

Unfathomable 161

Chapter 161

The people had noticed that something was afoot. At one point the audience started pouring out, the communication jades had gone down so information wasn't going through as well as it should. The Dark Palm members formed a perimeter around the large building keeping all those people that wanted to escape there.

Most core formation elders that were stationed in this city and were close by, went into the arena. The people keeping order outside were mostly in the foundation establishment realm, with two or three people being on the weaker end of core formation.

"What's happening inside senior..."

One of the sect members posed this question to an older looking man that looked to be the one in charge here. The man played with his beard while trying to get some more info with the help of his communication jade but to no avail.

"That doesn't matter, just keep anyone from leaving, that was the last order that the young Master had given us, The grand elder is also there now, so everything should be fine."

Wu Ming had gone inside some time ago after noticing the large blast of Qi that destroyed a quarter of that large arena. The nascent soul elder didn't give them any orders in particular, but Yang Kai did before the communication devices went out. They would continue to follow this order out of fear of offending a prominent sect master.

While they were diligently carrying out the order something finally occurred. A golden like storm shot out into the air and into the surrounding area momentarily stunning some of the cultivators outside. This was the aura attack that Zhang Dong used to knock out all the core formation cultivators in the vicinity. This didn't reach outside though as he was afraid to hurt the civilians outside. He was only able to keep the attack away from people close to him, like the members from the triform alliance that were at the arena building with him.

Soon people could see two blurry figures taking off, the ground rumbled and the spiritual energy around the area exploded. Hurricane like winds erupted in the city causing quite a bit of residual damage. Everyone looked in the direction of those two figures, the two busted through some jade green pagodas. One was covered in a golden hue while the other person was clouded in shade like energy.

Wu Ming and Zhang Dong clashed with each other, their colliding fists produced shockwaves that caused widespread damage. The people that were the closest to this fight scream out in fright, quickly scattering to various locations to keep themselves safe.

"Two masters are fighting, run for your lives!"

"Is another sect attacking? What's going on?"

"Oh no... the city is getting wrecked!"

People shouted out in panic while trying to get away, rubble was falling everywhere. Matt managed to push his opponent back while they clashed sending him barreling into the ground. He floated up in the air and looked around, taking a second to reassess this situation.

‘This doesn’t look good... if this continues we’ll destroy the whole city... and might even cause casualties.’

Matt didn’t care much about the Dark Palm Sect base that was in this city, it would be even better if it got smashed into pieces. The problem was the commoners living here, he didn’t want to cause mass destruction or injure anyone that wasn’t involved in this scuffle. The two nascent soul cultivators were doing the equivalent of throwing some left jabs at each other at the moment. They were feeling each other out, just measuring each other’s all-around power level.

‘This guy clearly doesn’t care, I bet he would throw meat shields at me if he figured out that I didn’t want to attack the regular folk.’

Normally people at their levels didn’t care that much about the lives of others. His opponent probably wouldn’t think that this Zhang Patriarch cared about harming the citizens of this city.

‘I think we need a change of scenery...’

Matt looked to the side and focused his senses, he was trying to find a certain location.

‘There, that’s a good spot to start things out.’

He grinned slightly while looking down, Wu Ming was already standing up and glaring daggers in his direction. He soon jumped right in, but his opponent didn’t throw himself at him, no. The cultivator called Zhang Dong started flying upwards as if he was fleeing. The Dark Palm Elder didn’t know what this guy was up to, but he followed after him while delivering some ranged attacks that looked like a barrage of shadowy arrows.

“Where are you going, you think you can escape?”

Wu Ming noticed something about this cultivator, he was clearly only in the early stage. The four stages of the nascent soul had distinct power signatures to them. It didn’t matter how much spiritual energy the cultivator had. Even if someone in the early stage had more spiritual energy than someone in the middle stage, you could still tell them both apart. The so-called marker of the stage was quite distinct.

From Wu Ming’s perspective, he had the upper hand, even though this enemy he was fighting had massive amounts of Qi he was still only in the early stage. He felt that in the long run, he should be able to take this win. This man was also acting strangely, after delivering a good hit he just backed away and started flying away instead of going with the flow of the fight. It made it seem as if he was trying to flee or at least gain some space between Wu Ming and himself, maybe he wasn’t that good at hand to hand combat?

