

Unfathomable 121

Chapter 121

Matt while wearing his demon hunter disguise wasn't sure what to make of this, the man was bowing as a show of respect. But at the same time, he was badmouthing him, well he was badmouthing that Zhang Clan Patriarch. He was apparently an evil demonic cultivator, that raped young girls and drunk their blood during the full moon.

'Gotta give it to them, that's some imagination...'

This was clearly a ploy to get his demon hunter persona that was known for killing evil cultivators and beasts to slay Zhang Dong. The problem was that he was this Zhang Dong that they were talking about, he didn't really want to commit suicide.

'Well, I guess I can just bring them in for trying to assassinate me... I'm my own witness... but wait...'

He wasn't sure how his public image would look, they would clearly deny it. Not like he couldn't just pound those two clans to the ground any time that he wanted, the thing holding him back was his conscience and his public image. He didn't want to look like a regular tyrant for the people and this was how a dictator acted.

'Guess I could pretend that I take the offer... but make it look like the three clans hired him to kill the benevolent leader instead, bet my popularity will spike, but will I have to kill off my demon hunter persona... '

This sounded like a good chance to milk these three clans, they were probably desperate enough to give him the bulk of their wealth in spirit stones which he could use to finally get himself into that Nascent Soul Realm. The problem was how he should do it, in other novels the protagonist mostly had a clone of some sort to help them out in situations like this. At most he could fashion an automated doll, but its looks were plain it would not pass for him in any shape or form.

'I guess I could go with the smoke and mirror approach... maybe use those holograms or just plant some speakers here and there...'

He wasn't sure about his acting abilities, but the people didn't need to see the battle happening from close up. He just needed to kick up a big fuss and make the three clans believe that the two experts were fighting it out. It would be really easy to implicate the three families in the assassination attempt, so that everyone was on his side.

Matt was really surprised that he was thinking about such a scheme, normally he would find things like these too bothersome to go through with. Now, he was just chuckling inwardly thinking about the dumb looks on people's faces when he would be performing the show, he was slowly moving on from his shy shell.

He looked at the man in his disguise, his facial expression changing into one of rage and discomfort.

"Oh, is this true?"

The bowing man bowed some more and nodded.

“Yes my lord, the Zhang Clan Patriarch is a true demon!”

He turned around, making it look like he was thinking hard about something, the man could see Lei Ying-Lo from the side.

“If you are telling the truth... then I can’t let this go... but it won’t come cheap...”

His eyes shined slightly as he mentioned the part about the payment, he wasn’t sure how much spirit stones the three clans had but he wanted them to fork it all up.

“Ah yes sir Ying-Lo, the clan leaders will discuss the pricing with you outside the city...”

Matt got the rundown by the servant, he would meet the three stooges outside in a secluded area. There they would discuss their dealings and the payment, he wouldn’t budge on that one and wanted to drain as much as he could from the old man trio.

“I will inform the families that you have agreed to meet with them!”

The man quickly run away, probably happy that he got a positive reply from this scary uncle. Matt that was standing there with a jade slip in his hand, the time and place of the meeting were all in there. It wasn’t that far away from Moonlight City, probably due to the fact that the three families didn’t have any flying swords to travel on.

‘Soon I won’t even need this thing anymore...’

He looked down at the black sword he was riding on, the item would lose its purpose after he leveled up as when he did he would be able to fly around like superman.

‘Though flying around like that looks kind of silly...’

He tossed the motion of flying with two fists forward back into his mind while he headed back to Moonlight City, he had to prepare for the show. He couldn’t really do it alone, so he had to pull Zhang Kuo into the mix. This man performed his job quite well and in return even got some top tips from this expert Patriarch of his.

Matt noticed that the stoic glasses-wearing man sometimes made bewildered faces at him, like the time he ordered them to pay off the debt, or when he ordered to set up the free school for the kids. He was loyal but he still was an old fashioned cultivator nut, giving things out for free was something that he still didn’t understand all that well.

He went back to his temporary room and took out some paper and a pen. He liked to write down his ideas and contemplate on them first. He made a short outline about what he could and couldn’t do in his little scheme. He clearly couldn’t have both of his personas out at the same time, some magic tricks would have to be implemented into the plan. Nothing too hard as the plan could fall through if he got too excited and made it harder for himself to pull it off.

‘Think this could work... but it will be really cheesy...’

He nodded and called his trusted retainer into the room, explaining his plan in detail. Zhang Kuo already knew that Zhang Dong was the famous Demon hunter. His brows furrowed slightly as his family head started explaining what this plan was supposed to be.

“S-sir, wouldn’t it be easier to just bring them in...”

The man was clearly confused, why do some strange charade when they could just bring those three family heads in for questioning. Not like they even needed to question them, with his own strength he could just order their execution or banish them from this city. No one would really ask any questions about it.

Matt, on the other hand, felt like this could be quite fun. Plus, the people would know that the three families ordered a hit on him after it all played out. If he just ordered their deaths, the people might think that he was too overbearing and not any different than all the other aristocratic like family clans.

Zhang Kuo was vetoed on the spot, Zhang Dong handed him some treasures that would be used for this charade and ordered him to prepare. He had already prepared the most important stuff for those and now just needed to go meet with the three Patriarchs that were trying to murder him.

He zoomed out of Moonlight City, the rendezvous point was in a secluded area surrounded by forest and by a lake. There was a log cabin there not used by anyone, the three families didn’t want anything getting traced back to them so they set up the meeting on neutral ground.

He made sure to look extra scary this time around, he had to make them feel like he meant business. That wasn’t hard though, he just needed to spill some of his aura out, his looks were already extremely menacing. He made sure to not use his lightning element or holy one, as that could have blown his cover.

He was hovering above in the clouds, he could clearly sense that there were a lot of people hiding around that log cabin. The three family heads must have placed their bodyguards around the perimeter to keep people out, but none of them would be his match. He could sense three cultivators in that small hut, they were all in the great circle of foundation establishment.

Kuan Yin, Xing Deng and Situ Rong were all waiting in that cabin. The inside looked quite nice as they made their servants clean this place up preparing it for the Demon hunter that was supposed to come soon. The three came to an agreement, they would hire this man to kill that pesky Zhang Dong.

After the man was dead, some other powerful clan could be bargained with. They wanted something similar to happen like the time where the Zhang Clan was weakened after the first expedition didn’t pan out for them.

“Do you think the man will do it? It might cost quite the penny...”

Said Situ Rong while rubbing the bald part of his head, that was shining from the sweat that was gathering.

“Do we have another option? If we don’t pay up now we will all be finished in a couple of years!”

Xing Deng replied, the man was hit the hardest from the three Patriarchs here. The other two made their own calculations, they would take significant losses to their fortunes if they agreed to what the Zhang Clan was planning.

“I have to agree with Brother Deng, those Zhang dogs clearly have something against us.”

The old man said while fanning himself some, he also took quite the hit to his stock. They were forced to pay the farmers more, and what was this blasted weekend thing, it would just bring in more losses for them.

Their conversation was interrupted after they felt someone getting near, this someone wasn't hiding his aura at all. They had some servants standing outside, so they just waited for now. Soon the door creaked open, a large scarred man entered their field of vision, his rough appearance made goosebumps appear on their arms.

"Greetings Senior Yinglo! We thank you for listening to our plead for help!"

Kuan Yin was the first one to speak up, a bright submissive smile plastered all over his face. The other two quickly clasped their hands and bowed towards this man, they could clearly feel his overwhelming cultivation.

The man in question walked in slowly, not saying much as he just observed the three morons that had called him here.

"So, I've heard you discovered a demonic cultivator in these parts, is this true?"

Matt asked with his gruff sounding voice, the three cultivators just glanced at each other and started talking, this would be the moment of truth for them.

"Tiss so, that monster Zhang Dong is a real fiend!"

"We are sure that he has some kind of demonic treasures in his home, some of our people discovered it!"

"Yes, we even lost family members to these monsters, they never returned back home, we are afraid that they have fallen to some kind of demonic ritual!"

The three started talking, trying to convince this man to act without asking too many questions. They had more than just words to back it up though, one of them pulled out some kind of curved dagger. The weapon was clearly radiating demonic energies, Matt was surprised after he grasped it.

"Our people managed to find this ceremonial dagger in one of the Zhang Clan compounds, then we quickly tried to inform you about it, Senior. Your fame precedes you, we are just simple cultivators we have no way of defending ourselves against such a strong demonic cultivator like the Zhang Patriarch, please aid us!"

"I'm sure there are more of these foul treasures in the city, but we weren't able to uncover the whole plot of that demonic fiend!"

The three were quite crafty, this wasn't the only demonic artifact that they had. They had their ways of doing things, bribing some servants wasn't hard. They had planted various demonic treasures in the buildings that the Zhang Clan members were using, they were hidden there so that when this cultivator did his own research, he would confirm their story.

This wasn't anything new to Matt, as his senses were quite high so he noticed the strange artifacts getting placed around the buildings in the city. They were all low level treasures, that would be easy to

dispose of. Moonlight city didn't have its defensive formation updated yet, so something like this could happen.

'You crafty foxes...'

He just nodded for now, while rubbing his chin.

"If what you say is true... then the man must die..."

The three just nodded, their scheme seemed to be working for now.

"But... I'll need a substantial payment in spirit stones for it, this Zhang Dong won't be an easy opponent..."

They all nodded once more, already knowing that it would be costly to hire this man, but it was already a miracle that they found someone that would face that monster of a Zhang Patriarch.

"I'll check if there really are demonic treasures or cultivators first, you have a day to get the payment ready. Hm, two hundred thousand low grade spirit stones should cover the expense...I'll take one hundred thousand as a downpayment, sounds fair?"

The three men almost collapsed onto the ground after they heard the price.

"S-senior... please show mercy... that price is a bit..."

Kuan Yin's bald head shined even brighter as he tried to plead for a lower price.

"What? Don't have it? Fighting someone of that level won't be easy... you don't need to pay all of it in spirit stones, you can cover the rest with treasures or other materials like beast cores. You have a day to get it all ready!"

The man snorted and then walked out of the cabin. The two hundred thousand stones were about the amount he needed to get a million system points. Before he would need half of that, but the system gave him fewer points now. This price was something that the three old schemers should be able to pay up, but they would probably need to empty all of their reserves, this was something he was counting on.

'You leeches this city for decades, now it's time to pay up!'

Chapter 122

The door shut behind the demon hunter, the servants outside just bowed and looked as the expert jumped into the air. A big black sword appeared out of thin air under his feet and then he took off into the clouds, making the people watching envious of this amount of power. The three Patriarchs were left in the cabin in distress as the amount they were thinking was about half of what the man was asking for.

"Damn... this man might be even worse than the Zhang Clan leader... and he wants it upfront? What if he fails, how will we get our spirit stones back?"

"He didn't look like he would take the job otherwise..."

"Luckily we don't need to use only spirit stones for it..."

They huddled up, they needed to split the expense three ways and none of them wanted to pay more than they had to. They got their accountants on the job, this was an amount that they could stomach somehow but if the man failed they would be finished. If they cleaned up most of their inventory they could gather most of it, at least they only needed to give him the first part upfront, the rest could be gathered later.

“Hope both of them kill each other!”

They grumbled to themselves, in reality, they could somehow recover from the losses if they just worked with the Zhang Clan normally. They would not earn as much as before, but not like they would end up poor. They would still be wealthy, but their pride wouldn't allow them to work it out with the other party, they would rather risk it all and come out on top than cower in fear below the Zhang family.

