to go.

He currently sat in his laboratory, a curious expression on his face. According to the technique description, the hobgoblin isn't supposed to appear until the tenth level. And it won't turn into an adult until reaching the peak level. Given my progress, it's going to reach adulthood in the seventh level. So what will happen in the eighth? And what about the ninth and tenth, and then the peak level of the technique?

Feeling full of anticipation, Xu Qing looked down at himself.

This time, he didn't do any tests of speed and strength. He could already tell that he was vastly stronger than he'd been in the fifth level. In fact, it was a level of strength that he already found astonishing. It was the same with his speed. From what Xu Qing could tell, he could now move so fast that wind resistance was the only thing he needed to worry about.

He had to wonder where he stacked up to the strongest people in the scavenger basecamp. One thing he was certain of: even if he had to fight two people who were like that black-garbed old man, both of whom could unleash magical techniques from the seventh level of Qi Condensation, he could still slaughter them. A moment later, he took a deep breath and looked around.

It was nighttime, and the laboratory was dark. However, he could still sense the presence of his shadow.

His breakthrough had affected his shadow too, allowing it to absorb even more mutagen. Furthermore, their connection was stronger and more complex.

Xu Qing looked thoughtfully at the ground as time slipped by. Eventually, the sky grew light, and sunlight filtered down into the laboratory. At that point, Xu Qing was able to make out the shape of his shadow. Suddenly, his eyes narrowed.

The moment he had been waiting for had arrived, as he had just seen his shadow ripple and distort. Then the shadow's right hand slowly raised.

Xu Qing took in a deep breath and kept his eyes focused on the shadow. Under his control, the shadow stretched across the floor toward a dark spot across the room. There, the shadow merged into the darkness and then disappeared. Xu Qing's expression remained placid, yet he could still sense his connection to the shadow.

Next, he sent the shadowy hand toward one of the cabinets, where it grabbed a medicinal plant. As the shadowy hand touched the plant, the mutagen within it grew more concentrated, and the plant turned greenish-black. That was when Xu Qing reached the limit of what he could do. His head felt like it was about to explode as he released control, and his shadow snapped back to its original shape.

A moment later, he looked up. His eyes were bloodshot and his head hurt so badly that he simply closed his eyes and tried to steady his breathing.

Two hours later, he opened his eyes. His headache was gone.

I can't really control it very well, he thought, staring at the shadow for a bit.

He wasn't in a rush. He knew that sooner or later he would be able to have full control over his shadow. And when that happened, his shadow... would be his most secret trump card.

After taking some time to rest, he reached out, causing the mutated medicinal plant to fly toward him. Once it was in his hand, he studied it closely.

This plant mutated just as if the eyes of the god above had opened. Does that mean my shadow can send mutagen into anything it touches?

Once again, he began to experiment with his shadow. Four hours later, Xu Qing had a much deeper understanding of his shadow. It couldn't send out mutagen into external objects at any time. It was only when Xu Qing had control of it.

By using that ability at an unexpected moment, he could definitely kill someone if he caught them off guard. At the same time, he felt just the same as ever that he needed to be wary of his shadow.

He glanced down at his chest to the spot where the violet crystal lay hidden inside. From what he could sense, it was only the violet crystal that allowed him to keep the shadow in check.

Finally, he put down the medicinal plant he'd been studying and looked around at all the little cabinets on the wall. He'd eventually tossed everything into that stone basin, and therefore, his collection was almost completely depleted now.

Looking at the basin, he sighed.

On the one hand, he regretted wasting so much of his collection. On the other hand, that black medicinal liquid had some good uses, and could even be considered a weapon.

After some more thought, he took the remaining medicinal liquid and rolled it into pills that he covered with a seven-leaf clover membrane. In the end, he had ten pitch-black pills that were slightly green on the outside.

"I'll call them black boluses," he murmured. Putting the pills away, he left his laboratory and prepared to go harvest some plants and think of a way to capture another black-scaled wolf. After all, it had worked well to have a wolf as a test animal.

Leaving the canyon, he headed to the temple complex. However, he didn't stop when he reached it. Instead, he ran through and continued deeper into the forbidden region. There were a lot more medicinal plants in that area.

Though he hadn't gone very far into this area, he had explored it on a number of occasions, and had reaped quite a harvest each time.

Not long after Xu Qing made his way into the depths of the forbidden region, a group of people slowly made their way into the jungle in the periphery behind him.

There were over a hundred in the group, including both men and women. There were also bodyguards, including five or six men who emanated unusually powerful auras.

The people being guarded were the very same young men and women who had set up their tents outside of the scavenger basecamp. Apparently, they'd come out into the

jungle for sightseeing purposes, and they didn't seem the least bit anxious. In fact, the sound of chatting and laughter could be heard from them.

Their guide was Ol' Stony, who didn't have much choice in how the party proceeded. As he led the way, he glanced at the carefree young men and women, and grumbled in his heart.

This is a forbidden region!

He wanted to speak up, but knew that they wouldn't listen to him. City people like this thought they understood the dangers of forbidden regions, but the truth was that they had no idea of the terrors there that scavengers knew.

The city dwellers had learned things in books, or by hearing stories. But the scavengers had experienced things firsthand.

I just hope everything goes smoothly, and I can finish this mission and finally retire. Then I'll never come to a forbidden region ever again.

Nervous, but on guard, Ol' Stony continued to lead the group forward.

Unbeknownst to anyone present, something was happening in the middle of the group. One of the young women, a true beauty with long black hair, clad in a cyan gown, was talking with a fawning young man in a blue jerkin. But at the same time, that young woman was casually scattering some medicinal powder.

As the wind blew, the powder drifted about, odorless and invisible. That powder was apparently a catalyst of some sort, and it soon provoked a reaction deep in the forbidden region.

Xu Qing noticed.

As he was moving along carefully, he suddenly realized that there were a lot less mutant beasts than usual.

He even spotted an aggressive lizard that was on the same level of strength as the sixth or seventh level of Qi Condensation. Normally, that lizard would have attacked him, but now, it lay concealed in a mud pit. Even when Xu Qing got close to it, it didn't do anything. It almost seemed afraid.

Xu Qing was on even higher alert than normal as he looked around. Feeling very uneasy, he harvested a medicinal plant then prepared to leave. But before he could, a frigid aura erupted from even deeper in the jungle, spreading out so rapidly the trees started freezing up.

Xu Qing's pupils constricted. Looking up, he saw numerous transparent jellyfish floating out from the depths of the forbidden region. Six of the jellyfish were gigantic, and they were surrounded by hundreds of smaller jellyfish. All of them floated in the general direction of the temple complex. It was almost as if something there was attracting them. As the group flew over, they noticed Xu Qing below.

One of the large jellyfish turned in his direction, its mass of eye-covered tentacles writhing. Most of those eyes were open.

A sensation of crisis exploded within Xu Qing. At the same time, his flesh and blood vibrated as, behind him, the spectral hobgoblin appeared, then looked up and howled noiselessly at the jellyfish.

Xu Qing looked on, his eyes narrowed. He was no longer the same person he was back in the third level of Qi Condensation, when he first felt the might of a jellyfish like this. Back then, he had been incapable of standing up to it.

As for the jellyfish, when it saw the howling hobgoblin, it seemed to hesitate.

Whether it was because of the force of attraction in the temple complex, or the fact that Xu Qing posed a threat, the jellyfish turned and floated away. Discover *new* stories on [no/v/e\(\)/lbin\(.\)com](http://no/v/e()/lbin(.)com)

Xu Qing breathed a sigh of relief.

Looking around, he thought about how strange this part of the jungle was today, and decided to leave.

Are they actually going to the temple complex? Or are they going somewhere else? I hope it's the latter. Otherwise, I'm going to have to go the long way around....

Looking thoughtful, he proceeded at top speed, becoming a streak of light that pierced through the jungle.

About two hours later, Xu Qing heard rumbling sounds in the distance as he perched atop a tree looking at the distant temple complex. He was only about an hour from the complex, and was close enough that he could just barely see the outline of the buildings there.

Unfortunately, the circumstance he had been worried about had arisen.

The group of jellyfish was hovering in the air above the temple complex, where they seemed to be fighting a group of people.

It was too far to make out any details of who was involved in the fight. After mulling the matter over, he headed carefully toward the complex.

Meanwhile, in the temple complex itself, Ol' Stony trembled, his lips quivering as he looked around in despair.

Bodies littered the ground around him, all of them servants and bodyguards of the group of young men and women.

Before, the young men and women had been carefree and relaxed. But not now. Their faces were pale, and all of them were injured. In their bedraggled state, they looked terrified.

The surviving bodyguards and servants surrounded them protectively as they desperately tried to fight their way out of the complex.

They were being constantly attacked by the hundreds of small jellyfish, while further up, the five or six huge jellyfish fought the five middle-aged cultivators who were part of the group.

Ol' Stony was in the group trying to break free. Why is this happening? Why is this happening...? Everything was going fine....

Unfortunately, he was old, and he couldn't move as fast as the others. After only taking a few steps, a jellyfish broke through the bodyguards and rushed toward him. He wasn't quick enough to evade. A moment later... the jellyfish swept past Ol' Stony, leaving behind a gaping hole where his heart had been. Then it attacked the young men and women.

Ol' Stony fell onto the ground, twitching.

Blood poured out of his chest, pooling up around him. Blood also filled his mouth and throat, making it impossible for him to say a word.

I guess... I won't get that city residence permit....

Ol' Stony closed his eyes, and his energy dissipated. Then, his view of the world became eternal darkness.

#### Chapter 34: A Chance Encounter

Bodies lay everywhere in the temple complex. Bodyguards. Servants. And a few young men whose understanding of the dangers of the forbidden region came from books alone. They stared up into the sky, their faces filled with the terror they had experienced before dying.

There were also dead jellyfish.

Unlike humans, when jellyfish died, they became shapeless gray sludges that flopped to the ground and emanated a noxious stench. They didn't seem anything like the beautiful, colorful creatures they were in life. They also emanated a powerful level of mutagen that seeped into everything around it.

The disaster continued.

As the young men and women desperately fled into the jungle, the jellyfish pursued them, wreaking death and havoc.