Zhang Dong that was glowing like a light-bulb flew through the air, everyone that saw him coming instantly fled into their homes. Right behind him was quite the angry-looking man with salt and pepper hair, the black arrows that had the shadow attribute raced right behind him. For some reason, Zhang Dong slowed down each time and received the ranged attack with his own energy negating it in the

process. This was odd as he could very well just dodge them instead, not many people knew that he was doing it so that those ranged attacks wouldn't hit a passerby.

'Is he mocking me?'

This only made Wu Ming that was flying behind him even madder. He figured the man was taking his attacks just to show him that they weren't up to par. He wanted to increase the number of his attacks, but his opponent didn't look fazed. He needed more time to charge up a stronger one, but if he did that Zhang Dong would be gone by that point.

The chase continued and more shadowy attacks rained, this time though the white-haired man dodged to the side. The old man that was doing the chasing smirked, thinking that he was probably at his limit and couldn't just defend himself anymore. The attack that Matt dodged flew into the distance and hit some kind of defensive formation. The formation wasn't able to hold on though and a couple of those shadow bolts descended downwards into the buildings that were behind this shield.

"Nice hit, but I think you missed a spot."

Zhang Dong gave Wu Ming a thumbs up before moving his hand upwards while forming a lightning spear. He chucked it in the same general direction where the shadow arrows flew, his attack causing more destruction than the previous attack.

"W-what's happening, we are getting attacked!"

"The defensive formation has crumbled just after one hit, are those nascent soul cultivators!"

"Why are two nascent soul masters attacking us, is this an attack from an opposing sect?"

The people looked up into the air with fright in their eyes. They saw a cultivator dressed in some strange armored white robe, slightly behind him was another cultivator that was wearing a Dark Palm elder robe. One of the people on the ground recognized the older looking person and quickly spoke out.

"Isn't that Elder Ming from the main sect?"

"What is he doing here?"

The people murmured among each other, Matt showed a slight grin and quickly shouted so that everyone could hear him.

"Yes, Elder Ming ol' buddy ol' pal, let us destroy this sect outpost before they figure out that we are from the Demon Subduing Sect!"

Wu Ming was taken aback, his eyes bugged out in confusion as he didn't know what to say.

"W-what nonsense are you spewing!"

The man tried to give a retort but the man in the white battle robe gave out a dazzling radiance that blinded most of the people in the area. A loud rumbling sound followed suit that also drowned out whatever elder Ming was saying. A barrage of guided lightning spears that just looked like a mass of golden lightning bolts descended upon the Dark Palm cultivators, raining doom upon them.

This, of course, was the outer sect base that belonged to the Dark Palm sect. Matt had gotten a brilliant idea after he noticed that his opponent wasn't really looking where he was shooting his attacks. The Demon Subduing Sect name came up previously, from what he could recall he knew that both of these sects were antagonistic towards each other. He wasn't sure if this silly scheme would work out, but he was willing to give it a go.

The seed of doubt was placed now, he just needed to remove the only person that could give away his bs act. Firstly he targeted all the main buildings at this base, making sure to cause mayhem and destruction. He was still feeling bad about attacking people out of nowhere, but this was the start of a war. He realized that he had to put his own people first, he was already being merciful by focusing on the structures and the core formation cultivators in this area. He wasn't even going for kills and was trying to just cripple their cultivation bases for now.

After the flash of light cleared, you could hear the groans and moans of the people that were implicated by Matt's wide-area lightning barrage. The whole place was a mess, the ground and buildings were trashed and the area looked like it had been hit by missiles.

"Haha, take that you vile Dark Palm scum! Elder Ming, we should go now before they call for more help!"

This was a big gamble, would they even believe this obvious lie? There was also the other problem of the Demon Subduing Sect getting angry at him for spreading some misinformation, but he could just deny the claims if that time came. Elder Ming, on the other hand, was already coming straight at him, his whole body covered in a shadowy aura.

"Stop spouting this hogwash!"