While the three families were scattering to gather all the resources the demon hunter flew into town. He used his Wei Hung persona to move around town and discovered various demonic artifacts around the city. They were mostly low-level mortal weapons, probably the only thing these types of clans could get.

‘Still, they got to some of the hired help... or they already had them in the bag from the start...’

This was a new city they were now running, they needed the help of the locals for various tasks. It wouldn't be surprising if some of the servants and workers had ties to one of the three larger families. Maybe they were in debt, a promise of lowering that would probably make them do this in a heartbeat.

‘Not like these people feel very thankful to my clan just yet... have to give him some time...’

He didn't blame the ignorant masses that much, things just worked like that here. That didn't mean that he wouldn't punish anyone if they were caught doing it. He would give the people that helped the three families one more chance, after his little act that was about to happen he would take off the training wheels.

‘If I was a real demon hunter I might have even believed these people.’

Without doing much research Zhang Dong could fit a demonic cultivator template. He went missing from the clan for ten long years. He returned with some strange cultivation method that made him insanely more powerful than others. He also was managing to burst through realms like crazy being now in the great circle only after two years.

Demonic cultivators were known for sucking away the lifeforce of other cultivators which prompted them to mostly have a higher cultivation realm than your regular cultivator. The downsides to these types of methods were, first the body count left, then the practitioner's psychological problems. The demonic energies would corrupt their very being and soul, making them act like psychopaths that didn't care about anyone but themselves.

Zhang Dong was also rarely seen, this was due to him spending times cooped up in his crafting abode. When he actually decided to go out, he used a disguise like he was using now. So he no one really knew what he was up to these days, but not like other Patriarchal types of cultivators were very social either.

‘Okay, let me get this over with.’

He removed all of the demonic artifacts that were placed around the city, then went back to the meeting spot after the day had passed. The three family heads were waiting for him, each one of them having a spatial ring with various treasures in them. Matt counted about sixty thousand in low grade spirit stones, the rest were other various materials like spirit herbs, metals and beast cores.

“We will need some time to gather more assets, I’m sure after Senior defeats that foul demonic cultivator, we will have everything ready for you!”

One of the men mentioned while handing over his clan’s spatial ring, his hand quivering as he was parting with the fortune.

“Hm... I’ll count it later... should be enough in here as a down-payment, but don’t forget to gather the rest after the deed is done!”

The men nodded, they weren’t planning on cheating the man they were far too afraid of his power to even try that. They were curious how the demon hunter would handle this, would he lure the Zhang Clan Patriarch out. Maybe he would wait for him to leave, he probably would be going back to Spirit Spring City sooner or later. They all thought that such an expert had to have his ways of taking care of high profile targets like this.

They looked as he rose up from the ground on his black sword and just flew back towards Moonlight City. The three looked at each other, wondering if he would use some kind of disguise to hide, he wouldn’t just go and attack him outright, now would he?

Little did they know that Zhang Dong was the demon hunter, and he was planning to implicate them in the hit.

‘Well, time to get this show on the road.’

The three clan heads were still in the forest, returning from the meeting place at the log cabin. Suddenly they could hear a booming voice, this voice was familiar as it belonged to the man that they just hired. He was shouting while using his Qi to make his voice travel all around the area of the city and it even reached them all the way back here.

“Zhang Dong come out! I know who you are, it’s no use hiding!”

Everyone looked up into the sky and stopped anything that they were doing. They spotted an angry-looking cultivator in a black robe hovering right above Moonlight City. He was clearly here to cause trouble and apparently he was after the Zhang Clan head.

“I know that you are a foul demonic cultivator, the Situ Clan, Xing Clan and the Kuan Clan have provided me irrefutable evidence! You must be cleansed by this Lei Ying-lo!”

The Moonlight City residence started whispering among each other, they heard the man’s name and instantly knew that the name belonged to a famous demon hunter.

“C-could it be true?... but wait... this sounds fishy...”

“Yeah... would those three families even tell the truth...”

“Sounds like a hoax!”

The people didn't trust those three clans one bit, there was far too much shady stuff around those three clans. While the people were whispering, the man on the flying sword looked down as if he could hear what they were talking about.

"What? You don't believe me? Why would those three established families lie to me? What could they possibly gain from this? Not like they are losing bountiful amounts of spirit stones due to the new laws or anything like that... Yes, no reason at all!"

The citizens looked at each other, their brows twitching after the man continued to talk. Was he here to fight the Zhang Clan Patriarch or talk badly about the three families. He was also contradicting himself, speaking that the three clans were good people and then mentioning a good reason why they would want to kill Zhang Dong.

"They clearly hired him to kill the Zhang Clan Patriarch... but what a strange fellow..."

The people whispered some more, the whole thing was quite odd.

"Now, Zhang Dong come out from your hiding place and let our fists do the talking! I'll see for myself if you are a demonic cultivator during our battle, you won't be able to hide your foul energies from this Lei Yinglo!"

More people started gathering, a lot of people from the Police force were dispatched but they were sweating bullets as they knew that they stood no chance against this powerful uncle. Zhang Zhi was also moving towards that area, he had to protect the good name of his patriarch but before he could speak out he heard Zhang Dong's voice instead.

"Oh, why isn't it the famous demon hunter, I'm quite intrigued that those three fools got you to agree to this... But if it's a battle that you want, then a battle you will have!"

The voice was coming out of the old Cheng Clan main building, the Zhang Clan leader was probably somewhere in it but people couldn't really see him.

"Patriarch, you should leave this to me!"

Zhang Zhi shouted out, he wanted to at least face this man in battle first even if he would die the Patriarch could perhaps see the man's fighting style, this could lead to a win later on when he faced him.

"No need! What kind of person would I be if I let one of my junior members fight my battles for me?"

"Demon hunter, face me behind the mountains in the East, we can't get the city people involved in our fight, there would be massive casualties!"

"Promise me this fellow Daoist, if I lose you will leave my Zhang Clan alone and this city as well, they have suffered enough!"

Zhang Zhi got denied and Zhang Dong scored a couple of points with the public as he appeared to be worried about their well being. It was a given if two top core formation experts fought above a large city like this, there would be casualties and destruction.

Zhang Dong's voice that everyone was hearing was of course done with a speaker type treasure. He was holding on to the microphone while being in his demon hunter persona. No one could really see what he

was doing, he just covered his mouth with his hand and spoke into the little treasure that produced the sound. The speaker was placed in a good spot and Zhang Kuo was guarding it, making sure that the plan doesn't get discovered by other people.

"Very well, you have my word. I'm only here for demonic cultivators."

Soon, Lei Yinglo agreed and headed over behind those mountains leaving the city airspace. Then a sudden boom of thunder could be heard followed by a flash of light up in the sky. The people turned to it out of instinct, they saw the Zhang Clan Patriarch hovering up in the sky, golden lightning shooting out of his body as he also flew towards those mountains.

Matt used an old magic trick, kicking up a fuss at one spot. While everyone was trying to find the source of the noise he quickly changed his appearance while being above the clouds where no one could see him. He then used his movement technique to get into that spot in a flash, making it seem as if he took off from the old Cheng Clan main building.

Everyone heard the exchange, the three families were in distress as the cat was out of the bag and everything depended on that blasted demon hunter now. Why did he have to tell everyone that they were the ones that provided that evidence? It was obvious that they just wanted to use that as an excuse to kill this man off.

Suddenly a loud booming sound could be heard, some strange beams of light rose up into the air as people could feel an overbearing aura flying their way.

"Oh no, they are fighting... what strength!"

"Can the Zhang Patriarch win? That Demon hunter is really famous..."

"What are those three clan's planning... hope Senior Dong wins!"

While the people were talking among each other, Matt was punching some boulders into dust. He was kicking up a storm, shouting out loudly. He hoped that his mock battle with himself would come off as realistic, otherwise he might get embarrassed if his super sneaky scheme came to light.

'Think I need to work on my lines, they were quite corny...also how long should I keep this up...'

Chapter 123

Everyone from the Zhang Clan gathered in the city and they were looking in the direction of the faraway mountains. The aura fluctuations were quite chaotic and reached the pinnacle of core formation which made the regular Qi condensation people shake in their boots.

"What a battle, shame that we can't see anything..."

The common cultivators could profit when two experts fought each other. They could see their techniques and get inspired which would allow them to reach a higher realm. So wanting to be there to see how those two monsters performed was quite enticing, but it was also very dangerous, one bad step and you could be flattened by a Qi strike.

"You're not half bad, Zhang Clan Patriarch!"

“You’re not a slouch either, Sir. Demon Hunter!”

They were a bit perplexed that they could hear the two men talking, it was as if they were shouting out in the direction of the City or something. Which was just what Matt was doing, both of his hands placed in a cone shape, his shouts were accompanied by some Qi so that his voice would travel far and wide.

Luckily Zhang Kuo was smart enough to order the clan members to set up a perimeter outside the city, so that no nosy person would bother their Patriarch’s scheme which looked as if it was working. After some back and forth, the people started cheering out Zhang Dong’s name.

They had considered the pros and cons and they came to the conclusion that it would be a travesty with the Zhang head perished here. What would come of these tax cuts and new laws, would the other three families gain back their position and bully them once more? An even more ruthless clan could even show up, which would mean their downfall.

The three big Moonlight City clan heads were standing outside the forest, they were afraid to return afraid that the Zhang clan people would apprehend them the moment they tried to sneak in.

“Blasted idiot! Did something eat his brain! Why does he have to implicate us too!”

They were pulling their hair out, they didn’t think that the famous demon hunter would just waltz into the city and demand a duel with his assassination target. This would be fine, but he had to babble out that he was coaxed into it by them, a child would figure out during that speech that they were the ones that hired him.

“Calm down... if he beats him then only that other core formation expert will be left... Judging by his temper he will attack the demon hunter...”

“Yeah if he kills all of their core formation experts we will be in the clear...”

The three talked while hiding behind some large trees, the loud thunderous sounds could be heard even from the place they were in. Their conversation got interrupted though, by someone they were talking about.

“Oh? the other expert? Did you mean me?”

Zhang Zhi was hovering on a sword above the group of cultivators, Zhang Kuo already filled him in on where the three stooges were hiding at. The location was provided by Zhang Dong, but no one besides Kuo would know about that little detail.

“Don’t move, I’ll cut you where you stand if you try to run!”

Zhang Zhi pulled out his sword and held it over his shoulder, the long blade glistening with water Qi which made everyone below him gulp in fright. The man in question wasn’t in on the plan, so he was still on edge as he thought that his clan head was fighting a ferocious opponent. He had no way of telling how strong that Senior Yinglo was, he was truly astonishing.

The glorious Zhang Dong at this moment was leaning against some rocks, here and there he fired off a bolt of lightning from his finger which caused more noise than damage. He was munching on a meat bun and looking at the sky, quite relaxed. Here and there he would shout out or produce a loud roar which would make the people back in the city gasp in worry.

'Hm... is this enough? How long do experts fight for... I don't really want to blow these mountains up for this silly play I'm doing.'

He glanced around, the area looked quite silent as every creature in a ten-kilometer radius had scattered away. He was hoping that they don't cause trouble for some villagers or something, he'll have to send out a squad of warriors to check that out.

'Guess the Demon hunter will have to go out with a bang...'

He wouldn't kill of his other person but he had to make him lose in some shape or form. He had one ability that didn't require him to be in the vicinity of it so he would go with that.