It wasn't until about two hours later that Xu Qing reached the temple complex. When he looked around at all the corpses, his facial expression didn't change. He had seen many corpses in his life. He left the dead bodyguards and servants alone, but did collect some of the jellyfish remains to study later. Whatever possessions remained on the corpses were tainted by the dead jellyfish mutagen, and were thus useless.

Eventually, Xu Qing stopped next to one corpse in particular. It was Ol' Stony. His chest had a gaping hole in it, but the blood was already coagulating. The man stared up with vacant eyes that still contained a bit of regret.

Xu Qing sighed.

He wasn't a god, so even though Ol' Stony had bought insurance from him, there was no way he could have saved him from this. That was even more the case considering the Fog of Confusion hadn't risen up.

After a quiet moment, Xu Qing knelt and closed Ol' Stony's eyes. Then he buried him. He didn't bother with a gravestone. As Sergeant Thunder had said, scavengers didn't have family, and thus, there was no need for any ceremony. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. That was the life of scavengers. They struggled to survive in a chaotic world, and after they died... being able to rest in peace was enough. It was sad, but that was how most scavengers ended up.

Standing in front of where he'd buried Ol' Stony, Xu Qing looked in the direction of the basecamp and thought about his life recently.

It had already been four months since he arrived at the camp.

Captain Bloodshadow was dead. Flamecrow was dead. Fatmountain and Horsefour were dead. Savage Ghost was dead. Boneblade was dead. Ol' Stony was dead. Sergeant Thunder had retired. And there were many other scavengers who had died during that time.

It was a brutal, chaotic world in which human life wasn't worth much.

The only way to keep on living is to get even stronger.

Expression turning cold, he turned and left.

In the fading evening light, a wind blew, rustling his clothing. It was a cold sound, and it grew fainter as he disappeared into the jungle. Despite the light fading, it still worked hard to penetrate the leafy canopy, as if it sought to shine on Xu Qing as he ran. But he was too fast, and the light couldn't catch up.

After moving for some time, Xu Qing suddenly stopped and looked down, a disbelieving gleam in his eyes. Kneeling, he sniffed the air as he looked at one plant in particular, and more specifically, an almost undetectable trace of powder on one of its leaves. If it weren't for his solid understanding of poisonous plants, and his familiarity with the smells in the forbidden region, he wouldn't have noticed it. After observing the powder for a moment, he plucked off the leaf and stared at it even more closely.

I can't identify every ingredient, but I know it has ageless centipede blood in it!

His eyes glittered as he thought back to a lecture in which Grandmaster Bai talked about ageless centipede blood.

It had certain medicinal properties, but was usually used as a catalyst in other medicines. And because it could be combined with other medicinal items to create a substance that attracted beasts, it was an important ingredient to hunters.

Does this have something to do with those jellyfish going on the move? Narrowing his eyes, he carefully put down the dangerous leaf, then brought out a packet of poison powder.

After scattering the powder on the leaf with the ageless centipede blood on it, he started moving again, this time in a different direction.

He had no intention of going in a similar direction as the young men and women Ol' Stony had been working for. Their affairs had nothing to do with him, and he didn't want to get involved. Even if they were friends of Chen Feiyuan, he wasn't duty-bound to help them. Besides, they had experts with them who could fight the giant jellyfish, and as far as Xu Qing was concerned, those experts could be a threat to him as well. Most importantly of all, it seemed like someone in that group had, for some unknown reasons, intentionally provoked the jellyfish.

After determining where they were, Xu Qing went around them. The sky was dark by the time he reached the canyon and his laboratory. Carefully putting all his newly harvested medicinal plants into storage, he started working on the white bolus project again. Despite having avoided the fleeing young men and women, as the night grew deeper, Xu Qing could still hear the rumbles and booms of their fight. And it was getting closer. He frowned.

Eventually, when he heard footsteps nearing, he sighed.



Getting to his feet, he walked out of the laboratory and into the moonlight. From the entrance of the canyon, he heard frantic voices.

“The path leads here!!”

“Everybody hurry. Get inside!”

The voices belonged to a group of bedraggled young people in tattered garments. They looked terrified.

Behind them were a dozen or so people of the same age, then seven or eight bodyguards, most of them injured to varying degrees.

In total, they numbered more than twenty. As they ran into the canyon, the bodyguards took up defensive positions by the entrance. Meanwhile, the young men and women breathed sighs of relief and looked around the beautiful canyon. Almost immediately, they noticed Xu Qing standing there outside of his laboratory.

“Someone’s here!”

The young men and women cried out in alarm, and stumbled back, away from Xu Qing. At the same time, three of the bodyguards flew past them and glared at Xu Qing with both vigilance and killing intent.

The killing intent caused Xu Qing’s eyes to turn as cold as ice. Then he looked past the guards to the young men and women. Two of them stood out to him.

One looked to be a bit older than Xu Qing, perhaps sixteen or seventeen. He was in bad shape, but instead of being flustered like his companions, he was alert and on guard.

The other was a pretty young woman whose garment was very dirty. She appeared to be terrified. However, Xu Qing had seen so much in life that, at a single glance, he could tell that her terror was an act.

Furthermore... that girl wore a set of very clean gloves. Xu Qing, who was already very knowledgeable about working with poison, knew that gloves like that had many uses.

For instance: scattering medicinal powder.

Eight bodyguards, all with cultivation bases in the sixth level of Qi Condensation. Everyone else is in the fifth level or lower. They’re organized into three groups. That fellow is the only one with a cultivation base in the seventh level. And that girl... is the one who brought the jellyfish. The experts fighting the big jellyfish aren’t here. They must have led the big jellyfish away from the main group.

It was Xu Qing's habit to size people up this way. And there was no way that these young men and women could have any idea that all he needed was a single glance to determine so much about them.

However, the bodyguards were different. They could sense the coldness in Xu Qing's eyes, and upon looking at his laboratory behind him, the vigilance in their eyes grew stronger.

Here they were in a forbidden region, where they found a canyon with a workshop in it. It could indicate only one thing; this young person in front of them was familiar with the forbidden region, and probably lived inside of it. And that meant that he was a dangerous person.

"Fellow Daoist, are your parents around?" one guard said. "We have no ill intentions. We were attacked by some mutant beasts and fled here to hide."

"We'll leave at daybreak," said another guard. "Please forgive us for disturbing you."

The guards were instinctively polite. And their words were a surprise to the young men and women behind them. Sensing that something unusual was going on, they peered at Xu Qing.

The oldest young man in the group looked at Xu Qing for a moment, and his expression turned serious.

As for the girl with the gloves, she looked at him suspiciously. Then she glanced at his laboratory, and could smell the faint aroma of medicinal plants. That was enough for her to get an idea of what Xu Qing was all about.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing frowned as he looked over the group, then at the canyon entrance. Without saying a word, he walked back toward his laboratory. Doing so, he gave them tacit approval to stay.

Seeing that, the bodyguards sighed in relief. However, the young men and women all seemed nervous.

The only exception was the girl with the gloves. Her eyes glittered strangely, and then she spoke in a cautious but seemingly hurt tone.

"You're... you're so mean! We just want to hide here from the mutant beasts! If we go out there, we're dead!"

Her voice seemed to provoke sympathy in those who heard her speak, and it caused the young men in the group who liked her to suddenly swell with courage.

"That's right! How could you be so cold-blooded?"

“We have no ill intentions. We just want to rest here for a bit.”

“It’s not like he owns the forbidden region! We don’t have to ask his permission!”

A few softly spoken words were all it took to get these people riled up at Xu Qing. They weren’t whipped into a fury, but it was enough that the girl felt pleased with herself. She liked using people, and right now, she wanted to know more about the young man they’d encountered.

However, that was when a cold light glittered from Xu Qing as his dagger shot out with lightning speed toward the girl.

Her face fell, but before she could dodge, the dagger passed by her ear, slicing through a lock of hair, and then thumping into the stone behind her. Sparks flew. The shocked young woman’s right hand hung in the air where she’d thrown it up to defend herself. Then she looked at Xu Qing, and saw him glaring back at her with the cold, murderous eyes of a wolf. The look in his eyes shook her to the core.

As for the bodyguards and the other young men and women, they looked similarly astonished. The former became even more vigilant than before, while the latter let loose exclamations of surprise.

Giving the girl a hard look, Xu Qing suppressed his killing intent and said, “We met by chance, like patches of drifting duckweed. Don’t push me.”

Then he walked back to his laboratory. He seemed to meld with the moonlight, becoming as cold as the night.

Everyone else in the canyon went silent. During that brief moment, many in the canyon suddenly felt they had faced a danger just as frightening as the jellyfish outside.

In the silence, Xu Qing entered his laboratory. And then a bloodcurdling scream rang out from the entrance. A small jellyfish had just found them, and had stabbed one of the guards, sucked up his organs, and then entered the canyon.

And behind it was a whole host of jellyfish, rushing forward.

Chapter 35: Troubles Bring a Frown

Frowning, Xu Qing turned around.

Hundreds of jellyfish poured into the canyon toward the group of young people and their bodyguards. The group looked shocked, but they immediately started fighting back. And the bodyguards looked like they were ready to give their lives to stop the onslaught.

The young man that had caught Xu Qing's attention earlier, who was in the seventh level of Qi Condensation, unleashed an attack that sent colorful rays of light toward the enemy.

Unfortunately, there were just too many jellyfish. What was more, they seemed naturally resistant to magical techniques, significantly reducing the damage they sustained when hit. Worse, they were very fast, had penetrating attacks, and were nimble. As a result, seven or eight people died just in the initial onslaught.

One young man, who had once been decked out in luxurious clothing that was now in shreds, looked to be in complete despair as a jellyfish closed in on him. Scrambling away, he called for help from his seventh-level friend.

"Young Master Bai, help!" [1]

A colorful ray of light shot past him, delaying the jellyfish long enough for the terrified young man to make his way to safety.

Xu Qing was some distance away from the fighting, but some of the jellyfish had already taken notice of him. Three of them sailed in his direction, ready to pierce him through. His eyes glittered with cold light, and he clenched his right hand into a fist.

Jumping into motion, he slammed his fist into one of the jellyfish. The creature trembled and, unable to sustain the force of the blow, exploded into bits. Xu Qing didn't pause for a second. A dagger appeared in his left hand, and he dashed toward the other two incoming jellyfish.