He was fast to recover, he wasn't sure why this man was doing this type of act but he just had to take care of him before any further trouble arose. Before he could close in though, the white-haired man's figure blurred, in an instant, he was right in front. The two made eye contact for a fraction of a second before Wu Ming saw a palm going for his face. He was rushing forward and couldn't react to his enemy's speed.

This wasn't an attack though, Zhang Dong's digits pushed into the older man's face as he grabbed him by the face. Due to the sudden grab, Wu Ming's lower body flew forward while his neck and head were pushed backward. The two men then flew into the distance leaving the area of the outer sect headquarters.

The older nascent soul cultivator grasped Zhang Dong's wrist and pushed his shadow Qi into his own digits in the hopes of wrestling himself free. To no avail as the divine lightning Qi that formed a thin protective layer was holding in place. The man pushed his whole middle stage to the apex while trying to wrestle himself free, but he just couldn't budge this man's vice-like grip that he had over his face.

Wu Ming's body then flew through the air as he crushed into some boulders. He was finally free and found himself in some unknown location outside of the city. His opponent was just hovering above the ground and looking at him, hands crossed over one another as if he was taunting him.

"Well then, Mr. Big Grand Elder of the Dark Palm Sect. I don't think that you will surrender peacefully?"

Wu Ming just looked up at his opponent, eyes squinting. He waved his hand producing an obsidian Jian sword that had similar Qi qualities to that shadowy Qi that he was using. The old man pointed the sword towards his enemy, no words came out of his mouth but Matt could feel that this man's danger level went up a notch.

"Didn't think so..."

Chapter 162

The whole Jade Grass City was in an uproar. Everyone was hiding in their homes or running for their lives, people were in full panic mode the moment they got wind of two nascent soul cultivators fighting it out in the city. This was a city with millions of people in it, but there were no such things as the police force or a fire department to help people out in the time of need.

Every prominent clan or sect that was living here just closed off their doors and hid away in their mansions, protecting themselves behind their defensive formations. The people with the lack of these sorts of protective measures either hid in the cellars or tried seeking shelter somewhere else, even deciding to run outside and wait it out in the nearby mountains.

While everyone was running around like headless chickens a certain elegant looking gentleman was standing at a large gate. The gate looked to be made from pure gold and it had two winged serpents entangling the columns on each side. Right at the top of the gate, there was a large red sign with the words 'Yinglong Pavilion'. Behind it was a large building that looked like a reverse triangle with the bottom flattened.

The man was sticking out like a sore thumb, mostly due to what he was wearing. He had a very western looking tuxedo, pure black jacket, and trousers that had a satin stripe. Under the jacket, he had the usual black vest and white dress shirt. He wore nice black leather shoes and his cufflinks had a dragon shape to them. The whole getup was completed with a black-tie and a monocle that the man was fiddling with. His gray hair and beard went quite well with his refined gentleman looks, which made you think that this was some kind of butler that worked for a noble.

"Reporting to Lord Tian!"

The man nodded at the other person that looked more like your traditional cultivator as he was wearing a robe. This robe had a similar winged golden dragon pattern on the back like the one on the gate.

"Following the large explosion, the Sect elder that was at our auction house had left towards its source."

"The explosion originated from the Colosseum where the Dao Festival was taking place this year."

"The sect that owns this town had sealed off the access to the building before our men could get more information, but after a further inspection this is what we have found out..."

The man started telling his superior about the fight inside the arena building and the two nascent cultivators that burst out of it. One of them was the Dark Palm Sect Wu Ming that was a special guest at this branch auction house. The man also brought over the info that the two were seen destroying the main base that the sect was located at. The man called Tian was given Zhang Dong's description and that he was an unknown cultivator that suddenly appeared seemingly out of nowhere. It was unclear how or why the man sneaked into the city, but they were speculating that he probably hid his cultivation level.

“After the two nascent soul elders left a group of cultivators belonging to the Feng, Huo and Zhang clan came out. They showed hostility towards the Dark Palm Sect that was blocking people from getting out of the Colosseum building. A fight ensued soon and they left in the direction of the docks. It is unknown if they are related to this incident but it’s highly likely...”

“Hmmm...Quite interesting...”

The butler looking man nodded while thinking about something.