The people in the city suddenly felt a surge of Qi, the power was truly immense. Out from behind those mountains they saw a bright golden dragon emerging, it was made purely out of golden divine lightning energies. It was truly immense a couple of kilometers in length and powered with Zhang Dong's Qi.

"Look... what is that! It's flying into the air..."

"That's a giant dragon... wait is that a Daoist magic of some sort?"

The dragon was roaring out and chasing someone on a sword, the man looked beaten up quite a bit his hair and clothes were disheveled.

'Is that the Demon Hunter? Looks like he is fleeing from that dragon...'

The dragon shot of lightning bolts all around the area and flew right after its enemy. The fleeing cultivator couldn't shake it off as they danced around in the sky. Finally, the people gasped as they saw the dragon's mouth closing on the man, the cultivator dressed in black holding that mouth open as the two flew up into the air.

The man looked like he was holding on for his life, not letting the dragon construct close its large maw on him. The two flew straight up into the air and vanished behind some clouds. Just a couple of moments later there was an explosion, the shockwave reaching the people standing outside and made their hair flutter in the wind.

Everyone started looking and running to see what happened, the clouds were blocking the view but the explosion kicked up quite the strong wind which blew the white sky marshmallows to the side. The revealed the demon hunter, he was still alive but the top of his robe was no more.

He was floating up in the air, covered in red which indicated that he took quite the hit from that.

"You're quite a strong fellow Daoist Dong, this is my loss... I have made a mistake you are clearly not a demonic cultivator, it would be impossible for a foul demonic cultivator to possess such divine abilities like these..."

"That's fine, we all make mistakes fellow Daoist Yinglo. You may leave with this experience, it would be a travesty if our land lost such a talented master such as yourself."

A disembodied voice came from somewhere sounding like the Zhang Clan Patriarch, apparently, the demon hunter lost but Zhang Dong was letting him go.

“My humble thanks, I should have known that those three clans were up to no good and placed those demonic artifacts to make you look bad!”

“Yes, don’t worry my clan will take care of that.”

The two chatted for a bit before the Demon hunter swished away, he flew high up into the clouds and vanished from sight. Matt would wait for the coast to be clear before returning back to his quarters. Zhang Zhi and the others would take care of those three family heads their businesses would probably fall into his clutches now.

The three Patriarchs tried to defend themselves, accusing Lei Yinglo instead. They proclaimed that he was the mastermind behind everything and that he even stole their money after threatening them. They would have a lot of time to explain everything in the court, the lie detection devices had proven to be quite the handy commodity which made the trials progress at a rapid pace.

You just had to ask the right ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions, which forced the truth out one way or the other. The only way to circumvent this procedure was not to talk at all, but almost no one could stomach that pain. This might feel like it was a bit tyrannical, more or less torture. But it got the job done and the truth came out easily.

Still, the device wouldn’t kill a person a safety device was put in place after the death warriors that the Zhang Clan captured wouldn’t talk. They lit up like Christmas trees from the high voltage and almost died at the court hearing. If you refused to talk would just be incarcerated with no way of getting out, so there was no reason to take the pain unless you were covering for someone.

Matt made sure to write out the penalties for any transgression, he knew how murderous these cultivation nuts were. He didn’t want them killing people for stealing food or some coin. The crime would fit the bill, the death penalty would exist for certain nut jobs like the demonic cultivators or cultists. Mostly you would get a jail sentence with some hard labor added on to it.

Matt returned to his quarters after the night came, he was uninjured as the blood was fake. It was a contained explosion the Qi blast that resulted from it was dispersed into the air.

The city seemed quite peaceful most of the goons and thug types were too afraid to cause trouble after what happened this day. The police were patrolling the city and the pleasure district was quite barren, it would take some time before some of the more raunchy establishments resumed with their work.

He took a sip from his tea and sat down on a large beanbag pillow, he had one made just so he could laze around.

‘Well, I’m making progress the daily points are going up!’

He looked through his system window, the city was progressing and he could see the red area’s changing from red to yellow, yellow areas going blue and blue areas changing to a nice shade of green. This showed him that things were improving, getting everything into a nice blue color was the least he wanted to achieve, all green would be just a nice bonus.

The city needed more work though, it was one thing to make it safer for the citizens and lowering the taxes to keep them happy. It was another thing to provide them with a steady job. This city needed

something that they could use for profit. Like Spirit Spring City that had the Zhang Clan which had a good business in pill making.

There was a plan of bringing some pill making masters over here to train people, setting up another division that would produce more income. There also was a plan in making other things, like daily necessities like plumbing. The construction of factories that would hire people to produce parts was already on the way. This would be a long term plan, but they were hoping to replace some outdated products with some easily manufactured treasures that worked on spiritual energy.

‘Well, guess it’s time to go back to Spirit Spring, wonder how things are going back there...think grandpa sais something about a clan get together or something...’

‘He said that it was for the junior members... sounded like some tournament, probably to show off your disciples.’

Matt looked at the ring that he was holding, in it were the spirit stones and loot that he got from the three clans. He then looked at his current amount of points, a bright grin appearing on his face.

‘Well, thing gramps can just go there instead of me, think it’s time to get ready to reach a new level!’

He calculated that if he grabbed the remaining spirit stones that those three stooges offered him, he would have enough to absorb and get those ten million points. He needed to return to his home city and get ready, he would soon be in the nascent soul level he needed look over those nascent soul techniques he got from that secret ground. There was also something that he wanted to talk about with his two friends Huo Qiang and Feng Liena.

‘Well, that Bankei guy wasn’t that bad, can bring him over too...that last guy felt a bit opportunistic...will have to think about that one some more...’

‘Well, guess I’ll head out in the morning and tell gramps that they should go without me. I’ll just tell him that I’m busy with cultivating and can’t be bothered. Gotta love the perks of being the clan leader, can shove babysitting onto others, he he.’

‘But I guess if I’m going to talk to those two, I should think about a good name first...’

The man continued sipping his green tea while looking at the system screen, thinking that after he rose up to the Nascent Soul level, things would get hectic.

Chapter 124

A month had passed since the Zhang Clan recaptured their old city. At the moment the clinic people were bowing to an old man that had a fu manchu mustache and beard. They were giving him their farewells as he was leaving the clinic and leaving it to a new physician instead. He had stayed in the city for a bit longer, making sure that the police station was up and working correctly.

He wasn’t sure if his people would be as lenient as he hoped them to be, so he made sure to stay and correct them during the judging processes as well. They weren’t perfect but it was in working condition, he would check up on them later but it looked like they were doing fine and sticking to the guidelines that he had written down.

Thanks to the changes in the city, the Zhang Clan mine enterprise had gotten quite a bit more workers and they were quite cheap. The, of course, were the incarcerated criminals, now wearing slave collars, some of them having their cultivation crippled or lowered. Matt made sure that the criminals actually earned their keep and not just lazed around in prisons bored out of their minds.

It was time to move on, he nodded at the workers and headed out his next stop would be the new Zhang Clan estate which was now occupied by Zhang Zhi the new city mayor who was also the police chief. His amazon wife had already moved here along with their child, he was just here to bid the two farewell.

“Zhang Zhi, I’ll be leaving this city to you, be sure not to destroy it too much like last time...”

He chuckled to himself, the samurai styled man blushed a bit as he recalled the day that he destroyed a couple of houses while chasing this Patriarch’s ‘Master’.

“Don’t worry about Master, you probably won’t see him again, he likes to keep to himself, so no need to feel down about it.”

He gave the man a reassuring pat on the shoulder and a Patriarch brand smile to go with it. A small energetic one-year-old was getting held up by a large lady, Matt just petted her head which made the toddler smile.

“Patriarch, you should go visit the old Matriarch once in a while, she used to talk quite about your time in the secret ground before I left the old Clan.”

Zhang Daiyu said while holding the child in her hands, she was previously a member of the Feng clan but in this world, women took on the names of the clan’s of their husbands.

“Oh yes, didn’t want to bother her too much, I bet she is busy cultivating and all...”

Matt gave out a weak laugh, not really knowing how to reply. He was somewhat interested in the Feng Clan Matriarch, but he didn’t really know how to court her. He had zero dating experience and the women in this world were far different than the ones back on Earth.

“Oh, think she should be attending the Dao Festival at Jade Grass city, they always host it every five years and all the clans attend it, you should go visit it, Patriarch.”

The woman gave Matt a little wink before heading out with her child, he soon bade both her and her husband farewell as he was ready to head out.

He already knew about the festival, but to be precise it was more of a tournament for the junior’s to attend to it was also quite a popular betting event. It was more or less a place to show the skills of the younger generation, the age cut off was at twenty-one. His two disciples were going to compete in it, along with some other young members that med it to the foundation establishment level.

You could compete at the age of sixteen, but no one was counting on you to win. Reaching the foundation establishment stage before the age of twenty was quite rare, but not that difficult if you had a clan backing you with cultivation resources. Zhang Dong gave the two the okay to take part in the tournament, but he would probably miss it as he wanted to finally upgrade himself to the nascent soul level.

He counted the resources he had and came to the conclusion that after absorbing all of those spirit stones, he would probably need to wait a couple of days. After that, the system would give him enough passive points from the clan building section. He didn't really want to go there and be stuck in some foreign town, this was quite the serious jump in power which needed to be done in secret.

He knew that the Dark Palm Sect goons would be knocking on his door if they found out. He had just the spot to level up though, it was in the medallion treasure that blocked out any energies from sipping out of it. He could upgrade himself in there, then train some nascent soul techniques.

'I'll probably be able to craft a Heaven grade weapon after I jump that realm'

To make a heaven grade weapon you needed a couple of things, first were the materials that were very hard to come by as those sects liked to buy or steal them off everyone. The other thing was that it was extremely hard to produce a weapon of a higher realm than at what the blacksmith was at. It would be possible with some external help or some specialized treasures that fed the crafter spiritual energy, that was required to produce a higher-tiered item.

So you would need like a team of core formation experts providing spiritual energy to the master blacksmith that was forging the weapon, or substitute it with some item that gave that crafter the required Qi energy for the crafting process.

Also, heaven grade items were a lot harder to process for a weaker cultivator, took quite a bit of time to hammer that special spirit ingot into shape. It was even harder if you didn't have a hammer that was also in the heaven grade, thus it was much easier to try it after reaching the nascent soul realm.

Matt headed out, his flying sword was upgraded to a perfect graded earth treasure and with the boost in his cultivation, he could make the trip in under a day now. He could probably do it even faster if he actually pushed his cultivation to the limit, but he wasn't that much in a hurry.

The people in the villages that saw him wooshing by just bowed out of respect, eyes wide open as the passing man produced shocking thunderous sounds. He made sure to fly high up in the sky, if he did it close to the ground he could do some damage to the fields and livestock.

He left Moonlight City early in the morning and arrived at Spirit Spring City early in the night, the familiar scenery filling his field of vision as he made his return.

'Still quite the sight for sore eyes!'

He breathed in the Qi rich air, the many springs in the city were glowing with light along with all the lanterns. The place looked the best at night, the illumination made it look quite otherworldly. He slowed down his descent, taking in the sights no one stopping him, the guards just bowed and turned their heads and went back to work.

This city was his home and he was slowly treating it like that. The people also started growing on him, his old grandpa was quite the funny character even at this age he was sneaking out into the night trying to woo the young ladies that fell for his charade. He tried talking him out of it, but in return, he got bombarded with questions about his own relationship problem.