He was a lot faster than them, and also more agile. In the blink of an eye, he passed them, whereupon both of them split in two.

The young men and women fighting the other jellyfish saw this, and were so astonished they instinctively headed in Xu Qing's direction.

Upon realizing that three of their number had been slaughtered, the other jellyfish opened their bizarre eyes and then surged in Xu Qing's direction.

This time, it was a group of ten.

Xu Qing's expression remained the same as ever. Instead of backing up, he charged forward, leaving a blur of afterimages. Then his dagger glittered coldly as he passed one enemy creature after another, leaving behind popping sounds and exploding jellyfish.

As they died, large quantities of mutagen spread out, causing the plants and vegetation in the canyon to turn greenish-black. That included what was in Xu Qing's laboratory. The injured bodyguards were also being affected.

Seeing his canyon affected in this manner caused Xu Qing's eyes to burn with killing intent.

He started moving again, faster than before, his dagger dancing left and right to slaughter jellyfish. However, it didn't take long before he was frowning as he realized the mutagen was eroding the blade of his dagger. And as he continued to fight, the metal started to crumble.

There was no time for him to feel bad about the dagger. His iron skewer appeared next, and he continued to slice apart jellyfish. At the same time, he started scattering poison powder. The jellyfish were naturally resistant to poison, so it didn't do much to them, but Xu Qing didn't give up. After all, his poisons didn't just kill, they could also neutralize odors.

Unfortunately, Xu Qing's weapons weren't working well. His iron skewer had penetrating power, but couldn't slice as well as the dagger. That was when he heard someone call to him from behind.

"Friend, use my sword!"

A cold streak of light shot toward Xu Qing, and he reached back to grab the sword tossed to him by the young man who'd been called Young Master Bai.

The moment his fingers wrapped around the hilt, he could sense that it was an extraordinary weapon. When he swung it, a cold glow emanated from the sword. Xu Qing was no swordsman, but the weapon was sharp, and only a moment later, he'd already chopped apart seven or eight jellyfish.

As the jellyfish corpses piled up, Xu Qing became splattered with their blue blood. Meanwhile, the surviving bodyguards and young people had gathered behind him, and watched the spectacle in shock and disbelief.

"S-so... so strong!"

"He's a body cultivator. But what level is he in? Don't tell me he's at the peak??"

"Given his spirit power fluctuations, I doubt it. He looks more like he's in the fifth or sixth level."

"Cultivation base doesn't matter. What sticks out about him is how ruthless he is."

Bodyguards and young people alike were all astonished by Xu Qing's fighting. Even Young Master Bai seemed surprised. And the suspicious young woman in the group was nervous; given how terrifying Xu Qing was, she stowed any crafty thoughts.

She sensed the same aura on Xu Qing that some people in her clan had that earned them the epithet 'monster.' The monsters in her clan were people who had slaughtered crowds of enemies, and whenever she laid eyes on them, she felt fear in her heart. And that was exactly the same feeling she experienced with Xu Qing. He was the kind of person she had no interest in provoking.

Besides, she'd accomplished her mission this day. She'd instigated the jellyfish attack. As for whether the people from the Church would get what they wanted from the jellyfish nest, that had nothing to do with her. Things had turned a lot more dangerous than she expected, and she already had her hand on a jade slip in her garment. That jade slip was a talisman treasure, and it would teleport her out of here if necessary.

That was her emergency backup plan. As she hesitated about whether or not to use it, a boom echoed out from the entrance of the canyon as dozens of jellyfish swarmed in.

That helped her make up her mind. She snapped the teleportation jade slip, and then faded away.

Mixed emotions appeared on the faces of her companions as she disappeared.

Xu Qing kept his focus on the incoming jellyfish. After calculating how much time he had to work with, he stood there, his energy and blood surging. Looking at the incoming jellyfish, he opened his mouth and unleashed a roar. As his energy and blood raged, and he tapped into Sea and Mountain Incantation, the spectral hobgoblin appeared behind him, and it also roared noiselessly. It was fierce, with a horn on its head, its body pitch black, as if it had just climbed out of the Yellow Springs. And the violet glitter in its eyes was astonishing to anyone who beheld it.

The combined roar of Xu Qing and the hobgoblin caused the incoming jellyfish to halt in place, their eyes wide and staring.

They weren't the only ones shocked into immobility. The young men and women behind Xu Qing stood there with pale faces, staring at the image behind him. Find **new** chapters on [nove.lbin\(.\)com](http://nove.lbin(.)com)

"A projected image of energy and blood!!"

"This... this is... this is the kind of bizarre image that appears only at the peak of body refinement!!"

All of them were shaken to the core. The jellyfish could also sense how fierce Xu Qing was. Furthermore, Xu Qing's poisons masked the scent of the ageless centipede. After a brief, tense standoff, the jellyfish slowly retreated, exiting the canyon and floating off into the distance.

Seeing this, Xu Qing breathed a sigh of relief, then turned and looked coldly at the group of young people. And his gaze lingered on the spot where the gloved girl had been moments before.

Of course, she wasn't there.

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed.

Meanwhile, a few of the young women were so struck with fear by Xu Qing's gaze that they wept. Truth be told, the baleful aura pulsing off of Xu Qing was quite strong. He stood there in the moonlight, covered in blue blood, his eyes as cold as if he had also just climbed out of the Yellow Springs. Combined with the hobgoblin behind him, he looked like an evil ghost!

Only Young Master Bai managed to suppress the awe he felt in his heart, and stepped forward with hands clasped.

"Sir, I am Bai Yundong. Many thanks for your assistance, friend. The favor you have shown us will most certainly be repaid in kind." Noting the spot Xu Qing had just eyed, Bai Yundong took a deep breath and added a bit of explanation. "The girl who teleported away was Li Ruolin, who comes from a clan that specializes in spell formations. They provided her with a teleportation talisman to make it easier for her to escape deadly situations."

"The rest of you don't have something like that?" Xu Qing asked, looking at Bai Yundong.

Bai Yundong smiled wryly, and the other young men and women just stood there quietly.

"We all come from big clans in the Violet Lands. But none of us are from the primary bloodlines in our clans, so we're more flash than substance."

Xu Qing nodded and tossed the sword back to Bai Yundong. The other young men and women all offered words of thanks. Then Xu Qing looked at Bai Yundong and asked, "Who is Grandmaster Bai to you?"

"He's my grand-uncle," he replied, looking surprised. "You know my grand-uncle?" [2]

Xu Qing gave him a nod but didn't say anything else, then looked briefly at the canyon entrance before checking how dark the sky was.

"The mutagen is strong here now," he said. "You shouldn't stay around. I'll escort you out."

With that, he started walking to the canyon entrance. Bai Yundong hesitated for a moment, then gritted his teeth and followed. The other young men and women also seemed to know what was best for them, and did the same.

Thus, the group left the canyon and sped through the nighttime jungle. Though they had all suffered under the attacks of the jellyfish, they were all cultivators. The deadly experience they had just gone through had helped them transform for the better. No one spoke, they just followed Xu Qing. A few of the young women were physically weaker than the others, but even they gritted their teeth and followed.

Around daybreak, they were so close to the edge of the jungle they could see the outside world beyond. All the young people were excited, and despite the exhaustion they felt, let out whoops of joy.

At the same time, Xu Qing looked around vigilantly. A moment later, he saw three figures speeding toward them in the sky.

They were the powerful experts who had guarded the young men and women.

Xu Qing had guessed right earlier. They had drawn the big jellyfishes away from the group; that much was obvious from the casualties they had suffered. The group of young people immediately launched into a spirited recounting of what happened, all of them casting glances at Xu Qing.

Xu Qing kept his guard up, and maintained distance between them, keeping some poison powder hidden in his hand the entire time.

The three experts didn't approach him. But they did give him nods of acknowledgment before leading the group onward.

They seemed to be already close to the outside, but it was still around noon before they officially left the jungle. When the young people were finally out in the open, and could finally be assured that they had survived a deadly ordeal, some of them simply wept.

Xu Qing looked at them silently.

Meanwhile, Bai Yundong, who seemed to be a sort of leader among the young people, approached Xu Qing with clasped hands.

"This trip was a spur-of-the-moment decision, so we don't have much of value on us. That's not to mention that we lost most of our belongings in the forbidden region. Given how much mutagen we've taken in, we need to get to a nearby city and use a teleportation portal to get back to the Violet Lands as quickly as possible. I won't forget about the kindness you showed us. Please, accept this sword of mine."

Bai Yundong bowed deeply and then gave Xu Qing his sword.



Xu Qing watched them leave, then hefted the sharp sword.

It was a beautiful and refined weapon that glittered with cold light. Though it had been used to slaughter numerous jellyfish and was now polluted with mutagen, it hadn't sustained any damage. Xu Qing could feel the frigid aura of the weapon, and knew right away that it was a high-level prized treasure.

It was a bit long for his taste, not as convenient to use as a dagger. But it had worked well for him in the heat of the moment. After wrapping it up in some hemp strips to hide its glittering aura, he strapped it to his back.

Glancing up at the sky to check the time, he headed toward the basecamp.

His current plan was to buy a few new daggers, then wait until he was sure the jellyfish were gone before heading back into the forbidden region. Afternoon sunlight streamed down on him as he entered the basecamp. He was only a few steps inside when he frowned. Something about the camp seemed off....

Too many strangers were about.

When the surrounding scavengers looked at him, they had odd expressions on their faces. And he even noticed one of the people he had saved in the past, looking at him like he wanted to say something, but hesitating to do so. Despite not speaking, the man used his eyes to indicate that Xu Qing should go to his residence.

Heart pounding in his chest, Xu Qing started walking faster, while simultaneously looking around. When he reached his residence, he noticed that a lot of people were in the area, looking at him with cold eyes. Given their clothing, Xu Qing realized that all of them were special guards in the employ of the camp owner.

In the mouth of a nearby alley was the goateed man who worked for the camp owner, standing there with a sinister smile on his face.

Xu Qing narrowed his eyes, pushed open the courtyard gate, and saw Crucifix sitting there, his face pale as though he'd lost a lot of blood. And next to him, weak and severely injured, was Graceful Raptor.

The moment Xu Qing entered, the two of them looked up at him.

Trembling as he wrapped a bandage around himself, Crucifix said, "Kid... something happened to the sarge."