“Announce my message to everyone, the Yinglong Pavilion will stay neutral in this matter. Activate the defensive formation and bring all the treasures to the main vault.”

The man clasped his hands and headed inside, moments after the sound of the defensive formation activating was heard and a barrier flickered around the large Pavilion building. The man himself remained outside, his eyes focusing in one direction as he felt a battle taking place.

‘They began their battle... that one is Wu Ming... the other one... quite peculiar...’

The man fixed his monocle while slowly floating up and standing on the large gate as if he wanted to get a better view of the battle.

‘Wu Ming’s opponent is in the early stage, but still...’

Thunder and lightning resounding throughout the area, giving even this dandy looking man a shock. The man wasn’t going to get involved in this, but he was quite curious. Who would attack a large sect in one of their cities out of the blue, was this a prelude to something larger?

‘Quite peculiar, indeed. A storm might be coming to these lands... maybe something interesting will finally happen!’

The man chuckled to himself and peeked at the battle through this monocle, the item enhancing his view to the point that he could even see the two fighter’s silhouettes even though they were multiple kilometers away from him. He zoomed in just in time to see the two men clash with each other, the shock-waves from their clashes reverberated right towards the city and caused many mini earthquakes.

Matt floated back and looked to his arm, he was holding onto a hilt of a sword. Yes it was mostly just a hilt now as the blade of this sword of his had been cleanly sliced off after a couple of exchanges. The weapons that he had were only of the earth grade, so they had no chance of lasting against that man’s black sword that was a heaven grade treasure.

“You’re a slippery bastard and you don’t even have a weapon!”

Wu Ming scoffed at his opponent, he was slowly getting into the groove. Ever since he pulled out his sword he was on the attack, his opponent had already gone through multiple weapons. He had sliced and diced them into scrap metal each time and finally noticed that this poor sap didn’t have any high-level treasures.

“I’m not convinced, who are you really, stop hiding your real age!”

Elder Ming was also unconvinced about this man’s origins. The part about being a renegade cultivator was probably true, but Zhang Dong’s youthful appearance was throwing him off. A nascent soul

cultivator below the age of two hundred was already hard to find, but this man looked to be below the age of a hundred. For this reason, the man had a theory that he was using some kind of high-level disguise technique.

“Hiding my real age? What are you on about?”

Matt threw the destroyed sword hilt into his spatial ring, not bothering to pull out another one. The items that he had weren't able to handle his increased cultivation level, so even if he wanted to use them they would start crumbling. His opponent didn't even have to destroy them himself, if Matt pushed his energies into the blades they would start to burst from the inside. The weapons at the earth grade just weren't able to hold the massive nascent soul Qi load that was getting poured into them.

Wu Ming pointed his dark jian at Zhang Dong and continued.

“You are clearly hiding your true appearance, there are no masters on your level that are this young, what's your purpose here, are you trying to start a war?”

From Elder Ming's perspective this man was plotting something, he had already mentioned the sect that the Dark Palm sect was on bad terms with previously. This made him think that this opponent was from a third group, one that would gain something if they and the Demon Subduing Sect went to war. There were a couple of options here, but there was nothing to he could go off of here. This man was a mystery and he used a strange cultivation method that he never had seen before.

“Hiding my true appearance? Buddy, I think you have things mixed up here...”

Matt didn't really care what this man thought about at this point, he would be taking him out one way or another so he didn't have to lie anymore. The only thing he had to be careful was from other people that might be listening in on them.

“I'm just your regular thirty-two year old, but enough about me, I have a question for you.”

“Are you considered strong in your sect?”

Zhang Dong moved his hand to his chin and looked upwards to his enemy, the old man not looking too happy about the whole ordeal.

“What? Of course, I'm one of the core elders of the sect, the only one that is truly above me is the sect leader!”

The man stuck out his chest as if he was happy with his proclamation, he was also hoping to give this man a fright by saying that he was on the stronger side.

“Is that so...That makes things... easier.”

Zhang Dong moved his hand to his neck and proceeded to crack it a couple of times before slowly rising up.

“You did well to handle my strength at 15% of my true power, but what will happen if I further increase it to 30%!!!”