After he was settled in at his Patriarch position he was always bombarded by his Clan members with the question about getting married. His grandpa wanted an heir to the throne or something, he even got

many marriage proposals from other Clans. His friend Huo Qiang was quite forceful, trying to push one of his sisters on him.

The only clan from the area that didn't send any eloping requests was the Feng Clan, that was due to the fact that the person that was suited to marry him was the Matriarch herself. She blocked any schemes that her granny had about sending the letters, Feng Maling finally gave up on that notion and just tried to bring it up whenever she met anyone from the Zhang Clan that could pass the message on.

Matt was the type of person that the more you bothered him with something, the less he wanted to do it. So he locked himself up training his skills for the past year, trying to evade the looming danger of marriage and responsibilities.

He descended into the main hall, the spirit water gushing all around him and revitalizing his soul. He expected his two disciples to pop out and ask him some questions, the two buggers always kept nagging him for pointers and insights into their Dao. Now that he actually took the time to practice his techniques he was able to point the two in the right direction, that B+ potential wasn't just for show as the two absorbed the knowledge like sponges. Luckily training and cultivation was a slow process, so he didn't have to spend that much time with the two kids.

The one to greet him this time around was his cousin and the mother of his disciples.

"Greetings Patriarch, glad that you made it back, how was Moonlight City?"

They chatted for a while, he found out that he just missed them by a couple of hours the kids and other clan members headed to Jade Grass City for that festival thing.

"The two were quite saddened that you didn't come with them, but don't worry they know that their master is a busy man. Also, don't worry, the spear arrived and Xue'er was quite happy with it."

"Hah, well glad that they are keeping their noses out of trouble."

Zhang Dong replied while talking to his family members, the woman was close to reaching the core formation level due to the betterment in the cultivation techniques and her latent talent.

"Can't be helped, but I'll give them a little surprise after they return, think that the festival will take a week or two, right?"

Zhang Jie nodded and wondered what this surprise would be, the two parted ways soon enough and Matt headed back to his room. He jumped into his cushy bed and looked up to the ceiling. His eyes on that status page as he was counting down the days till he hit that ten million.

He already had a couple of magic techniques that he wanted to learn, he already absorbed the knowledge thanks to his system but performing techniques meant for a nascent soul cultivator could harm a core formation practitioner so he couldn't really train them just yet.

One of those skills was a giant sword formation, he would summon thousands of Qi blades that shredded into his opponent. The sword formation had some variations but was quite draining. There was one ability that let you summon a gigantic lightning bird, it looked like a phoenix only made from electricity.

The old techniques could also be upgraded and used, his Avatar Form would reach new heights and the condensation technique would probably allow him to momentarily fight even stronger foes. He just needed to wait a couple of days for his points to gather, he had already absorbed all the spirit stones and beast cores that he could and now it was time to wait. But not like he was in a rush, there wasn't anything dire happening at the moment and the kids were out of the house so he had lots of time to train and get stronger.

"Soon..."

Chapter 125

Half a day before the Patriarch of the Zhang Clan returned, his family members were all packed and ready to leave. They were slowly boarding the large flying vessel. This flying ship wasn't the same one that they used when going to the secret ground, it was a new and improved version with more space and better defensive formations.

This one looked like an elongated galleon, the characteristic dragon head was at the bow of the ship. This flying contraption also lacked any forms of sails and was propelled thanks to spiritual energy and something called a floating stone that was placed in the middle of the ship as its core. The various formations etched into the spirit wood would propel it forward while placing the cultivators inside in a thin membrane. The membrane was more of a shield that kept the winds out during a fast flight, it was even strong enough to repel cannon fire. Though there was a limit on how much damage it could take and would give out under prolonged bombardment.

There were cannons lined up on the side, the crew knew well how to use them in the times of battle. The middle part of the ship still had a steering wheel, but this flying galleon wasn't made for fast maneuvers as it was mostly designed to go forward in a straight line.

At this time Zhang Xue and Liu were sighing, they were expecting their master to come back to Moonlight City and come on this trip with them. The two of them didn't get to see their master all that often, most of the time he handed them a new technique here and there, with his teaching method they could learn the basics of the new techniques in a flash.

He was a very busy man though, they didn't get to see him often and he very rarely gave them practical lessons. Most of them consisted of them waiting for him to show up and then getting left with a splitting headache during the transfer of knowledge via his index finger. They were quite grateful that they gained so much knowledge, but the two wanted to get closer to their uncle never having time to just chat or repay him in any shape or form.

This was why they were looking forward to the Dao Festival in Jade Grass City, it was held every five years and it was more or less a spot to show off your young disciples to the world. They wanted to make him proud by winning it, or at least making it into the top ten. There were no age brackets, so a sixteen-year-old could be facing someone five years older, that was quite the difference in experience.

The two had quite a high opinion of their Patriarch's skills. This was confirmed when they fought against their peers that were sticking to the water-based Zhang Clan techniques. Those techniques didn't stand a chance against theirs, even though they were also refined by their Patriarch.

"Wish Master wasn't always so busy all the time..."

Zhang Xue pouted a bit while looking at some people that were carrying provisions onto the ship, her brother standing next to her the two youths looking quite different than they used to.

“Don’t be like that sister, he is the clan head, we are lucky that he even agreed to teach us.”

Zhang Liu replied but he wasn’t that convinced in his own words, longing to be praised by his Master that was the strongest person in the clan.

The youth changed through these two years, mostly due to practicing that special body refining skill. His frame changed and he gained quite the attractive jawline and muscular body shape that quite a lot of ladies were found of.

On the other hand, the Sylph physique that Zhang Xue was practicing turned her into an otherworldly beauty, her features turned from cute ones to more refined ones, her figure got enhanced quite a bit too boot. Whenever she walked she would make the men and boys crane their necks in her direction, but luckily most knew who her Master was and were far too scared to approach her or try something funny.

The two were quite popular in their home city, but neither of them showed an interest in the opposite sex. The two just were quite the cultivation junkies and their Master was just feeding them more and more skills just to get them to leave him alone while he himself immersed himself in his own cultivation and crafting.

“I heard that Master was going to be returning today, but he must have been held up by something...”

“What, are you not happy with me coming in his stead?”

Zhang Jin made his appearance, the old man seemed invigorated he had broken into the middle stage of core formation and the late stage wasn’t a dream anymore. The improved cultivation techniques that his grandson gave him were working wonders on his old bones. The downside of his recent boost in vigor was his attempts in courting more women, due to this the men of the family looked at this elder with awe while the women held him in contempt.

“It’s not like that grandpa...”

The two smiled at the older man who just moved onto the ship, his arrival indicated that they would be taking off quite soon. The two nodded and headed inside, they weren’t the only promising youths from the Zhang Clan that were on board there were other participants even some of their old friends from the 9th Platoon, but people like Zhang Ai and Zhang Teng wouldn’t be making it as they were busy with their police work at this time.

Zhang Jin moved to his cabin before liftoff, Zhang Dong’s female retainer Zhang Ya was waiting for him just to check up some things before they all left.

“Grand Elder, are you sure that it’s wise to keep the nature of the Dao Festival a secret from the Patriarch, he doesn’t seem to be informed about it that well.”

The old man looked at the lovely retainer and rubbed his chin before replying.

“Yes, this will be for the best.”

He paused for a moment before continuing with his answer.

“Dong’er isn’t that good with politics and he doesn’t seem to care much about face... It will be better if he doesn’t go to that city...”

“I’m afraid that his kind heart could be his undoing...”

“Don’t worry, I’ll be there nothing bad will happen or my name isn’t Zhang Jin!”

The woman waited for a moment before cupping her fists and walking away, being the Patriarch’s personal retainer she didn’t like keeping secrets from him. But deep inside she too thought that the new clan head was a bit too soft. He very rarely showed off his superiority, if he did it felt kind of forced. You wouldn’t notice it normally but if you stayed around him for a prolonged time, his act would start to fall apart.

The two parted, the ship started floating up and everyone outside of it was ordered to step back, the close families came to the dock area to wave at the promising youths that would be taking part in the friendly exchange. Though this was a friendly competition, some rivalities came to be during it, things could even turn bloody.

Sometimes deaths occurred, the cultivators in this world took things like honor and respect very seriously. If someone was defeated by a person that was seen as someone weaker or of lower status it would be quite a hit to the face of the defeated cultivator and their whole family. Sometimes disputes broke out outside the ring, even the seniors fought sometimes with each other when their pupils suffered an embarrassing defeat.

The Zhang Clan wasn’t afraid though, they had gained some fame lately mostly thanks to their Patriarch. They also had some backing now in the form of the Huo and Feng clan, so anyone from the clan’s there would think twice before trying to start anything with them.

The people cheered at the youths that just waved from the flying ship that was leaving.

“Show them what the Zhang Clan is made of!”

“Make us proud!”

“Be a Zhang!”

People kept shouting while the junior clan members held their noses up high, they were the elite members of their generation heading off to battle the other strong families. They were in high spirits, their techniques were all overhauled by their new clan head and they reached new heights.

The ship’s speed wasn’t all that great, at maximum, it could go at the speed of a core formation middle stage cultivator if you overheated the engines it could reach the late stage. It would take a couple of days to reach the destination, Jade Grass City was located a bit further away than Moonlight City was and it was a neutral zone not ruled by any particular clan.

There was a reason for that, it was under the control of the ruling sect in the area, the Dark Palm sect in particular. This was mostly the reason that it was picked as the gathering spot, as the weaker clans felt that the stronger clans wouldn’t do something overbearing if they were being watched by the sect overlords that ruled the land.

The Dark Palm sect members stationed there weren't really the core members though, they were mostly composed of outer sect disciples that didn't really have any pull in it. Due to this, the sect people acted a lot more snobby as they had an inferiority complex that came from the fact that they were outer sect disciples. Because of this they always found a reason to show off, or act as if they had something stuck up their posterior. But they were still part of the large sect, so the people that were exposed to this behavior had to always give them face.

There was about a week till the competition started, but it was advised to arrive a couple of days early. There were some procedures that every clan had to go through, each competitor had to get a number assigned to them and there would be a preliminary test held before the fighting started.

The tests were quite easy, there were various treasures that measured the cultivator's strength, Qi amount and there was even a course to measure your agility. This was a must as if they let just anyone participate in the competitions they could spend a month or more. This world was large and the number of cultivators was immense. The number of small clans was quite immense and everyone could participate if they made it through the preliminary round.

This was a big chance for the smaller clans to shine. The large sect had their members stationed there and even though they were just outer sect disciples, there were some sect elders with some pull. If a junior member showed some promise it wasn't odd for them to get picked as a disciple by one of the elders. If they were exceptionally talented they would be sent to the main sect area to train, the elder that the disciple belonged too would be praised and rewarded accordingly for finding a talented person for the sect.

While the clans and their contestants were slowly gathering into their flying vessels a peculiar scene was playing out in the city that the Dao Festival would be taking place.

A particular elder with the Dark Palm insignia on his robe was pacing back and forth. He was a man that looked to be in his fifties, he had dark hair and quite the long crooked nose. It bent upwards and then made a sharp turn to the left, giving the man a peculiar look.

"No good, no good... why is that person coming... this is just a small festival for those clan trashies..."

He was holding a communication device, he had just received word that an important person from the main sect area would be arriving to take part in this year's festival. The man didn't know why, but one thing was clear he couldn't offend this scary cultivator, if he did his life would probably be over.