Talking caused him to cough so badly he spat up some blood.

The words hit Xu Qing so hard he felt like he'd been struck by lightning.

His heart started pounding, and he felt himself stiffening up. A bad feeling rose up within him, turning worse and worse by the moment. An incomparably baleful aura began to pulse in him, something that he couldn't control at all, making all warmth in the area turn cold.

"What happened?" he asked, his voice trembling and bone-chillingly cold.

1. Young Master Bai's surname is the same as Grandmaster Bai's. It's not a very common surname, so it sticks out. 📖

2. To be clear, this means that Grandmaster Bai is the brother of Bai Yundong's grandfather. 📖

### Chapter 36: Killing with Impunity

Crucifix's hands were tougher than an ordinary person's. Because of his years of archery practice, he had many thick calluses. Back during the encounter with the black-scaled wolves, he had fought for an entire day and night. Yet even then, his hands didn't shake like they did now. It was impossible to imagine what vicious fighting he had engaged in before Xu Qing arrived.

He had clearly encountered an enemy he couldn't deal with. Otherwise, his fingers wouldn't be in such bad shape, and he wouldn't be covered in wounds. Similarly, Graceful Raptor's exhausted state showed that she'd pushed herself to the limit.

Given what Xu Qing had seen upon entering the camp, including all of the strange faces, the large number of the camp owner's people, and the goateed man, he already knew who the enemy was.

Unfortunately, that only made him more uneasy. At his urging, Crucifix and Graceful Raptor explained the situation.

Many years ago, Sergeant Thunder wasn't a scavenger, but rather, an ordinary citizen in a distant city. Being a talented person, he eventually ended up as a city guard. That was also when he learned how to practice cultivation. He had earned the favor of the city magistrate, and had also become engaged to his childhood sweetheart.

Life was good back then. But then a caravan showed up, and everything changed.

Not even Crucifix and Graceful Raptor knew all the details. They just knew that, some years ago, when Sergeant Thunder got drunk one night, he muttered about how he'd 'lost everything.' His fiancée died, and in the process of exacting revenge, his cultivation base was crippled. After barely surviving, he fled his hometown and began the painstaking process of restarting his cultivation. That was when he became a scavenger.

Decades passed until he was an old man with one foot in the grave. The sergeant had long since given up on his old life, and wanted to simply retire. Until...

He saw a certain person in a caravan that visited the scavenger basecamp. It was the person that had ruined his life, and that he thought he'd killed. Except that person wasn't dead at all. Aall newest chapters on n.o./velbi/n/().com

However, Sergeant Thunder chose not to pursue revenge, fearing that he would implicate the people close to him. Instead, he made the difficult decision to hurry off to Laughing Pines.

Unbeknownst to him, his nemesis was already aware of his existence. Some days ago, the camp owner sent people to Laughing Pines to drag Sergeant Thunder back and give him as a gift to a friend. And that friend was, of course, the very same nemesis Sergeant Thunder had from years ago.

"One of the camp owner's people is someone whose life I saved some time ago," Crucifix said through gritted teeth. "When Graceful Raptor and I got back two days ago, he secretly let us know what happened. Of course, as soon as we found out, we tried to rescue the sarge, but failed.... While we were at the camp owner's place, we saw the sarge's nemesis. It seems his cultivation base was also damaged years ago. Like the sarge, he managed to rebuild it and make advancement. He's even beyond the sarge, although not by that much."

"We did some asking around," Graceful Raptor said quietly, "and found out that the caravan he's part of is backed by a mysterious organization called Night Dove. It's a huge group that operates countless caravans throughout South Phoenix, and visits all sorts of scavenger basecamps and small cities. They often do business with camp owners and city magistrates, especially in the trade of... living treasures."

"Camp owner, caravan...." Xu Qing was breathing hard, and his eyes already contained powerful killing intent. He felt like there were flames inside him, burning hotter and hotter, making his eyes bloodshot, and stoking his rage sky high. Turning, he walked toward the gate.

Crucifix and Graceful Raptor immediately looked nervous.

"Kid," Graceful Raptor said anxiously, "we need to talk about this. We should ally with some other scavengers, as this has to do with all the people going missing over the years. We—"

"No need!" Xu Qing said. He reached up and took the long sword off his back.

The sword became a cold streak of light that shot at top speed toward the courtyard gate, backed with explosive power. The courtyard gate shattered, revealing one of the camp owner's guards outside eavesdropping.

The man had a dagger in his hands, and his eyes were wide as he looked down at the sword piercing through his torso. Then he flew back, blood spraying out of his mouth, his expression one of shock.

The sword was so powerful that, after piercing through the guard, it continued onward toward a nearby alley. There, the goateed man let loose an agonized shriek as the sword plunged into his thigh, impaling him to the ground.

The two sudden casualties caused silence to reign outside. Then shouting and yelling rose up as the seven or eight camp guards in the area rushed toward the gate.

Crucifix and Graceful Raptor looked stunned as Xu Qing shot like a lightning bolt out of the courtyard.

The moment he was outside, he grabbed the dagger out of the dead guard's hands and took a step toward the nearest enemy. Without even looking, he walked past the guard, using the dagger to slash open his throat. Blood sprayed out like a fountain, and yet that blood couldn't compare to the redness that filled Xu Qing's eyes. His bloodshot eyes seemed to be looking at Sergeant Thunder in the camp, seeing his nemesis, and shaking inwardly with grief and indignation.

Xu Qing's killing intent grew stronger. Spinning, he launched a fist that slammed into the chest of a guard behind him. A boom rang out as blood oozed out of the man's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and his internal organs shattered. Then he flew backward like a kite with its string cut before flopping onto the ground.

At the same time, three guards charged toward Xu Qing. Of that group, two were in the fifth level and one was in the sixth. But as they neared, Xu Qing waved his right hand, and his iron skewer flew out.

It pierced one of the men's skulls. Then Xu Qing bent over, as agile as a cat, and jumped forward, his dagger slashing through the other man's throat as he leaped toward the sixth-level guard.

CRACK!

The sixth-level guard reacted fast, putting up a spirit power barrier that blocked the dagger. However, the man wasn't strong enough to stand up to Xu Qing's strength. Xu Qing pushed against the barrier, shoving the man backward across the ground until he slammed into the wall behind him. To the shock of the sixth-level guard, the dagger pierced through the spirit power barrier and stabbed into his throat. In fact, the force was so great that the wall behind the man collapsed.

Standing there, Xu Qing slowly turned, his eyes burning with murder.

The remaining handful of camp guards trembled, their eyes wide. Even though all of them had sixth-level cultivation bases, they slowly backed away from him. The goateed man's screaming ceased, and his face drained of blood as his anxiety built.

And the slaughter wasn't over yet.

Xu Qing lunged forward again, and the terrified camp guards tried to run, but it was too late. Xu Qing was just too fast. With his left hand he punched the head of one of the guards, and it exploded. Then he moved with specter-like agility to appear next to another guard. His dagger flashed. Then he moved again, appearing in front of a third guard.

Trembling, the man let out a desperate howl and jumped forward, wrapping his arms around Xu Qing. Apparently, the man wanted to end this fight in mutual death.

However, the only thing waiting for him was Xu Qing's head, which smashed forward. The camp guard's skull caved in, and he died. Xu Qing took a step back, only to run into another guard.

The dagger in his hand stabbed backward. Once. Twice. Three times.

Only when a wall stopped his blows did Xu Qing look around.

Thumping sounds rang out as all the camp guards in the area dropped to the ground, dead. And none of them had died with corpses intact!

After killing so many people, blood was splattered everywhere. In the late afternoon sun, it was a truly ghastly sight.

Sunlight hit Xu Qing, and all the blood combined made him seem like a devil.

The slaughter here attracted the attention of many of the scavengers living nearby, who stepped out of their residences and stared in shock at the scene.

"It's the Kid!"

"How... how is he so strong?"

"All of those bodies are people who work for the camp owner. Is this an insurrection?"

Crucifix and Graceful Raptor walked out, supporting each other as they did. When they saw the corpses everywhere, and Xu Qing illuminated in the sun and covered in blood, they were deeply shaken.

Amidst the uproar, Xu Qing walked toward the trembling goateed man, retrieving his dagger and skewer along the way. Soon, he reached the goateed man and stood above him.

The goateed man trembled, and sweat poured down his face. Though he was in pain, it couldn't surpass the terror he felt in his heart. He tried to struggle, but the long sword stabbing through his thigh made it impossible for him to move. Despair in his eyes, he squealed, "Kid, listen to me, you don't—"

Xu Qing grabbed the hilt of the sword and wrenched the weapon upward.

It sliced through the goateed man's leg, into his belly, and out his chin. Blood erupted along with an agonized shriek as the goateed man was split in two.

With this accomplished, Xu Qing stood there with an expressionless face, but surrounded by roiling killing intent. As the sun reflected off the pools of blood, he started walking.

All the scavengers in front of him trembled and backed away. They had seen vicious acts, but usually it was adults who perpetrated them. And most of the perpetrators were outlaws. Xu Qing was only a teenager, and yet had carried out his slaughter with complete calmness. Furthermore, it seemed he wasn't finished. It was truly a rare sight.

"He's going... toward the camp owner's mansion!"

When people realized where he was heading, they let out exclamations of shock. All of them were stunned, and without any coordinated agreement, all started walking after Xu Qing. From a distance, it looked like Xu Qing was leading a big group of people to the camp owner's mansion. As word spread, and more scavengers heard about what was happening, the crowd increased in size.

Meanwhile, the top experts among the camp guards and caravan strangers were closing in on Xu Qing, ready to kill him.

Inside the mansion, the camp owner was drinking some tea. At the table with him was an icily arrogant old man wearing a brocade robe. The two of them were chatting.

"Don't worry, Mister Sun. In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, this matter will be resolved. Even when scavengers act like this, they aren't on the same level as sect cultivators like us. I'd been planning to groom the Kid a bit further, and possibly recommend him for the sect. But given how stubborn he's being, it's probably better to just cut him down."

The old man in the brocaded robe took a sip of tea, then put the cup down and said, "I'd rather have him alive."

## Chapter 37: Power over Life and Death

As the teacup touched the table, the street outside the camp owner's mansion filled with blood and corpses!