He shouted out the last part dramatically, his body began radiating with the already familiar golden light but it was a lot more condensed this time around. Matt wasn't really being serious with the percentages, he also had no way of truly measuring his own output as they did in some shows that he watched back in the day. He still wanted to say that line, it was something that the people in this world weren't all too familiar with.

His body flickered as he activated the higher tier version of his Embodiment of the Thunder God. His eyes started turning white, golden lightning bolts flickering on and off within them. His white locks shifted into golden energy and rumbling of thunder filled the area as he charged forward. Before his opponent could even flick his sword, he was able to blitz him thanks to his increased speed. The Dark Palm elder found himself with a footprint embedded into his cheek as he received a swift kick that propelled him into some boulders on the side.

Matt had already spent some time exchanging blows with this man, he had figured out a couple of things during this. For one, he was in no way weaker than someone at the middle stage of the nascent soul level. He also noticed that if he remained in close-quarter combat at all times, the other person's battle prowess dropped significantly. He had a theory concerning that, it was probably mostly due to the upper-level cultivators spending more time learning large scale attacks than sticking to the basics of combat.

Matt was still someone relatively fresh to all this battling nonsense. He had only two years of fighting under his belt and he wasn't afraid to duke it out at close proximity. This was also attributed to him having quite the strong body refining technique that made him impervious to most damage and lowered the pain that he felt.

On the other hand, the most powerful cultivators had long abandoned the early gained techniques. Exchanging them for grander ones, but the harder the technique the more Qi it used, and the longer the activation time was. Sometimes the basics were the way to go, it was far easier to deliver a simple kick or punch to your enemy than to focus on that flashy finisher move to end it all. Even the swordmasters that you'd think would fight at close range, mostly used some ranged slicing attacks that parted the rivers. You didn't actually see them exchanging blows with each other at close range instead, they clashed with their strongest attacks that were backed by their Dao.

'I only learned that one new move it would be wise to just end it like this, but...'

This was also why Matt was staying close to Wu Ming. He didn't really have any nascent soul moves beside one that he learned during this week. This was the safest way of winning this fight, just using his superior cultivation method that gave him better all-around stats than this person that probably knew some peculiar techniques that could shift the tide of this battle. There was also a flip side to this, he wouldn't really learn anything new, he wanted to test his limits while he had the chance to do so.

'I guess, I'll give him some time to recover.'

"Is that all? Is this what a Dark Palm sect elder amounts to?"

Matt flew upwards into the air and looked down at Wu Ming, the man shook the rubble off his robe. His body flickered with shadowy light as he jumped upwards. He began making some strange hand gestures

that culminated in him putting them together. The moment he did that a spike in spiritual energy was felt by Matt in the area and something started appearing from behind him.

It looked like a mass of black energy that was getting sucked into a certain spot. The energy started taking form soon after, Matt clearly saw something being created out of nothing. This 'being' looked like a massive looking Raven. This being of shadowy energy was even larger than he was in his avatar form as it towered over him.

"That certainly is a big boy..."

Matt commented while looking at the two beady eyes that were locked on to him.

Chapter 163

"Halt, you may not leave!"

A man with a spear pointed at some people, with him there were many others with similar weapons and clothes. This was the Jade Grass City docks and these men were the guards stationed there. They were following a previously given order of not letting anyone leave the city that a superior from the sect had given them.

They were having slight troubles as there were many people that came for the Dao Festival here. Everyone was going crazy after the two nascent soul uncles started fighting, fleeing the city was the only thing on their mind. The guards were able to keep the numerous people at bay for now, mostly due to the fear of the Dark Palm sect looming over them. Otherwise, the various clan warriors would have charged through these guards that were at most at the foundation level.

This was only to this point though, as a certain group of people charged into the dock area pushing everyone to the side.

"What are you doing, you may not leave, this is what the elders from the Dark Palm sect had decided, are you going against the venerable sect?"

The guard captain with the highest cultivation realm shouted out while seeing a large man with red hair charging forward.

"Venerable? Think you have them confused with some other sect, now move!"

The warning that the guard gave the group didn't work as they all got tossed to the side like ragdolls. The man with red hair was of course Huo Qiang, behind him were all the people from the triform alliance. Clans that were to the side, looked shocked at the brazen show of force. Everyone was wondering who these people were, that didn't fear the powerful sect that was behind these guards.