"We must get everything in order... damn is there enough time to prepare everything for his arrival?"

The man activated the communication device and started calling his underlings, he had to prepare a grand welcoming party for this important visitor. They needed to get the best food ready, the best lodgings the best everything that they had. The problem were these random clans that would be swarming the city in a couple of days, they were a random factor any one of those people could end up offending the important people from the main sect.

"Be sure to assign as many people as you can to our special visitor, we can't let anything happen, I don't care if anything happens to those useless clans, you have my permission to get rid of anyone!"

The man put the communication device to the side, this was quite a big problem but also could be a blessing in disguise. This was a high ranking member from the main sect, if he made a good impression on him he might get a promotion. He was a big fish in a small pond now, but he longed for better cultivation manuals and an even higher position. This was all attainable at the main sect area, it boasted the largest Qi condensation and had a vast library of knowledge.

"If everything goes right, I might finally be able to leave this backwater sinkhole!"

Chapter 126

The Zhang Clan flying ship moved through the air, most of the people were just sitting in their cabins cultivating but some of them were out and about, looking at the scenery that zoomed past them. It was quite the sight, the closer they got to their destination the greener it got, the city the festival was being held was famous for its lush grass fields.

Spirit grass was a staple in this area and it was a very potent pill concocting ingredient. This was why it was procured by the ruling sect from the area, they wouldn't let a green goldmine like this be conquered by any of the backwater clans in the area. The spirit grass export and price was regulated by the Dark Palm sect, making sure to have the people that they deemed unworthy to have to pay up more.

This was an important ingredient, but it wasn't super essential that's why only lower-level members from the Dark Palm sect were stationed here. It brought in quite the penny but wasn't as important as some other assets that the sect was defending, like a spirit stone mine that was far more of a flexible asset.

This wasn't the only thing that grew in this city though, there were vast rice fields, that added to the greenery. The whole area was more or less fertile land, that allowed most plants to bloom and grow. The name coming from the vast fields of green, that made the outside look like green jade.

The Zhang Clan ship was close to reaching their destination, the youths on the deck were slowly coming out from their secluded meditation. There weren't that many of them, the clan only chose the most promising members that would participate, some of them were well-known figures that made their fame from partaking in the expedition two years ago.

The two most prominent ones were of course the Patriarch's disciples, both of them had reached the foundation establishment realm before the age of twenty which was quite the achievement. Their salt and pepper hair turned mostly white after they formed their perfect Dao pillars, now they only had a large patch of hair at the forehead area that was pure black, the rest was snow white. Their mom didn't come this time around, leaving everything up to their grandfather.

Next in line was their senior brother, Zhang Tai. He was older than them but still made the cut, he was still quite talented. His potential was at a B grade, which wasn't much below the two siblings. Thanks to his achievements he had earned better cultivation methods and the Patriarch even gave him a more fitting cultivation method as well as some manuals to aid him in with his swordsmanship skills.

That was all the members that were from the old 9th Platoon, the rest were recruited for police work and sitting back in Spirit Spring City training up new recruits. There were a couple of other promising youths, but most of the juniors that were at the expedition were too old to participate now and the ones here paled in comparison to the three previously mentioned youths.

“Junior Sister Xue how do you fare?”

Zhang Tai walked over to the edge of the ship, his junior sister was standing there and looking at the lush greenery. The young man had a slight smile on his face, but it quickly turned around after he saw Zhang Liu standing next to her.

“Ah, I don’t get a greeting, senior brother?”

Zhang Liu asked, a cocky grin plastered all over his face. The two had built up a kind of rivalry over the past two years. In the beginning Liu wasn’t a match for Tai at all, but now they were at exactly the same cultivation level and were more or less equal in strength. This was a slight hit to the face of Zhang Tai, having someone younger be his equal but considering that the person in question was the Patriarch’s disciple, he could somehow stomach it.

“Well, if it isn’t junior brother Liu... don’t get your hopes up too much, I’ll be taking the number one spot!”

He stuck out his chest, hands behind his back as if he was trying to imitate that Zhang Dong pose. He also glanced at Zhang Xue’s expression from the side, the younger girl caught his eye as the man was gunning for her affections. This was something her older sibling knew and didn’t agree with, thinking that this senior brother was far too pompous for his lovely sister.

“Haha, I see senior brother has cultivated a sense of humor, I’ll be sure to congratulate you on your spot, after I’m the tournament winner!”

Sparks flew between the two young men, the girl just covered her face with her long sleeve and started laughing. She took quite the joy from these two, they bickered and fought like an old married couple which was quite fun to watch.

“Oh, you want to have a go at it?”

Zhang Tai shouted out, his finger pointing at Xue menacingly.

“I’ll be your opponent, anytime!”

Liu replied while getting ready for some fisticuffs.

“Brother, Senior Tai please calm down. Use that anger against the other clans that will be participating.”

She tried to defuse the situation, a bright smile on her face the moment Tai got a glimpse of it, he felt a devastating blow to his heart. His face went slightly red and he turned away, worried that the beautiful junior sister would find it funny and he wanted to come off as a gallant gentleman.

“Ah, if junior sister says so...”

“Hah, you always chicken out when Xue is around.”

Tai turned to glare at his junior brother once more, this time around he was more willing to give him a good trashing. The two released their cultivation aura which alarmed all the other people in the vicinity, but they weren’t going to jump in or anything most of the youths were just interested who from these two would come out on top.

“Brother Liu you can do it!”

“Brother Tai, don’t let that junior speak to you like that!”

“Fight, fight, fight!”

The two of them moved their palms up, Zhang Tai was holding his hand out, blue energy slowly enveloped his mitt. On the other hand, Zhang Liu placed his palm in a ninety-degree angle, lightning energy started crackling as he was preparing to receive his senior brother’s attack. But before the two could clash a booming voice filled the entire ship, which made the two fighting peacocks ferocity deflate like a poked balloon.

“What are you two idiots doing, cease your squabbling!”

This was Zhang Jin flexing his aura, which made the two youths drop down to their knees in an instant. The crowd on the side that were egging the two one just a second ago dispersed, doing it only after cupping their fists at their grand elder. The two didn’t get to leave unscathed as a lump appeared on their heads after the elder gave them a good smack.

“Now, sit down and be quiet you two, we will be arriving shortly, can’t have the other clans see you two idiots bickering!”

Zhang Jin glared at some other elder members from the clan that were previously in the crowd. They didn’t do much to stop the fight as they thought that it would be too bothersome. Also, no one really wanted to offend the Patriarch’s disciple as that was a fast way of getting yourself in trouble.

The whole place quieted down afterward, the city was just a couple hours away and they could already see more of those lush rice and spirit grass fields. Some villagers were there, they bowed to the flying ship. Regular people would preform these acts of courtesy, flying ships were a sign of power as you had to have quite the amount of cultivation resources to buy or build one.

Soon you could see the more refined architecture, many large pagodas were sticking out also in that green color which made the whole city look like a piece of jade. All the buildings were made this way, the pavilions and the palaces all had a green tint to them, the cultivators apparently liked the green jade theme that went with this city.

At the front was a massive gate, people were lined up on one side and moving in while on the other they were moving out. This city was a coastal one too boot. From the front, it was surrounded by greenery while from the back by a giant mass of water. By the sheer size of the body of water you would think that it was a giant sea, but this was only a really large lake. Things were larger in this world, so the lakes that were the size of an earthly ocean were quite common.

This city was larger than Spirit Spring City and Moonlight City that boasted a population count close to ten million each. It was about twice the size of those, but it was still smaller than some main cities or the capital city that had a population of over one hundred million.

The population was densely packed and the buildings were built high up, which allowed for such a huge amount of residents in one place. But such a high population brought in the usual problems, like a high poverty rate and rampant disorder. This was fueled by the fact that most ruling powers didn’t care

about the commoners and let them handle their own disputes, as long as they paid their taxes and were courteous they were left alone.

This made what the Zhang Patriarch was doing back in his two cities stick out like a sore thumb, the news was slowly reaching the outside area's, it had a mixed reception with the crowd. Mostly positive from the poorer demographic, but they were also unwilling to trust the rumors. Their spirits were already broken, so they wouldn't have faith in the news of a just clan that would tend to their needs with minimal recompensation needed. Still, the curiosity was there if things got too rough they might not be against trying their luck out there.

On the other hand, the ruling forces were even more skeptical about the whole thing. For them, it looked like some kind of ploy to get people's attention. It seemed like the Zhang Clan was trying to lure the downtrodden people in with the promise of milk and honey, then do something unfathomable once they were in their clutches. They just couldn't get their heads around someone trying to help people with minimal or no gain in mind, that would just be something a fool would do. If it was true though, they just chucked it up to the Zhang Patriarch being far too young and uneducated for his position.

The Zhang Flying ship moved around the city, which allowed all the people to get a good look at it. They had to fly around to land on the big shipyard in the lake, some of the other clan ships being already stationed there while others were just arriving as them. The descending ship slowly landed in the water, an anchor getting thrown out, the ship could very well function as a normal water faring vessel.

They were finally here, people started descending and a man dressed in a baggy robe with a clipboard in his hand came out to greet them. He was wearing quite a large pointy hat and his beard was long and excessive.

"Greeting fellow Daoists, from the insignia I can see, that you are probably from the Zhang Clan, right?"

Zhang Jin nodded and let one of his retainers get the paperwork ready, they would get some accommodations and a guide just as any other clan. He didn't think they would get much though, his clan was still considered one of the averages ones, the word of their Patriarch's strength was still being questioned which made them quite the underdog. It didn't help that he was rarely seen and most of his accolades outside were under his demon hunter persona.

Chapter 127

The junior members of the clan looked out of their ship, they were standing on the deck of the boat. There were other flying vessels slowly descending into the water below. The last part of the descent made the waves splash to the side which made their own ship shake. There were quite a bit of them anchored here, many unfamiliar clan insignias could be seen ones belonging to small and one to the middle-sized clans.

The Zhang Clan was still considered a middle-sized clan, Clan's like the Xing family from Moonlight city would be considered a small-sized one. Still, some of them had enough spirit stones to buy themselves a sky fairing flying vessel, this was a good occasion to show of their clan members and make some connections with the other families in the Dark Palm sect area of influence.

The country this was taking place was called the Azure Dragon Empire, the Long Clan and the Azure Emperor were the ruling factions, but there were various other powerhouses scattered around it. In this world, the density of spiritual energy determined where people would set up their settlements.

The more you traveled towards the Long Clan occupied area the denser the Qi condensation got and the easier the cultivators could progress. The Empire was divided into smaller state like areas where various powerful clans and sects ruled. Due to this, sects and clans wanted to set up their bases as near to the Long Clan area as it was possible, so those cities were always built close to the state borders. The further away from the border you got, you'd find weaker and weaker sects and clans residing there.

The so-called states didn't really have any particular names, they were just areas ruled by a powerful clan or sect. The area that the Dark Palm sect was occupying was about in the middle of the map, the land further in was the spot that was occupied by the truly strong forces, ones that even this sect wouldn't be dumb enough to offend.

But in response, the space that they occupied was deemed inferior for them, letting this sect grow in power while the powerhouses further into the empire fought with themselves, leaving sects like the Dark Palm one alone to do whatever they pleased. They wouldn't care one way or the other what happened to them, they would only react if someone tried moving onto their territory.