Xu Qing moved like a tiger, and wherever he went, blood blossomed. It was a ghastly sight as he slaughtered enemies with every step he took. Camp guards blocked the way to the mansion, and more guards rushed toward him from all other directions. At the same time, ten strangers in black robes appeared, cultivators from the caravan.

Whether guards or caravan strangers, they all had one target: Xu Qing.

The wind blew, lifting his hair away from his face as he strapped the unfamiliar sword back on his back and pulled out his dagger. Then, he seemed to become part of the wind itself as he went straight toward a caravan cultivator who was in the sixth level of Qi Condensation.

The moment they clashed, the enemy's head flew into the air!

Blood sprayed out as more black-garbed men and guards advanced.

Xu Qing looked at the caravan cultivators, and briefly thought back to how it was the same day they arrived that Sergeant Thunder went out to buy food for dinner, and had returned sooner than expected. That must have also been the day the sergeant spotted his nemesis, which was why he ended up leaving the camp earlier than expected.

Xu Qing said nothing, but his killing intent grew more intense. He moved with even greater speed than before, not even making a pretense of retreating, and just charging forward.

Some distance away, on the eaves of the mansion, stood two people.

One was old, the other middle-aged. The old man wore a blue Daoist robe, while the middle-aged man was clad in fine garments. The former stood with his hands clasped behind his back, calmly watching the fight play out on the street. The latter sat there with a metal string between his teeth, also closely watching the action. Shockingly, that string was one of Crucifix's bowstrings.

Crucifix didn't use normal bowstrings. And generally speaking, metal strings like that wouldn't snap easily, yet this man was slowly biting the string to pieces.

"Interesting," said the middle-aged man. "He's a body cultivator like me. But it looks like he's in the sixth level. He should be more fun to deal with than that guy with the crucifix scar."

"Are you going to handle this?" the old man asked calmly. "Or should I?"

Spitting out some saliva-covered bowstring, the middle-aged man grinned viciously and said, "We're in territory controlled by your Golden Vajra Warrior Sect. And the camp owner is an elder in your sect. Furthermore, do I even need to mention that you're a newly-appointed elder yourself?"

As the two men conversed, a boom echoed down the street, along with bloodcurdling screams. All eight of the camp guards and black-garbed men surrounding Xu Qing staggered away from him, blood spraying out of their mouths. All of them had been hit in vital spots, and it only took a moment for them to fall onto the ground. Then Xu Qing stepped out of the ring of corpses and kept moving.

His fur coat was drenched in blood. His hemp shoes were caked in black mud. His hair swayed in the wind. And his eyes... were as cold as the eyes of a lone wolf.

His right hand hung at his side, gripping his dagger, which dripped blood as he walked.

The eight corpses were in horrific condition, but he hadn't killed them sadistically. No, he had struck grievous blows to vital spots. He attacked to kill and didn't waste any movements. Because of that, the scavengers who were watching the scene play out were overwhelmed with shock and horror.

Not sparing a glance for the corpses, Xu Qing sped onward along the muddy street, his face completely expressionless and his eyes bloodshot.

His goal, the camp owner's mansion, was barely more than 900 meters away.

As he neared, the surviving dozen or so camp guards and black-garbed caravan cultivators trembled and backed away from him.

He started moving faster. But then he looked up at the two figures standing on the eaves.

They had stronger auras than anyone else he'd killed so far, making them the most dangerous opponents he'd fought. But Xu Qing had known from the beginning that, once he started this slaughter... he had to see it through to the end. Furthermore, these people were standing between him and the camp owner's mansion.

Therefore, he took a few more steps, extended his hand in the direction of the two men, and then made a beckoning gesture with his fingers.

"How arrogant!" said the old man in the blue robe, his eyes narrowing. Then, wind swirled beneath his feet as he walked off the roof and through the air toward Xu Qing.

This sight caused the guards, the black-garbed cultivators, and the scavengers to reel in shock. They all knew that only Foundation Establishment experts could walk on air.

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To them, a Foundation Establishment expert might as well be an immortal in heaven. There were many people who never even laid eyes on someone like that. And any person who reached Foundation Establishment could become the patriarch of a small organization like the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect, or the founder of a small clan.

But this blue-robed old man clearly wasn't a Foundation Establishment expert. He had only just stepped into the eighth level of Qi Condensation. His ability to walk on air was just a trick that had something to do with the wind technique he cultivated. It didn't give him much of an advantage in battle. Nonetheless, it was enough to shock the bystanders.

Xu Qing, on the other hand, didn't care. The moment his opponent walked toward him through the air, he secretly dispersed a packet of poison powder and then shot forward. He moved so quickly that he left behind a blur of afterimages. And before the old man in blue knew what was happening, he found, to his shock, that Xu Qing was right beneath him.

Xu Qing unleashed a fist strike, and the spectral hobgoblin appeared, howling noiselessly. The old man in mid-air had no time to avoid the strike, and could only perform a frenzied incantation gesture to throw up a defensive barrier. A boom rang out, and cracks spread out over the barrier. Meanwhile, the old man staggered back under the force of the blow. Then Xu Qing's black iron skewer appeared, flashing as it shot toward the old man.

Thump!

A small shield appeared and blocked the skewer.

The shield collapsed, and the power of the skewer vanished. But behind the destroyed shield, the old man in blue was coughing up blood, and looked to be in very bad shape.

The old man looked like he was about to speak, but before he could, Xu Qing stamped his right foot down and shot toward him.

The old man's pupils constricted with rage as he waved both hands out, causing a wild wind to fill the area. Then he inhaled deeply, and the wind raced into his mouth, causing his face to turn red and the brutal, killing intent in his eyes to surge.

He was about to exhale when, all of a sudden, his expression flickered, and his eyes bulged. Black patches appeared on his skin, which were a sign of poisoning. He started to tremble.

"You..."

Before he could say anything else, Xu Qing was upon him. His dagger moved so fast that it turned as red as flame, like a soldering iron that slashed through the old man's throat.

Blood sprayed, and he let out a miserable shriek before Xu Qing grabbed his head with his other hand, and ripped it off the torso!

It all happened so quickly!

Then, Xu Qing took the greenish-purple head and threw it toward the eaves, where the shocked middle-aged man was only just standing up. Afterwards, Xu Qing reached out and made the same beckoning gesture as before.

Everything went quiet.

The scavengers, the guards, the caravan members, all of them were battered by massive waves of shock, and simply stood there trembling.

“S-so... so strong....”

“Was that poison...? It was so deadly!”

The middle-aged man on the eaves looked down, his heart pounding.

“Is everyone from the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect such trash?” he said. “I can't believe he was trying to show off in the middle of a fight!!”

He knew full well that the old man in blue was no weakling. His wind technique was spectacular. However, his attempt to show off by walking on the air lost him the initiative, and by underestimating his opponent, he failed to detect the poison until he had already inhaled it. In the final analysis, sect cultivators often lacked the ferocity and resourcefulness that scavengers developed naturally in their struggle to survive.

With such thoughts on his mind, the middle-aged man took out seven or eight packets of poison repellents and antidotes, and consumed them all. Then he gritted his teeth as popping sounds rang out from inside him. He was already tall and sturdy, but now his body bulked up even more as he jumped off the roof eaves and dropped toward Xu Qing like a diving falcon.

Xu Qing looked up, his eyes hardly visible through his long black hair. Then he dashed toward his opponent.

A boom rang out when they clashed, and the middle-aged man shook from head to toe as they backed away from each other. A look of astonishment was visible on the middle-aged man's face, whereas the force of the impact brushed Xu Qing's hair aside, revealing his bloodthirsty eyes.

Xu Qing could sense that his opponent was strong, but not as strong as himself. Furthermore, Xu Qing knew that his powers of recovery were far superior. Eyes bursting with killing intent, he gathered his strength and unleashed another punch!

When body cultivators fought, it was pure brutality. Over and over again they clashed, parted, and then clashed again.

Booms filled the street, and roof tiles crumbled to the ground from the resulting shock waves.

Soon, the middle-aged cultivator was panting, and his face was pale. As he fought, blue veins bulged out on his skin, and his bloodshot eyes were filled with terror and despair.

In terms of strength and speed, he wasn't a match for Xu Qing, and his powers of recovery weren't worth mentioning in comparison. After little more than thirty breaths of time passed, his fists exploded into blood and bone. His arms couldn't sustain the force, and were ripped to shreds. He let loose a bloodcurdling scream.

Then Xu Qing jumped up and smashed his knee into the man's head. A crunch could be heard as the sound of crushed bone brought the agonized shrieking to a halt. Then the man was dead.

Xu Qing didn't even look around. Eyes surging with killing intent, he stepped over the corpse of the middle-aged man and headed... directly toward the camp owner's mansion!

The guards and caravan members outside the mansion had long since been intimidated so badly they lost all courage.

When they saw Xu Qing approaching, drenched in blood and looking like some sort of devil, they were overwhelmed with the instinct to flee for their lives. It was hard to say who started running first, but hardly a moment passed before they were all gone.

Under the eyes of the masses of scavengers who had gathered, Xu Qing started moving like the wind toward the mansion gate.

As he neared, the gate suddenly exploded, and a fist appeared, slamming right into Xu Qing. A rumbling sound echoed out as, for the first time, Xu Qing was forced backward. He took three steps, then looked up with cold eyes.

Walking out of the shattered remnants of the gate was the camp owner, wearing a golden robe, his expression very unsightly. Behind him was a grim old man in a brocade robe. In that old man's hand was someone that Xu Qing recognized!

The moment he saw that person, a tremor passed through him, and indescribable emotions surged within his heart.

It was Sergeant Thunder, struggling to breathe!

## Chapter 38: Total Extermination

“You don’t know the immensity of heaven and earth, snotty whoreson!” growled the camp owner. There was no way he could ever have predicted that his guards would be incapable of dealing with a boy like this. What was worse, only moments ago he had boasted that in the time it takes an incense stick to burn, the fight would be over. Except, that amount of time had not yet passed, and his guards had already been routed. “Those pieces of trash!”

Eyes flashing with cold light, the camp owner strode out of the door and headed right toward Xu Qing. As he moved, intense spirit power fluctuations rolled off of him, and his energy and blood erupted with force, causing his muscles to swell beneath his robe. To the onlookers, he looked like a mountain. He also emanated a faint golden light. The camp owner was also a body cultivator!