"Everyone, go to your ships, we will follow Brother Dong's orders and go towards the Zhang Clan's Spirit Spring City!"

"Qiao, go with the Zhang Clan, and protect their ship, take care of Senior Jin."

Huo Qiang knew that the old man was injured, he was still out cold and getting carried by some Zhang members. Zhang Liu on the other hand had awoken from his slumber and was more or less healed thanks to some recovery pills he had previously gotten from his master. The pills had the holy element

infused into them, so they worked wonders for external and internal injuries of any kind. He and Feng Nuana were running along with the rest of the people from their camp, the short girl was glancing back and forth from the youth as if she wanted to say something.

“My lord, is it wise to do that? Shouldn’t we return to the clan and alert the Patriarch?”

Huo Qiao asked while everyone was making their way into the docks, the guards that were there not really being able to do anything with the core formation experts around.

“Hah, you saw it all... Senior Brother is the only one that can protect us... we just need to tell that old fart to hide for the moment.”

“Young Master, please stop referring to the Patriarch that way...”

Qiao nodded and saw some reason in this. What good would it do to hide away in their main city, only to wait for the incoming doom? He didn’t think that the Dark Palm sect would let them live, even this nascent soul elder was already ordering that Yang Kai to eradicate all the three clans that were involved in this fiasco. Probably letting themselves be protected by an allied nascent soul master like Zhang Dong was the better option, but he was still only one man.

“Are the communication jades still not working?”

Communications were still out, the jades in themselves had probably been destroyed and they needed new ones. Even the ones that were in their spatial rings were not working anymore. This worked in their favor as the sect that was chasing them wouldn’t know that they left, or that the incident even happened before someone from this city reported it. They had some precious time now, the word about this incident hadn’t reached outside yet.

While everyone was running towards their designated ships a big screech was heard. It sounded like a cry from some kind of bird, everyone that was rushing forward had to grasp their ears. The core formation elders quickly surrounded the juniors with their aura to protect them from harm.

Everyone looked into the distance to the spot that this loud cry originated from. The cultivator’s eyes went wide as they saw that large beast opening its wings. It looked like a huge raven, but this beast was the size of a kaiju a lot bigger than normal creatures that were even in the core formation level. Its size was immense when it flapped those giant wings giant cyclones were created that produced massive windstorms.

“Master is fighting that?”

Zhang Liu and Xue were squatting down on the ground along with the other junior members, taken aback by the sudden appearance of that creature. Was that some kind of nascent soul technique that they didn’t know about?

“Is that a Spirit Soul-Beast?”

The old granny from the Feng clan called out, her eyes squinting as she tried to look in the direction where the action was happening.

“I heard it takes a lot of time to create a Soul-Beast like that, not every nascent soul cultivator is able to do it...”

Most of the people here didn't really have information about the various techniques a nascent soul master used. They were shrouded in mystery, but this one was more of a staple so it was more widely known. Still, how one produced such a strong beast that rivaled its own master in battle strength was an enigma.

"What's a Spirit Soul-Beast?"

One of the junior members asked while quivering down on the ground.

"A Soul-Beast is something a nascent soul master is able to create. It's more than an attack, this beast as its name states possess its own soul. We don't have much information on this matter, but it is believed that it has something to do with the nascent soul of the cultivator. It can freely move around and has a mind of its own as well."

The old lady explained while forcing the hurricane-like winds away from the group of youths that she was protecting. She didn't know all the details but, she was sure of one thing. A cultivator that had a Soul-Beast with him had a massive advantage over one that didn't have it. Supposedly those beasts could be even stronger than the person that created them and would follow any order without asking any pesky questions. The beast was supposedly created with the help of the cultivator's nascent soul, so it was a part of them.

While the triform alliance was concerned about what Zhang Dong was against they saw a blinding light in the distance. Opposite of the giant black bird there was something or someone. The flickering light expanded in scope while looking spherical in nature.

Then something strange happened after the sphere turned gigantic, something burst through it. It looked like a massive clawed hand, following it was a massive roar. The yell sounded like a mix of a monster's growl and the sound of thunder. The Spherical orb of light burst like a balloon after that monstrous claw showed itself, revealing the monster inside.