Thanks to this, these kinds of sects could flourish. They were deemed strong enough to not be worth the hassle of losing any troops if it came to blows, the nascent soul cultivators being a strong enough deterrent. Yet, the probability of them getting stronger was quite low as the better resources were all further into the empire, things like secret grounds were far more common there.

There was also a thin balancing act that the more powerful sects had to go through. If they suddenly ordered a large chunk of their nascent soul cultivators to attack a sect like the Dark Palm sect, another powerhouse could use this and move in on their turf. So, unless something drastic happened they wouldn't keep to themselves.

Jade Grass City was one of the spots affiliated with the sect, they had a small force stationed here and even a direct line to the main sect. Though it would be used for emergencies, for moments of a revolt or if a particular strong beast attack.

The bustling of the crowd could be heard everywhere, some people on flying swords were also buzzing about. They were all people in high places and with connections, normal cultivators were forbidden from flying on their swords above the city.

Zhang Jin was still on the ship, one of his retainers was outside handling all that paperwork and showing them the proof that they were truly from the Zhang Clan. There was a small fee you had to pay to participate, this small payment was already too much to stomach for some smaller clans.

There were about fifty junior clan members from the Zhang Clan, mostly everyone was twenty or twenty-one, and in the early stage of foundation establishment. There was no reason to take Qi condensation cultivators as they would never make it through the preliminary round of the test, failing at the first one where the all-around strength was measured.

This was actually a high number, all things considered, thanks to increasing the ranks of their cultivation techniques the Zhang Clan was seeing a new renaissance. Their younger generation was profiting the

most as it was easier to change things up before you reached the foundation establishment level. Creating superior pillars was far easier than reinforcing cracked or flawed ones.

Zhang Jin knew well how things stood and that his clan would be sticking out with how much they had progressed. But he was betting on that, he wanted to show that his family was getting stronger this would make people think twice about offending them. He was well aware of the looming threat of the sect but he knew that they would do a thing unless it was related to a nascent soul level threat.

At the foundation level, they had nothing to fear, they still had only three core formation cultivators which was nothing in the eyes of their overlord. Though, if they showed up with fifty core formation experts, the Dark Palm sect would probably start playing a different tune and engage them in combat.

The accommodations were ready as the Zhang clan retainer moved back to the ship and gave the news to the grand elder, he in response clapped his hands to get everyone's attention.

"Okay you rascals, stay close together, and don't get separated from the group at least till we get to our hotel, then you'll be free to explore the city."

The youths beamed with excitement, it was very rare for them to leave the main clan city and they were mostly cultivating diligently at their homes or cultivation caves. This would be a nice chance to see the world and have some fun, they all were snapped back to reality after their grand elder spoke once more.

"But be cautious, I'm sure you are all excited but remember where we are, be courteous to the other clans and the sect, don't cause trouble for me or the clan. If you offend someone from the Dark Palm sect or a strong clan, I won't be able to do anything for you."

The youths looked at each other, they knew well how this world worked. They were all highly regarded cultivators in their home city, but here they were more or less just country bumpkins. No one would bat an eye if they got stabbed in the back after offending some scary uncles or overbearing young masters.

"Still, don't bring shame to the Zhang Clan and the Patriarch, this clan isn't a bunch of cowards, don't let me see you tarnish our reputation!"

It was one thing to be honorable and civilized, it was another to just let people spit in your face. The elder's words were clear, if you meet someone from a stronger affiliation you should bow your head, but if it's someone of an equal status you are not allowed to defame the clan, losing face was not allowed,

This was also the reason that Zhang Jin didn't want Zhang Dong to be here. The juniors seemed to have more common sense than his grandson, that if push comes to shove would probably offend their sect overlords. Zhang Jin knew how to maneuver things which got difficult, there was no shame in bowing your head to someone stronger than you, it was the way of this world. He feared that his grandson would blunder and cause a scene that could cost him his life, he wasn't quite ready to take the next step.

"Well then, let us depart!"

The youths started moving in an orderly fashion, there were also members of the elder generation with them. They were all quite proud of how their youths were progressing, they knew that at their age they weren't nearly as strong.

They were slowly guided towards the main lodging area, people in various colorful robes were gathering there. The youths didn't recognize the patterns or insignias at all, the cultivators were from various sects and clans that were scattered around the area hoping to make a name for themselves.

"Have you heard, apparently this time around the winner will receive fifty middle grade spirit stones!"

"Fifty? But that's like fifty thousand low-grade spirit stones... I'm getting even more pumped up!"

While going in you could overhear people talking, besides the name recognition that you would gain from winning the tournament, you would receive quite the hefty sum of spirit stones. This amount was enough to fund your own small clan, you could probably build a small city with that amount as well.

The top ten participants would earn prizes and even be allowed to join the Dark Palm sect if they so wished for. This wasn't anything strange, it was normal for clan members to study at sects. They were sworn to secrecy but that didn't mean that they couldn't protect their family members and improve their status. The sect wouldn't bat an eye if they shared some rudimentary techniques with the lower clans though, but the higher ones were forbidden from getting passed on outside the sect.

The building the clans were staying was huge, it was a giant pagoda in an octagon shape. It looked to be able to house tens of thousands of people inside of it, with various levels outfitted filled out with diverse equipment. There was a dining area, an auditorium for lectures and even a casino, betting and gambling was quite popular in this world, probably due to the fact that it was a way to gain easy money and all these cultivators liked taking high risk, high reward bets.

The thing was over a hundred stories high, there was something akin to an elevator installed. There were various platforms outside the pagoda balconies, they would slowly float upwards after you pushed some spiritual energy into them. They were only designed to move in a certain way so you couldn't use them like a flying sword. The requirement of spiritual energy was quite low, thanks to that almost everyone could use them. This was all thanks to something akin to spiritual energy batteries that were embedded to the floating platform, the platform only required a small jolt of energy to get moving.

The clan was situated at about the 30th floor, due to the fact that they had to switch those platforms constantly it took them thirty minutes to just reach their lodging. The higher the level of the hotel the more pristine it was, the pagoda was thinner at the top. That's where the penthouse suite was, it boasted the best qi gathering formations and was made from the best materials on the market, but it was reserved for the utmost important guests.

It had quite the view as well, letting the person staying there enjoy the jade green scenery below. At this time some people were staying in this apartment, they were brought here by the Dark Palm sect elder that was panicking just a couple days ago.

Two people were in this penthouse apartment at the moment. One was a handsome young man, he had the usual long dark hair and he was wearing a golden robe, the most peculiar thing about him was the jewel sticking out of his forehead. Its color was purple, which was associated with royalty in this kind of world.

The youth was clasping his hands in front of an older man, this man was sitting in a large armchair and just glancing to the side out to the scenery. The man was wearing a similar robe to the youth, but it was

even more extravagant with various gems and sparkling metals attached to it, a large dark palm symbol glistening in the back.

The man's outer appearance was quite normal, he had a classical beard that wasn't all that long, just long enough to cover his chin and cheeks. He had salt and pepper hair and didn't look anything out of the ordinary, though when you looked into his eyes they would send shivers down your spine. It were the kind of eyes that made you cover in fear of what was hidden behind them.

Chapter 128

The man with the gem in his forehead looked to be in his twenties, but in reality he was already fifty years old. He was quite the famous young master from the Dark Palm sect. He looked quite handsome and was adored by everyone, or at least that's how it looked on the outside.

"Thanks for letting me tag along with you, Elder Ming."

The man bowed with his hands clasped, the Dark Palm sect elder was on a little errand here and this young master had used this opportunity to join him on his journey.

"It's nothing really, didn't think you'd find this place that interesting little Kai, I'm just here for the items at the auction."

The old man sat back and sipped some green tea, the tea leaves being the highest quality that this city could offer, the water and tableware being the same.

"Hm, the tea is satisfactory at least..."

The young man straightened up and looked outside the window, his eyes narrowing.

"Ah yes the auction, to be exact I wanted my disciple to participate in that little festival those little clans are having."

"Oh? The Dao Festival?"

The sect elder's brow moved upwards slightly, but almost immediately went down.

"Well, I won't pester you for details, but if your disciple is taking part then be sure not to sully the sects name, he has to win."

The man waved with his hand at his junior member, even though this was the son of the Patriarch this elder outranked him by quite a bit, his cultivation level was something that made him a king among men already.

"Well then, Elder Ming rest well, I'll see you tomorrow."

The Dark Palm member named Kai exited the room that this elder of his was staying, he knew when this Elder Ming didn't want him around so he had enough tack to back of, on his own. He was stationed a floor below, which was still quite the expensive-looking apartment.

This man's full name was Yang Kai. He returned to his quarters, the view at the city was grand but the man in question wasn't really impressed by it.

“Mmm, give me your report...”

There was another man in that room, Yang Kai was sitting on an expensive couch, his legs spread apart in a nonchalant way. The man opposite him was a rough-looking gentleman in a less expensive Dark Palm sect robe.

“Yes young master, the ‘target’ arrived not long ago, they are staying at this grand dragon hotel on the fortieth floor.”

Yang Kai licked his lips slightly after he heard that the person that he was here for was already in this hotel with him. He had to stop himself from just going directly there, that would just make him look bad and he would lose face, it was not yet time to strike.

“Good... good... now I just have to wait for this festival to start and then...”

The bodyguard was silent, his eyebrows quivering after seeing quite the devilish expression on his face.

“Ahh... tell my disciple to prepare, he is not allowed to lose or he will be severely punished! But not like any of those backwater clans can hold a handle to him.”

“Now, leave.”

He waved with his hand at the guard while smirking to himself. The moment the man left Yang Kai stood up, his gaze moving over to his spatial ring. He pulled out a thin scarf, it had a cherry blossom pattern sewn into it. He placed it soon up towards his nose and inhaled with vigor, his eyes closed but his eyelids quivered back and forth during the inhaling.

“You got away once and I thought that I lost you... but now here you are... If I wasn’t stuck cultivating at the sect I would have come sooner, but that’s fine...he he he...”

The man licked his lips in a gross fashion, the scarf he was holding looked a bit scuffed up.

“Soon you will be mine, this time I won’t let you run away... even if I have to...”

The man didn’t finish the sentence and moved the scarf back into his spatial ring, his head shaking.

“Oh my, I’m getting too excited here...”

Yang Kai sat down to meditate, the chaotic thoughts in his mind calming down while the night ended.

At dawn you could hear people walking, all the shops were opening up and the day was starting. The Dao Festival wasn’t only for the clan’s but a lot of people saw it as a chance to make some coin or spirit stones. There was a big marketplace, with various cultivation materials and trinkets gathered in one place.

Usage of magical treasures during the fights was allowed, so was taking pills. The use of weapons was allowed as well, everyone could bring weapons of their choosing, using dual swords was also allowed. It didn’t matter if the quality of the weapon of one participant was lower than the others, that was taken into account as your personal strength. It was the same with the defensive treasures or any magical trinkets, the cultivators knew that life wasn’t fair and that everyone was born unequally. Having

resources to back yourself up was something that these people agreed with, but due to this you didn't see poorer practitioners winning that often.

The preliminary round would start tomorrow so everyone from the clan had some free time today, they could use it to tour the city or just stay and cultivate if they felt that it would give them an edge over the competition. Most of the youths were quite interested in the new environment and decided to form a couple of smaller groups. In front of those groups stood one of Zhang Jin's retainers, the grand elder had other things to take care of besides being a chaperone for these kids.