What was more, the technique he cultivated wasn’t something low-level like the Sea and Mountain Incantation, but rather, a consummate art from his sect. It was called Dharma of the Golden Vajra Warrior.

Tapping into all his power, his pace quickened and he became a streak of light as he rushed forward. A moment later, he was right in front of Xu Qing, where he launched a punch. As his fist flew, he glowed with dazzling golden light.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing glanced at the gate, where the old man in the brocade robe held Sergeant Thunder. He forced himself to be patient. He knew that if he managed to get the upper hand in this situation, the man would surely use Sergeant Thunder as a hostage.

Xu Qing didn’t want that to happen, and the only way to prevent it was to act quickly. So quickly that his opponent didn’t have time to react. Therefore, he clenched his hand into a fist and met the camp owner’s incoming blow.

A boom rang out, and Xu Qing staggered backward seven or eight steps. However, he didn’t move in a straight line backward. Instead, he moved diagonally.

The sun was behind his back, and his shadow was on the ground in front of him, twitching slightly.

Meanwhile, the camp owner also retreated a few steps. During the clash, he’d clearly felt how much power Xu Qing was capable of unleashing. Even still, his eyes overflowed with scorn as he once again charged toward Xu Qing, his cultivation base operating at maximum. He spoke no words, and his expression was one of contempt. Yet, when he attacked... he did so with full force. His scornful expression was clearly put on for show. He was the camp owner, after all, and he needed the scavengers to

respect him. He might be a member of an important sect, but he couldn't have the locals looking down on him.

"Golden Vajra Warrior: First Dharma!" he roared. Suddenly his body bulked up even more, and his power and strength skyrocketed.

The camp owner unleashed a smashing attack, and Xu Qing threw up his hands to defend himself, but kept his head down, making it impossible for the camp owner to see his eyes. At the same time, his shadow twitched even more intensely.

However, no one noticed that.

Seeing that Xu Qing had already stood up to two blows, the camp owner, whose cultivation base was already at the peak of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, glared with even more killing intent.

"Golden Vajra Warrior: Second Dharma!"

Yet again, he bulked up, then unleashed another punch toward Xu Qing. As his fist sailed through the air, the golden light grew stronger.

But before the fist landed, Xu Qing suddenly looked up. The killing intent in his eyes blazed as he shifted positions, allowing his shadow to get closer to the old man in the brocade garment, using the movement of his own body to disguise what he was doing with the shadow. Furthermore, because of the position of the sun in the sky, his shadow stretched out very long.

As Xu Qing looked up, and as the killing intent within him surged, he ignored the camp owner's fist and jumped straight up.

That, in turn, allowed his shadow to bridge the gap to the old man in the brocade. The distorted shadow reached out and covered the wrist of the old man's right arm, which was currently wrapped around Sergeant Thunder!

The shadow didn't touch Sergeant Thunder at all!

This was the reason Xu Qing had positioned himself as carefully as he had.

Xu Qing roared as he unleashed the grisly power of his shadow. Discover *new* stories on [no/v/e\(\)/lbin\(.\)com](http://www.lbin(.)com)

The old man's face fell as he was struck by intense pain and an eruption of mutagen. Instantly, his hand turned greenish-black.

The sudden development caused the old man to instinctively release Sergeant Thunder.

At exactly the same time, Xu Qing let the camp owner's strike land directly on him. Coughing up a mouthful of blood, he burst into motion. Disappearing from the spot in which he stood, he left behind a series of afterimages as he shot forward. His dagger and iron skewer became like shining bolts of lightning.

As for the old man, his hand was already starting to mutate, so he had no choice but to fall back.

That gave Xu Qing the opportunity he needed to reach in and grab Sergeant Thunder. Then he threw him forcefully off to the side, to where Crucifix and Graceful Raptor were hiding in the crowd. The two of them leaped out, caught the sergeant, and raced off.

All of this happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint!

"Your shadow!!" blurted the old man in the brocade. Everything had happened so quickly that he didn't even have time to react. The camp owner was also shocked at everything Xu Qing had done.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing wiped blood off of his lips and stared coldly at his two opponents. In the light of the evening sun, he looked like a bird of prey as he quietly growled, "Now, it's my turn."

He immediately rushed toward the old man in brocade. Xu Qing knew that, if he needed to pick between a body cultivator and a magic cultivator, he should take out the latter first.

Almost as soon as he started moving, he was already closing in.

An unsightly expression covered the old man's face as he flew backward while performing a double-handed incantation gesture. Then he waved his finger, and a mist shot out, transforming into the image of an evil ghost that lunged viciously toward Xu Qing.

Off to the side, the camp owner howled, golden light surging off of him as he shot toward Xu Qing. Between the two of them, they sent two attacks toward Xu Qing, like vice grips, leaving him no room to evade.

It was a critical moment, but Xu Qing's eyes glittered coldly as his energy and blood burst forth. Its power erupted in all directions like a windstorm, while at the same time, the spectral image of the hobgoblin appeared, snarling viciously, its inaudible howl shaking the area.

Xu Qing's hands both formed fists as he launched two strikes at the same time!

The movement of his fist caused the spectral hobgoblin to split in two, with one part heading toward the camp owner, and the other toward the old man.

“Energy and blood projection?? That’s... that’s....”

The camp owner’s face fell as his fist collided with Xu Qing’s left fist. As the spectral hobgoblin snarled, the golden light around the camp owner faded, and he was sent tumbling backward over twenty meters.

The old man in the brocade was also shocked. The vicious ghost he’d summoned with his magical technique trembled in fear at the incoming hobgoblin. Then the hobgoblin snapped it up, only to keep going toward the old man. A boom rang out as the old man fell back, blood spraying out of his mouth. Luckily for him, he was surrounded by a glowing blue light that prevented him from sustaining any serious injuries. Shockingly, that glowing light came from a paper talisman!

It was... a talisman treasure!!

Xu Qing looked a bit pale. Though he was incredibly strong, he was facing a double threat from the camp owner and the old man in brocade. As a result, his internal organs were in chaos.

He was also coughing up blood. However, he hadn’t lost any of his ruthlessness. What was more, he took advantage of the shock of the camp owner to rush toward the old man, putting all of his strength into his next punch.

“Looking to die?!” the old man said, his face pale, but his eyes filled with venomous hatred.

Taking a step back, he kept up the barrier created by his talisman treasure, and simultaneously performed another double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, eight evil ghosts appeared.

Each seemed as strong as the seventh level of Qi Condensation, and pulsed with sinister coldness as they lunged toward Xu Qing.

Xu Qing’s eyes shone with ruthless light as, instead of trying to avoid them, he let them slash into him with their teeth. At the same time, he increased his speed and unleashed a punch.

A huge boom rang out, and the talisman treasure shook. That said, it was still a talisman treasure. Until it was completely and utterly drained, it wouldn’t be easy to get past it. On the other hand, it was unlikely that even this old man would have a second talisman treasure. And he had used this one so many times that the calligraphy on its surface was getting hard to see clearly. As Xu Qing battered it, that effect grew more pronounced.

The old man realized this, and he looked even more worried than before. Realizing how ferocious Xu Qing was, and knowing this was a life-or-death situation, his eyes filled

with madness as he performed an incantation gesture and then spat out some blood. That blood transformed into a blood-colored ghost that rushed toward Xu Qing.

Xu Qing's energy and blood were surging, so he didn't even bother looking at his opponent's magical technique. Ignoring his injuries, he unleashed another punch!

"Sergeant Thunder was already in his dying days. But you just couldn't let him go, could you?"

Xu Qing's eyes were bloodshot as the spectral hobgoblin threw its head back and howled. Then its fist combined with his as he landed his blow.

The talisman treasure held, but was badly shaken, such that the old man in the brocade staggered backward, blood spraying out his mouth, and his eyes filling with hysteria.

Feeling like death was looming over him, he howled, "What are you standing around for, Zhang Shiyuan? Let's attack together!!"

Zhang Shiyuan was the camp owner's name. Hearing his name being called, the man suppressed his shock and once again charged forward on the offensive.

Blood seeped out of a neck wound on Xu Qing, and pain pulsed through him, but he ignored it. His energy and blood surged, and his heart overflowed with both fury and madness.

"Sergeant Thunder chose to leave, but you had to keep causing problems! He lived a miserable life, but your heart was set on total extermination!"

Xu Qing seemed almost insane as he unleashed one fist strike after another on the old man's defensive barrier, all while the spectral hobgoblin howled and joined him in the attack.

Booms rang out in the scavenger basecamp as the calligraphy on the talisman treasure faded more. Though the defenses still held, the old man still sustained damage from the force of the attack. Indescribable terror filled him as the shadow of death grew stronger. His talisman treasure was especially effective against magical techniques. But he was dealing with a body cultivator whose repeated attacks created a power of resonance. And his already-damaged body wasn't going to hold out for much longer. As he coughed up mouthful after mouthful of blood, his despair grew.

He wanted to beg for mercy, but the resonance caused by the fist strikes hammered at him, making it impossible for him to do so. As he trembled, incapable of releasing any more magical techniques, he could only scream inwardly.

I... I don't want to die. I—



Veins bulged on Xu Qing's forehead, and his eyes were crimson as he launched both fists at the defensive barrier created by the talisman treasure.

"Die!"

An astonishing boom rang out as the talisman treasure twisted and distorted. It still remained intact, but the old man inside the barrier was shaken so badly his eyes bulged. And at this point, he really couldn't take any more of this barrage. His eyes exploded, his organs collapsed, his flesh and blood were shredded into a paste!

Having done this, Xu Qing slowly turned around, his breath coming in ragged gasps. Clenching his right hand into a fist, he turned and launched a punch to meet the attack of the incoming camp owner.

Xu Qing was sent tumbling back about twenty meters. His numerous wounds opened up again, causing more blood to splash out. Beneath the evening sun, Xu Qing looked to be completely drenched in blood.

Seeing this, the camp owner was shaken to the core.

He looked at his partner, who had been blown to bits, and then his opponent, who was covered in blood but still standing there ready to attack, his eyes filled with killing intent. A chill ran down his spine.

At the same time, the surrounding scavengers looked on, also shaken. And as their eyes came to rest on Xu Qing, they seemed... awestruck.

### Chapter 39: A Requiem to the Mortal World

After a short silence, the camp owner looked at Xu Qing and said, "Kid, let's let this matter drop. You saved Sergeant Thunder, and his nemesis is dead. There's no reason for you and I to fight to the death. Besides, I'm an elder in the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect. If you keep fighting with me, you're basically declaring war on my sect. Our patriarch is a Foundation Establishment expert!"

Xu Qing stood there quietly before coughing up a mouthful of blood. Staggering a bit, he reached up as if to wipe away the blood.

However, that was when the camp owner, who had seemed like he was ready to stop fighting, suddenly rushed forward, eyes flashing coldly. He moved even faster than before, the golden light around him erupting with greater intensity than ever as his body seemed to transform into gold.

"Golden Vajra Warrior: Third Dharma!"

From a distance, golden light seemed to cover the camp owner, and his killing intent burned with unmatched intensity.

Xu Qing's expression didn't change at all. What was more, the stagger from before instantly disappeared. It was clearly an act. And he hadn't been raising his hand to wipe the blood from his mouth, but rather, to lift it over his head. He closed his eyes. In his mind, he recalled the image in that temple in which the walking, god-like statue lifted its hand to unleash a saber strike that contained some sort of great dao. Xu Qing had practiced that saber strike countless times, but had never used it in combat. Right now, he had the feeling that he could use it.

Violet light spilled out, covering him, and circling up to his right hand.

The statue of the god was gold, but Xu Qing was different.

As the violet light surged, the camp owner howled and closed in. Then Xu Qing's right hand dropped in a seemingly casual movement.

There was nothing spectacular about it, and in fact, it seemed completely ordinary. Even simple. Yet within that ordinary movement was something profound. Because of that profundity, as the violet light converged on his hand, and as the hand dropped past his head... the image of a saber appeared in it!

It was a huge, heavenly saber!

Violet light glittered, replacing the sunlight, superseding the golden light, taking over everything. As Xu Qing's hand fell, that saber fell... and sliced through everything in its path! A sound like a thunderclap echoed out, and the ground in the camp shook. A rushing wind swept through the camp, accompanied by blinding light.

The scavengers backed away without even thinking about it.

As for the camp owner, he had been speeding toward Xu Qing, but now he slowed down, until he came to a complete stop about three meters from Xu Qing. First he looked at Xu Qing, then he looked down at the ground. Beneath him, there was a perfectly straight fissure. It was over twenty meters long, and it stretched much further past where he stood.

"That saber...." he murmured. Blood appeared on his face, stretching from his forehead down to his chin. Then it went to his chest, and toward his dantian region. Blood sprayed out as he split completely in two. After the two sides flopped to the ground, silence prevailed.

The only sounds to be heard were the faint gasps from the incredulous onlookers.

The setting sun shone on the young man who stood there, blood dripping off the tips of his fingers and landing below, causing ripples to spread out in the pools of blood that filled the street.

His reflection was hard to see in the blood, but even still, the coldness of his eyes was visible.

Xu Qing quietly put away his bloody dagger and skewer. He picked up the talisman treasure with its faint calligraphy, then turned and walked toward Crucifix and Graceful Raptor, who likewise had expressions of awe on their faces. Xu Qing took the unconscious Sergeant Thunder into his arms and carried him away.

Heads bowed, Crucifix and Graceful Raptor followed.

Xu Qing's shadow stretched long in the evening sun. It seemed unspeakably melancholy as it moved across the blood-soaked ground.

The scavengers watched him leave, then turned their attention to the corpses, which were like bloodstains left behind as Xu Qing walked away. Some of the people present thought back to when Xu Qing had fought the giant horned anaconda in the beast trial, and how he had also left behind a streak of blood as he dragged it out of the arena. Those two images seemed to combine into one.

"Kid!" someone yelled. And then the other scavengers started to say the same thing.

"Kid!!" DiisCoover *updated novels on [n\(o\)v./e/lbin\(.\)com](http://n(o)v./e/lbin(.)com)*

"Kid!!!"

Their voices joined, growing louder. Old people, young people, adults. Even the girls in the feather tents. All of them looked at him with fervent admiration as they called his nickname louder and louder. It was... a special salute from the scavengers!

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The sun had almost set. At the main gate to the basecamp, Xu Qing stopped to shift Sergeant Thunder onto his back, and then looked over his shoulder at Crucifix and Graceful Raptor. They looked back at him with respect and other complicated feelings. They had an idea what was going to happen next.

"You're leaving?" Crucifix asked quietly.

Xu Qing nodded. "I'm going to take Sergeant Thunder on the final leg of his journey. Then I'll leave this place."

Neither Crucifix nor Graceful Raptor said anything.

It was really only at this point that Xu Qing realized he had to say goodbye. He gave them a deep look, and then glanced at the camp where he had spent almost half a year of his life.

Graceful Raptor took a step forward and straightened his hair. Ignoring the blood soaking him, she gave him a hug. "Take care of yourself."

Xu Qing didn't push her away. "What about you two?" he asked softly.

"We're going away. Don't worry. Crucifix and I can take care of ourselves. We're strong enough that we can do well at whatever basecamp we end up in." She smiled.

Crucifix didn't say anything. He just stepped forward and gave Xu Qing a firm hug.

With that, Xu Qing walked a few steps, turned and waved, then left the camp and walked toward the forbidden region.

Crucifix and Graceful Raptor stood there watching him get farther and farther away. When he finally disappeared from sight, Graceful Raptor said, "What do you think, Crucifix? Will we ever see him again? We never even asked his real name."

"We'll see him again. And as for names... they aren't important." Reaching out, he took Graceful Raptor's hand.

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Xu Qing carried Sergeant Thunder on his back, just like he had when the old man was injured and he took him out of the forbidden region. In fact, he followed the same path back. Unfortunately, Sergeant Thunder grew less and less heavy, as though the life force in him were draining away. And slowly but surely, an aura of death built up in him.

Xu Qing's sorrow grew stronger. He entered the jungle, going deeper and deeper in one specific direction. Eventually, the sun set, and night took hold.

Because of the energy and lingering killing intent on him, no mutant beast blocked his path. They simply let him pass in his grief.

About two hours later, a raspy voice spoke from behind him.

"Kid, I had a dream."

Sergeant Thunder was awake, and he had an absent-minded look on his face. He didn't ask Xu Qing where they were, or how they got there. He didn't ask what happened to him.

"I dreamed of Taohong. And you."

Xu Qing's eyes were bloodshot, and his heart heavy with sorrow. He started walking faster, but did everything possible to keep his gait steady. They were almost there.

"In the dream, you were just as clever as you are now. You were always first place in class." It sounded like Sergeant Thunder wanted to laugh, but speaking took too much energy. His voice was getting weaker. "It was a really good dream. I can't hold on much longer, Kid."

Xu Qing raced forward as fast as he could. He tried to somehow use the powers of his violet crystal to heal Sergeant Thunder, but it didn't do any good. The old man's life force just kept slipping away.

Another hour later, they reached the spot where they'd encountered the Singing.

Xu Qing put Sergeant Thunder down beneath the same big tree as before. His eyes were red and his nose stung as he looked down at the old man's wrinkled face.

"Sarge..." he said softly.

As the old man leaned against the tree, his eyes flickered open. They were cloudy and somewhat blank. But a moment later, he realized where he was, and he smiled. There was still some life left in his eyes.

"Got any liquor, Kid?"

Xu Qing nodded and took a jug of alcohol out of his sack. Opening it, he put it to Sergeant Thunder's lips and helped him take a drink. The sergeant's eyes shone a bit brighter after he swallowed. It was like the glow of a candle right before it went dark.

Sergeant Thunder looked up at Xu Qing's red eyes, and he chuckled. "You don't need to cry."

The sergeant seemed to regain a bit of strength, and with Xu Qing's help, pushed himself up against the tree into a standing position. Then he tried to reach out and tousle Xu Qing's hair, but couldn't manage it, and his hand fell back. Xu Qing reached out, grabbed his hand, and put it on his head.

The old man smiled.

"You know, I'm actually lucky to have someone with me at a time like this. And I have some alcohol, too. Even better, once I die, there's someone here to bury me. A lot of people in this world die sad and alone, out in the middle of nowhere, their corpse rotting away in the sun. You know, death isn't something to be afraid of. What's really scary is being alone in the moments before you die...."

The light in Sergeant Thunder's eyes was starting to fade.

“Kid, help me take one last drink.”

Grief filled Xu Qing’s heart as he carefully put the jug of alcohol up to Sergeant Thunder’s lips. The alcohol spilled out, but didn’t enter his mouth. The sergeant looked over Xu Qing’s shoulders, his gaze vacant as he murmured, “Are you coming for me, Taohong...?”

The alcohol seeped down the sergeant’s garment onto the ground below. He didn’t drink. The light in his eyes went out as his life force dissipated.

Xu Qing trembled, bowing his head as he lost control of his sorrow. It swept over him from head to toe. He gripped the jug of alcohol so hard his fingers bit into the clay surface, but he didn’t notice. A long moment later, he bit his lip, put the jug off to the side, and looked at the old man in front of him. The old man who would never wake up again.

In his mind, he could see that time in the city ruins when Sergeant Thunder had looked over his shoulder and suddenly said, “Kid. Do you want to come with me?”

Tears seeped out of Xu Qing’s eyes, creating rivulets as they cut through the blood on his face and fell onto his garments. Back in the slums, he had never cried. But right now, he couldn’t control himself.

He stood there with Sergeant Thunder until the sun rose. Then he buried the old man beneath the tree, along with the jug of alcohol.

Scavengers didn’t need gravestones, as no one would visit them to mourn.

But Sergeant Thunder had a gravestone.

Xu Qing stood in front of it, staring blankly.

Time passed. Eventually, he reached into his sack and pulled out a small item wrapped in hemp cloth. It was a piece of candy. Putting the candy in his mouth, he leaned against the tree and closed his eyes. The candy was sweet.

Someone had once told him that, when he felt bad, he should eat this candy, and it would make him feel better.

Chapter 40: Growing Up

Eventually, the candy melted in his mouth. Sunlight streamed down through the treetops, lingering on his face for a time until it, too, melted down into his soul. As if to assuage his grief.