"Listen up, you are free to visit the city. Fighting with anyone is forbidden, remember that this isn't Spirit Spring city and Elder Jin won't be able to help you out if you offend someone."

"Don't worry, the other clans are also forbidden from causing trouble before the festival starts, anyone that doesn't follow the law will be banned from the competition, so use some common sense and don't bring shame to our Zhang Clan!"

"Yes Elder!"

The young adults all replied in unison, the loud shout even alerting some other tournament participants that were standing on the side. Some of them already whispering as the Zhang family was slowly gaining notoriety, mostly because their Patriarch apparently soundly beat the famous Demon Hunter a few weeks ago.

The acclaimed Lei Yinglo was someone with quite a high status, his strength was already legendary. He had built it up by slaying demon beasts and cultivators all in the late and great circle stages of core formation, which was quite a feat in the eyes of anyone without a nascent soul cultivator in their camp. Also, Zhang Dong made it sure to order to spread this information through the land so that he would gain some clout.

As long as it wasn't something pointing people to think that he was in the nascent soul stage, it was fine. Even this feat wouldn't really be taken serious by the Dark Palm sect, the famous demon hunter was just a renegade cultivator with no backing so they didn't fear him much.

"Junior Sister, why don't we visit some sights in this Jade City, I heard they have really nice tea shops!"

After the Zhang Clan elder went back to his room, the first thing Zhang Tai did was walk over to Zhang Xue to ask her out. There were some other people around them, the youth would like to get someone on one time with this lovely younger sister of his, but their relationship wasn't quite there so he had to settle for some 'dead weight' to come with him.

"Tea shops? Why don't we go to the Jade Arena instead, maybe some experts will be fighting today!"

Zhang Lie chimed in, he was also with another small group of people. He smirked at Zhang Tai who was trying his best to not shout out in protest, this disciple of Zhang Dong was mostly just messing with his older brother. He found the courting that this senior brother was doing quite silly and loved to push his buttons.

"Tea shop?... Arena?... Hmm..."

Sparks started flying between the two youths some more, but before Zhang Xue could make her mind up someone else spoke up, it was a female voice.

“Hey, leave sister Xue alone, why would she spend time with you boys~”

A group of girls appeared out of nowhere, these were quite the cute and lovely junior and senior sisters that were also participating in this Dao Festival. There were fewer girls than boys at this event, with a ratio of five to one. They quickly shuffled between the youngest female member that was Zhang Xue and started pulling her away.

“Yes, this is time for us girls to bond, you boys go to your arenas or fight all you want~”

They all chuckled to each other, Xue did the same and let herself be escorted out by her clan sisters. The group of young beauties wasn’t going out alone, they had a couple of clan elders go along with them, it would be unwise to just let a group of beauties go out without any bodyguards whatsoever. Though, all of those girls were quite decent fighters they still needed some backup if things got out of hand.

The girls left, Zhang Tai had his hand outstretched in the position where Zhang Xue went down the floating platform, his hand soon falling down and going limp as he gave out a sigh. One of the members from his group came closer and gave his shoulder a pat, then spoke out with a smile on his face.

“Don’t worry senior brother Tai, there is no way that junior Sister Xue didn’t notice you. I bet the next time you’ll be able to share some tea with her!”

“Yes, there will always be a second chance.”

His buddies cheered him up while on the other hand Zhang Liu just walked away while snorting, it was enough to see his senior brother mope around , he would poke fun at him at another chance. For now he also wanted to leave and see the city, he had some other Zhang members with him to keep him company.

“Hah, while brother Tai sulks let us depart to see the city, that Jade Arena is said to have quite the ferocious fighters, even core formation experts do battle there!”

Zhang Liu proclaimed and departed down onto another floating platform, the trip to the first level of the pagoda hotel was quite tedious and took the same amount of time as before. Outside, the small group of youths rejoiced and departed they were all young men in their prime and they had a whole day of free time to play around. They all knew that they had a serious competition coming up the next day, but being young made them think that they could take on the world and they didn’t think that they would actually have any problems with the preliminary round.

“I heard that they have quite the nice tasting wine in this city... the rice they make it from is rich in spiritual energy too...”

The youths looked at each other, they were planning to check out that arena and then go out drinking. Still they had two elder members from the clan tagging along with them, but they knew these two uncles would probably give in if they offered them some alcohol as well.

“Yes, let us head out!”

Zhang Liu shouted out with a smile on his face, his friends smiled at each other and left. Soon they joined the sea of people and made their way towards the arena building. Even during the day, it was open it was quite the popular area for betting. But while Liu was taking a turn into another street, he felt something hit his chest.

“Ack...”

A cute voice cried out as the youth realized that a girl crashed into his chest. The youth cultivated his body refining technique to quite a high degree so the young lady rebounded off him and fell down on her butt. Liu instinctively reached out with his hand to help her out, the peculiar thing about the girl was the color of her hair that was light pink, her skin tone made you think that she was out tanning or spent a lot of time on a beach.

Chapter 129

The young man looked at the equally youthful girl that was rubbing her head. She had just bumped into him and was now down on the ground and on her posterior. The girl was peculiar looking, she could be described as flashy. Long nails with something that looked like little pink and purple gems stuck to them. Her hair was done in a twin-tail type of hairstyle, her lips were rosy and she was wearing golden earrings.

Her robe was unusually short, normally the female cultivators wore ones that went down to their ankles. They parted on the sides so that they had some wiggle room to move their legs around. The skirt of the robe that this girl was wearing could be considered a miniskirt. The young man’s eyes stopped at the lower area as he could see quite the plump thighs, he then traced his gaze upwards and was greeted by quite the lovely mountain peaks. He gulped hard and managed to gather his senses, reaching out with his hand as he tried to help the girl up to her feet.

“Ahh, forgive me, are you alright?”

He wasn’t sure if this girl was older or younger than he was, but they looked to be in a similar age range that didn’t require any honorifics. The girl finally looked up without saying a word, her green eyes met with the youth. They didn’t break eye contact for a good couple of seconds, which after the girl finally reacted.

“Ahhhhh....”

She jumped up to her two feet with haste, her twin-tails bounced around along with her upper chest part, her short robe having to strain itself to contain all of that weight there.

“Ohhhh nooo... I’m going to be late...”

Zhang Liu moved back a bit, the girl just bolting off into the distance and quickly vanishing from view leaving the youth and his clan companions stupefied.

“W-what?”

“Brother Liu sure is a smooth talker with the ladies...”

“Haven’t seen a girl run away that fast in a while, must be some kind of talent!”

Zhang Liu got a bit red in the face after his friends started teasing him, they quickly quieted down after he gave them all his death glare, but then they laughed out once more as this made things even funnier.

“Let us move on... the arena isn’t far from here...”

Zhang Liu proclaimed as everyone moved out, the youth rubbing his chin while he thought about the cute looking girl that he bumped into.

‘That robe pattern looked familiar... where did I see it before...’

He was sure that he saw a similar-looking robe on someone before, but he wasn’t quite sure who was it. He was positive that he didn’t know the girl from anywhere, but that robe and skin tone was unusual to see in this world occupied by jade-like beauties that liked to look like ghosts. Zhang Liu turned away from that motion after his master gave him a lecture about the importance of sunlight and how a healthy skin tone was vastly more beautiful than looking like a bedsheet.

‘She might have been from that clan...oh well...’

He tossed his thoughts to the back of his head, but while walking forward towards the arena he found himself constantly getting reminded of the girl’s chest area, guess the master’s tastes were absorbed by this disciple.

Though, while the group of youthful cultivators went on with their day, they didn’t notice that someone was following them. A bouncy tail of hair was peeking out from the corner, with the same girl that Zhang Liu bumped into peeking her head out. Her eyes were sparkling as she looked at the back of the young man that she bumped into. She clenched her tiny fist, a smirk covering her face as she whispered out.

“I’ll show you that the ancestors weren’t wrong! Stupid big sis!”

Back at Spirit Spring City Zhang Dong was pacing through his room. It seemed as if he was looking into a random direction where there was a wall, but in reality, he was looking at his status screen. He had absorbed anything he could, without tapping into the clan’s reserve spirit stone stash and was now waiting for the system point count to go past ten million.

‘God damn... it’s really happening... and I’m not even stuck in some kind of death and life battle this time around!’

He had a dumb grin plastered all over his face. He was sure that he would reach the nascent soul stage soon and it would be happening in a couple of hours at exactly twelve at midnight. That was the time when his clan building portion of his system did its update and he would receive the required points for his advancement.

‘It’s still the middle of the day... the suspense is killing me...’

He was equally happy and scared, this would be his first jump in big realms. The previous small level-ups all happened while he was still in core formation, this would be the first time he would be reaching a new point of existence. There was also one particular change that he was afraid of, that was actually getting one of those nascent souls, or infant souls if you went with a more direct translation.

'Guess I'll have a little baby soul living inside me... well that will be weird... well can't be weirder than cultivating a whole universe in your own body like they do in some other works of fiction.'

Matt crossed his hands over one another and tried to recall any other strange cultivation methods. In a lot of those, the cultivators would perceive some kind of world inside of themselves, building palaces or large seas of spiritual energies, or even worlds with greenery inside. He had a similar thing inside of him in the form of the Dao pillars, but they were already there along with his core even before he arrived in this world so they felt kind of natural.

'What I got from the other cultivation manuals is that, you are supposed to shatter your core to produce a nascent soul instead of it... the cultivator might die in the process of doing that if they aren't careful and fully prepared though, but in my case, the system should take care of everything, right?'

Matt was kind of banking on the system to get him over the hump, when he upgraded his cultivation method to the golden lightning one the system did the hard part for him. It was as if he practiced this cultivation method instead of the previous one the moment he spent his points of it. So he was sure that his cheat ability would push him through it one way or the other. He just needed to make sure to hide the fact that he reached this degree of power.

'First I'll lay low for some months and train up some of those nascent soul techniques at least to an adept rank...'

He already had picked up a couple of techniques that he wanted to practice, they included better sword techniques, better movement techniques and so on. He was also banking on producing better versions of his old techniques, he still got the cultivation manuals of them.

After upgrading his main cultivation method, he would probably receive the manual for it. He could then start mixing it with the other manuals he received from the secret ground. You didn't have to mix attack techniques with the same sort, you could pick and choose. One technique would be used as a basis, while the rest would add to it.

For instance, he could take his improved golden nascent soul cultivation manual and pair it up with another heaven grade technique, if it worked it would produce an improved version of the skill that used parts of his main cultivation method. An inferno palm strike technique could thus be transformed into a golden lightning palm strike that would fit his needs a lot more.

'All the possibilities! Though I shouldn't spread myself too thin... I could well spend years training new skills it's fine if I get one or two and just focus on them for now. I'd also need boatloads of crafting points to get new technique manuals... wish that store was still working...'

Matt was still feeling disgruntled after losing his cash shop. It would be much easier to just find a proper skill from there than play around with that upgrading machine in his crafting abode.

'I'd probably already be in the nascent soul a year ago if I still got points for killing demonic beasts too...'

He shrugged and went outside his room, the people that he met bowed to him in respect. He headed down into the secret part of the main Zhang compound where the spatial treasure in the form of the medallion was hidden. After the years the clan had figured a way to bolster it, but it was something Matt didn't like doing as he had to pour copious amounts of his spiritual energy into the thing.

The dimensional regalia only accepted pure holy element energies which only he possessed. The more of it he inserted into the thing, the more it grew in size. The increase was quite meager though, if he pushed 50% of his cultivation base into the spatial treasure the rocky area would grow by only a couple of meters. Though it grew in all directions, after two years he managed to add another couple of kilometers in diameter.