Eventually, Xu Qing opened his eyes and looked up at the sun in the sky. Then he looked down at Sergeant Thunder's gravestone. He sighed.

"Sarge, have a safe journey...."

Clasping hands, he bowed deeply, then turned and walked away. As he did, he took all his feelings of weakness and buried them in his heart. As for his youthfulness and immaturity, they were buried in the ground with Sergeant Thunder, never to be seen again.

Fate had given Xu Qing a bit of warmth, but then the world cruelly stole it away. That was just life. He had no choice but to continue walking the path in front of him. Gradually, his gaze again became as sharp as a blade, but at the same time, there was something deeper in his eyes.

Moving quickly, he headed toward the edge of the jungle. As he slipped through the mottled sunlight, there was still a bleakness in him that the brightness couldn't dispel. As it built, it turned into loneliness.

Deeper and deeper.

Colder and colder.

He was like a wolf pup that had grown up alone in a brutal jungle, and was getting closer and closer to being a true lone wolf.

A day went by during which he didn't rest at all. Eventually, he was out of the forbidden region. The area he stepped out into wasn't connected to the basecamp. He had no plans to go back there. There would definitely be consequences for killing Sergeant Thunder's nemesis. That man had worked for an organization that operated throughout the continent of South Phoenix. Even though he wasn't a very important person, they would surely investigate his death. Xu Qing wasn't going to gamble on it either way.

But most important was that he'd killed the camp owner. Xu Qing had heard Sergeant Thunder talk about the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect. Night Dove was powerful, but could only be considered an outside force, while the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect was the strongest force in the region. They had connections to dozens of cities and scavenger basecamps, and directly ran many of them.

What was more, the sect's patriarch was a Foundation Establishment expert. To the people who lived around here, including the scavengers, Foundation Establishment experts were like immortals. Although few had ever seen one, the awe and might they commanded was enough to strike reverence into the hearts of all. Because of that, Xu Qing knew that since he had killed two of their elders, the sect was going to be enraged at him specifically. There was one simple way to deal with the problem.

He needed to join an organization that could strike fear into the hearts of the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect, and ensure that they wouldn't do anything to him.

That organization was none other than Seven Blood Eyes. To the local cities and basecamps, the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect was a colossal monster of a group. But to the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect, the same could be said about Seven Blood Eyes. Even if the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect was a hundred times more courageous, it wouldn't dare to provoke Seven Blood Eyes. The best way to resolve this crisis, at least for the moment, was for him to become a disciple of Seven Blood Eyes.

Therefore, as soon as he was out of the forbidden region, he patted the Seven Blood Eyes identity medallion in his sack, and then looked around with shining eyes.

He was going to take a trip to Seven Blood Eyes!

It was located so far away that an ordinary person would waste years of their life walking there. Not only would they have to cross entire mountain ranges, but also, they would face numerous dangers.

But the identity medallion was going to make things a lot easier. On the back was a map which showed cities controlled by Seven Blood Eyes. All he had to do was take his medallion there, and he would get a one-time free teleportation to the sect headquarters.

Right now, the nearest city to Xu Qing was Antlerville, which was in the opposite direction as Laughing Pines. Unlike Laughing Pines, you couldn't just buy a residence permit to live in Antlerville. Instead, you needed a recommendation letter from a Seven Blood Eyes disciple. That was why Sergeant Thunder hadn't been able to settle down there.

When that thought crossed his mind, Xu Qing turned to look back at the forbidden region. Then, as the evening stretched out, he headed toward Antlerville.

It should only take me about three days to get there.

He had never been to Antlerville, but he was familiar with the name, as it wasn't very far from the city where he had once lived for six years.

Two days passed by.

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Xu Qing's decision to avoid the basecamp had been the right one.

There were now dozens of Golden Vajra Warrior Sect disciples there keeping an eye on things. And there were seven or eight who were in the jungle searching for clues. The



reason for this was that there were all sorts of people among the scavengers, all with their own goals and ideas. The only way to keep events in the camp a secret would have been to wipe them all out. But news traveled fast, and when the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect heard what happened, they were furious. To them, losing two elders was a big matter, especially in terms of face. In essence, it was a provocation, and therefore, they had to resolve the issue as quickly as possible to maintain their prestige.

Even after two days of waiting, though, Xu Qing never showed up. Of course, the forbidden region was huge, and they had no idea if he actually went inside. And the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect didn't have enough people to thoroughly search the wilderness.

It was impossible to stop the spread of rumors, and soon, all of the cities and camps in the area knew about what happened. The fact that the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect's search for the culprit wasn't going anywhere made every member of the sect even angrier.

At the moment, an angry roar could be heard coming from the middle of the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect. The sect headquarters wasn't very far from Laughing Pines. It was a very expensive and beautiful complex of buildings built on a mountain, filled with hundreds of disciples and quite a few top experts. As for the angry roar, it came from the grand hall on the very top of the mountain.

"You haven't found him?"

Sitting on a throne at the end of the hall was a middle-aged man dressed in a golden robe. He was imposing, and his eyes flashed with anger. Given his rage, it was no surprise his spirit power fluctuations weighed down heavily on the others present.

Currently, there were two people standing in front of him. Both were middle-aged, and wore the same type of golden robe. Their spirit power fluctuations were intense, surpassing that of the camp owner, and they were both frowning.

"Sect Leader," one of them said, "the wilderness is too big. Why not have the camp guards and scavengers organize a search? If we do that, it shouldn't take more than three days to find the culprit." Finnd *new chapters on nove/lbin(.)com*

"What are you, a comedian?" the sect leader shouted. "Some boy kills two of our elders, drenches our basecamp in blood, and you want to ask help from the guards and scavengers? The Golden Vajra Warrior Sect would lose all face!!"

The other two men held their tongues and said nothing further.

A moment later, the sect leader took a deep breath and, eyes glittering with killing intent, pointed at his two subordinates.

“Grand Elder Li. Grand Elder Chen. You’re both at the peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Either of you could kill this ‘Kid’ without expending any effort.

“I already sent a message to the patriarch asking for instructions. I requested two of his search talismans for you, so once we get formal permission, you will go out and do whatever you have to do to resolve the issue. I want the Kid’s head brought back to me in twenty-four hours or less!”

The two grand elders accepted the orders with very serious looks on their faces.

Meanwhile, the sect leader’s eyes shone with cold light as he gave them each a jade slip. Then, just as they were about to go ask permission from the patriarch, the sound of a cold harrumph echoed out in the hall like thunder. The sound was so powerful it caused the two elders’ minds to reel. Even the sect leader reacted visibly. Then he stood and walked away from the throne as, at the other end of the hall, an old man appeared, wearing a gold robe with a primarily red color scheme.

The old man was tall and burly, and his face was ruddy. His long, white hair was disheveled, and his eyes crackled as if with lightning. As he entered, spirit power fluctuations rolled out that completely surpassed the Qi Condensation level. Wherever he walked, the ground split and cracked beneath him. Furthermore, his aura was so impressive that it created something like a tempest around him. In fact, if one looked closely, they would see that his feet weren’t even touching the ground. He was actually walking on thin air.

This was not some trick using a wind cultivation technique; he was really walking on air!

Behind him, it was possible to see the illusory image of an angry vajra warrior, pulsing with so much power that, if it attacked, the entire surrounding hall would be destroyed.

As soon as this man arrived, the three people in the hall dropped to their knees and kowtowed.

“Our respects, Patriarch!”

Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior said nothing, but instead strode to the throne and sat down. Then he looked coldly at his three subordinates for a moment before his lightning-like gaze came to rest on the sect leader.

“Yunwen, did you forget the sect mandate of our Golden Vajra Warrior Sect?”

Sweat broke out on the sect leader’s forehead as he immediately replied,

“Patriarch, sir, I haven’t forgotten. The Golden Vajra Warrior Sect’s mandate states that we try not to take action unless necessary. But when we do take action, we use the

sharp energy of the golden to strike like a vajra warrior. That's why I already arranged for these two grand elders to go out and handle the matter."

"You numbskull!" the patriarch raged. "I just looked into the Kid's background. He rose to prominence out of nowhere recently. As a new member of Squad Thunderbolt, he slaughtered a whole host of enemies on his first run into the forbidden region there. Despite being weaker than Squad Bloodshadow, he wiped them out. And he saved a lot of scavengers!"

"He's proficient in the dao of poison, and even though he's only in the sixth level of Qi Condensation, he slaughtered two of our elders and numerous disciples. Then he got away completely unscathed. Now, you can't even find him."

"Despite how many people live in that scavenger camp, there have been only two people willing to give information about him. Obviously, people like him!"

"Based on accounts I've read in the ancient records throughout the years, when dealing with a person like this, you either work things out with them, or you go all out to kill them."

"And now you're planning to send out only two people to get him? A person who's proficient at winning from a position of weakness? You might as well be sending them to their deaths!"

By the time he finished speaking, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior seemed completely infuriated. The three subordinates couldn't do anything but tremble and bow their heads.

Snorting coldly, the patriarch continued, "I can tell that if you two go out and run into him, he'll end up killing you both." Looking at the sect leader, he said, "Then you'd get pissed off and go chasing after him, and he'd kill you too. Finally, I would show up, but by that time he'd be long gone. Then, years later, he'd come back and slap me to death with a single blow."

The sect leader was stunned to hear this analysis, and was sweating now more than before. Of course, he didn't actually think that events would play out like that, but he also didn't dare to argue with the patriarch. Keeping his head bowed, he simply said, "What should we do, Patriarch?"

Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior looked out at the wilderness for a long moment. Then he said, "Send the disciples out to search the area. Have everyone in the cities and scavenger basecamps keep an eye out as well. I'll give these two elders flight talismans in addition to the search talismans. They can each cover one half of our territory. I'll join the search too. If anyone finds him, they're to notify me first. That is the way we can strike like a vajra warrior. It is also the only surefire way to ensure our sect's prestige is not damaged!"

Shortly thereafter, bells rang in the Golden Vajra Warrior Sect.

Disciples poured out of the main gates, while at the same time, the patriarch took the grand elders up into the sky.

In front of him were three glittering paper talismans that indicated a direction to follow. The three symbols turned into three beams of light that shot in different directions. From that point, the patriarch and the grand elders split up.