The guards greeted their Patriarch, they were already informed that he would be going into closed cultivation inside the dimensional regalia. They were ordered to keep anyone out and only bother him if there was some kind of emergency, like an attack from another clan or something in that range.

He entered the large room the medallion was placed in, quickly vanishing inside of it. The large dorm was still standing there, along with some other structures that were nowhere instead of the makeshift tents, that the clan used when they were preparing for the expedition. The dorm-like building was enlarged and another level was built atop of it, they even added a cafeteria for the recruits that were still being trained in here.

‘Heh, nice to be the leader, everyone had to clear out of here.’

The innermost clan members were training in here, hidden away from prying eyes. Matt had written down each book from that library and placed it in here in a well-protected vault. Normally you would see people guarding it, depending on your clan rank and your potential you were allowed inside of that vault. The vault library had four levels, each of them having manuals and books ranging from Qi condensation all up to Nascent soul ones. The last area was only open to people at the top, which was the Patriarch and the Grand Elder.

‘Well, the energies from stepping into the Nascent Soul level will be blocked by this treasure.’

This was the biggest reason he was here, the dimensional regalia blocked any aura from seeping outside. He would be safe in here to cultivate in peace, and unless someone stronger than him got their hands on the treasure they wouldn’t be able to even come inside without his approval.

“Hm, what time is it now...”

He glanced at his system clock, which was quite handy for occasions like this.

“Still have a couple of hours till I get my points... guess I could prepare for the next stage of the plan...”

He still needed to make that heaven grade weapon, he was waiting to pass his realm first than he would start crafting. He didn’t have that many materials for his training though, the blasted dark palm sect was keeping tabs on even the crafting component that could be used for heaven grade weapons and treasures. But luckily throughout the years, old grandpa Jin had managed to procure some goods for him. It was also one of the reasons that it was taking him two years to finally reach this point, the spirit stone expenditure was immense.

“Well then, time to say goodbye to the crummy core and welcome the baby soul.”

Chapter 130

Back in Jade Grass City Zhang Liu and his friends were moving through the stalls, they had some food in their hands something that looked like to be a shish kebab on a stick. All of them were munching while walking forward, wondering if they would get to see a good show at the arena.

“Hm, wonder if someone good will be battling, would be nice...”

“Yeah, someone like our Patriarch... we missed his fight with that Demon hunter...”

“The leader taught him a lesson, he was a hundred years too early to even try that!”

The young men chatted around, Zhang Liu didn't talk all that much as he didn't know these junior and senior brothers all that well himself. His old 9th platoon buddies weren't here and the only one from them was someone that he was in a feud with.

“Ah yes, shame that I could not see Master's fight, supposedly the Demon Hunter was just misguided, but Master was magnanimous in his decision and let him live.”

The other young men nodded, their eyes shining brightly as they heard Zhang Liu call their Patriarch, Master. They thought that it would be an honor if they were also his disciple, this was also a reason that they were pumped up. If they managed to reach a high standing in the tournament, or even beat this Zhang Liu than maybe Zhang Dong would notice them and give them some pointers.

“We are here brother Liu.”

While they were chatting and eating they finally arrived at the spot, they were greeted by a large gate, behind the gate were stairs that went upwards. There were some people in front of the gate, you had to pay the toll to get inside which the youths did. After slowly walking up they saw a large open space, in the middle of that area, was a large square ring made from some kind of brick-like material.

On the west and east side of that ring, they saw many regular looking seats. There were already some people sitting there and cheering for some warriors that were battling it out. On the North side, besides some more seats closer to the ring stood a large tower, in that tower were the more expensive seats for the more influential customers. They came from the south side and above them was a more narrow looking tower and on it was the booth with the announcers that commented on the fights and introduced the fighters before each fight.

To their immediate left, you could go under the seats. Inside were various booths and stands for betting purposes but you could also buy some refreshments. The young men looked at each other, people were going back and forth from within that area.

“Well... I'm not really interested in betting, don't even know the fighters... how about you brothers?”

Zhang Liu asked, not really keen on spending his allowance that his mother and master gave him. He would rather spend it on something like interesting treasures, he knew that Zhang Dong was quite a skilled craftsman. Maybe if he found something curious, his Master would praise him, he always said something about needing more treasures for deconstruction.

Some of the men went in to take a look, but the complicated board that had some numbers and names on it was quite confusing. Though they found something quite interesting, if you signed a contract you

could participate in the arena. You didn't even need to face other cultivators, in particular, you could fight untamed beasts or even have small skirmishes with your clan members against other clans.

"Quite interesting...though the grand elder told us to not cause trouble and not fight."

They all looked at each other, the warrior inside of them was telling them to go for it as they all wanted to prove themselves in a fight. But the Dao festival was coming along, what if they got injured or used up too much Qi during combat. There was also the threat of their opposition seeing their hidden techniques, then having something in store for them if they ever clashed.

"Let's just see who is fighting... maybe after the Festival is over we can try our luck in here, you can apparently earn quite a sum if you keep winning."

They headed out and found themselves a good spot to sit in, the area was slowly getting filled up and they were lucky enough to get enough seats for all. They could see someone getting carried out by two buff looking uncles, they were holding him by his wrists and ankles the person was just dangling like a ragdoll, probably the loser of the bout.

Zhang Liu looked inside the ring, there was one person standing there he was waving at the people a large smile plastered all over his face. He was wearing a red robe and had similar short red hair. The robe was peculiar in the way that it had no sleeves and you could see the young man's quite thick muscular arms.

"Oh, looks like the fiery youth has taken another victim, can no one stop him?"

You could hear the loud voice of the announcer that traveled around the arena, apparently, this youth had been on a winning streak.

"Can no one stop the blazing inferno? Already four people have failed!"

Zhang Liu squinted with his eyes, getting interested in this youth, he looked to be of similar age as he was. By the looks of it, he was also in the same cultivation range as him. One of the laws of this arena was that opponents had to be close to each other in cultivation realms. They wouldn't allow someone in the early stage of foundation establishment to fight someone in the great circle, unless the weaker person could use some treasures to lower that gap or something similar.

"I will be your opponent you shitty brat!"

A large burly man with tree trunks for arms jumped into the ring, his descent causing a commotion in the arena.

"Oh, if it isn't a brave challenger, let me remind you that everyone is allowed to challenge the winner of the previous bout! Fighters that are participating in this year's Dao Festival are also allowed! Just remember to register, if you want to participate!"

Apparently it was some kind of challenge event, where anyone of a similar cultivation realm could confront the previous winner. The more someone won, the more money they would get, you could also steal the previous winner's stash and then call it quits. The winning person could fight up to ten bouts but after winning all of those he wasn't allowed to participate anymore, this was a safety measure for the arena owners. This law was created to lower the losses if some kind of overpowered master

appeared. The no fighting before the Dao Festival decree was apparently abolished in this neutral zone, you could participate at your own risk.

The large cultivator charged at the red-haired youth, he in response moved his forearm upwards to block the man's punch.

"Ha, idiot. I'll snap that toothpick in half!"

The red-haired youth had a good physique, but his enemy was far larger than him. You'd expect that giant fist to snap his arm in half, but this wasn't what happened. The fist flew at the forearm that started glowing red, soon it was engulfed in flames. It was too late for the attacker to stop and when his fist collided with the fire an explosion occurred. The large man was forced backward his hand smoking, his flesh charred.

"Hm, what were you saying?"

The fight wasn't over just yet, but the burly man's right fist was out of commission. The two were apparently close range specialists, the burly man probably being a body refiner. Zhang Liu observed from his spot, the red-haired man charged in. He had both of his hands clad in flames with some strange patterns showing up on both his arms.

Each time the two clashed the burly man got pushed back, he was even using his damaged arm to block some hits his face contorting in strange ways as the pain struck.

'Quite the will power there...'

Zhang Liu thought while complimenting the older man, who showed quite some resilience. This wasn't enough though, soon he was pushed back, well more like he flew in a glorious arc and left an imprint of a human on the arena wall. The defensive formation activating so that the residual rubble didn't hit the audience members.

"Oh no, the challenger is down! Only five more to go can no one stop this fire demon? If you think you are up to the challenge please register with one of our staff members!"

Apparently, the people around here measured your strength before the fighting took place. They couldn't just have random people jumping in from god knows where. Someone could also setup easy fights for himself and cheat. This was possible but hard to pull off, also if you got caught cheating you would be severely punished.

"Brother Liu, maybe we should register..."

Some of the Zhang members got excited after hearing that fighting in this arena was allowed even for festival participants. This was quite an alluring proposal, Zhang Liu never got much practical training mostly training his techniques alone and his sister wasn't quite up to par when they sparred with each other, he as the older brother couldn't really go all out in fear of injuring his younger sibling.

"We could do that..."

"We will be holding a short intermission, please place your bets or register if you want to participate in the event."

The announcer proclaimed while the red-haired man at the arena crossed his arms over one another, even a bigger grin plastered over his face.

“Hah, let’s go...”

The young men all nodded at each other, the more elder members that were keeping tabs on them weren’t that thrilled about what these youths were doing. It looked like fighting before the festival could cause unneeded injuries, but it also could be a big confidence booster for their clan members. They let it slide, for now, they were just registering and weren’t fighting just yet.

Every one of the Zhang Clan youths, Zhang Liu included got a certain engraving on their palm. It was the rank that they were deemed worthy of fighting with, they also noticed that the exact same emblem, the emblem looking like a tiger was next to the man’s name that was currently in the ring.

“Huo Kong... the Huo clan?”

Zhang Liu read his name that was on the betting board, he knew the name of this clan they had fought together with them in that secret ground but he didn’t know this young man.

‘He wasn’t in there with us at that time... guess he stayed behind?’

The Huo Clan was a larger family that owned five cities and other various assets through the lands. It was one of the largest clans from the Dark Palm sect area, with more resources and manpower than what Zhang Clan could produce.

“Oh, is it a brother from the Huo Clan? The elders said that we are allied with them and our Patriarch and the son of their Patriarch are close friends...”

The Huo Clan and the Zhang Clan had formed an alliance after what happened in the secret ground. They weren’t the only ones as the ladies from the Feng Clan also became their supporters. This was quite advantageous for the Zhang Clan, who had gained two powerful backers and business partners. Zhang Dong had sold quite the amount of treasures and crafted weapons to both of those clans, who gave him beneficial prices.

“Guess we should cheer the brother from the Huo Clan on.”

The youths felt a sense of comradery with this fire family, mostly Zhang Liu that fought with them against the countless beast waves.

‘I should exchange greetings with him, Master had quite the favorable opinion of that clan.’

Thinking nothing about it, Zhang Liu moved closer to the edge of the arena wall, closer to where the youth was standing and waiting for the intermission to be over. The youth suddenly heard someone calling out to him, his eyes fixated on a certain white-haired youth with a patch of black hair wearing a blue robe.

“Greetings brother from the Huo Clan, we from the Zhang Clan send our regards.”

He was being formal with his greeting as he wasn’t sure who this person was, the order of not causing trouble was still on his mind. Huo Kong while still having his hands closed looked to the side, one of his brows moving upwards as he looked at the man that spoke out.

“The Zhang Clan? You’re from that small clan?”

He replied in a mocking tone, the grin never vanishing from his face as if he was trying to start a fight.