"W-what is that... it's... golden?"

"What kind of beast is that... it's not a dragon, is it?"

What materialized was a beast that the people here weren't familiar with. The body of this creature was hulking and covered in golden scales. It wasn't as big as the shadowy raven that was flapping its wings in front of it, but the presence that it had was even above that flying creature.

The golden creature had two large horns sprouting from its head. On its back the people could see huge webbed wings, sharp claws were present on some parts of those wings. Its eyes were smooth and glossy, the whole creature had lizard-like features to it. Out of its nostrils lightning bolts were shooting out and the moment it gave out a roar the whole place shook as if the heavens were angry.

This was what Matt would call a Western Dragon. This counterpart of the Dragon species wasn't serpentine in nature, it had powerful-looking fore and hindlegs that could deliver massive blows to its foes. It also didn't possess the classical deer-like horns that the eastern dragons had.

Without a warning a colossal explosion of plasma erupted, shooting wildly into the heavens making the cyclones and winds stop. The imposing scaly golden body slowly moved forward. The leathery bat-like

wings expanded to the creature's sides. The creature glared at the large raven in the distance, its long tail thrashing about and causing destruction to the surroundings.

Suddenly the dragon reared up on its hind legs, the muscles bulging as it jumped towards the dark shadowy raven beast. Its savage claws that looked like sword pillars sliced through the air as it flew towards its enemy. The Raven Soul-Beast gave out a high pitched caw while moving its huge wings towards that charging dragon.

When the wings moved forward a burst of spiritual energy erupted and a massive amount of black feathers shot out. The feathers looked like guided missiles that were on a collision course with the golden dragon in front. The beast that looked like it belonged to Zhang Dong didn't falter, it used those sharp claws to bat at the ranged attack, destroying the mass of feathers in the process.

"Is that... the Patriarch Soul-Beast?"

The Zhang Clan members shouted out after getting the name of this technique from the Feng elder. The beast had some characteristics that their Patriarch had, mostly that it was shooting out lightning bolts whenever it went. It also had that golden regal aura that their leader exuded as well.

Closer to where the two monsters were fighting, Zhang Dong was floating to the side, his robe fluttering in the wind. He moved his hand out with his fingers outstretched while shouting.

"Ruby Eyes Golden Dragon, use dragon claw!"

The golden dragon responded to the order, using its massive clawed hands as it swiped at the large raven that evaded to the side. Elder Wu was just floating there looking a lot paler than before while gasping for air.

"Now use, plasma breath!"

The dragon's toothy maw opened wide and a stream of bright golden plasma shot out, the black Raven barely managed to put up some kind of shadowy shield that broke almost instantly.

"H-how could this be..."

For the first time during this battle, the man had fear in his eyes. He thought that he would surely win after activating this trump card. People that had Soul-Beasts that were at the early stage of the nascent soul were rare, mostly due to the complexity of the technique and the massive strain it put the cultivator on. Somehow this young-looking man had summoned a strong Soul-Beast to combat his. The many years of experience were telling him that that strange-looking flying lizard was a lot stronger than his own.

He could tell from the way the two were clashing, that with each attack his beast took he got weaker. The dragon was abusing the flying monster around, the residual electricity blasts that were coming of it were a constant threat. This technique that the man just used was a strong one, but it was also a double-edged sword. The creature created was strong but it was linked to the cultivator that created it, with a soul bond.

Wu Ming felt each attack that his raven received and he used up a lot of Qi to keep this technique going. He thought he could overwhelm this white-haired man with the addition of his Soul-Beast but the

opponent had managed to pull out an even stronger monster instead. The Dark Palm elder started inching away to the side, slowly floating away while his beast got abused by the so-called Ruby Eyes Golden Dragon.

“Where do you think you’re going?”

Before he could run though, he had his way blocked by this enemy cultivator.

“You’re looking a bit pale there, having trouble keeping your technique up?”

Matt was curious, this was apparently the same type of technique he was using but it was taking a lot more from this old man than from him. It was probably due to the fact that he had a one in a billion cultivation method, he had truckloads of spiritual energy and he very rarely ran out of it.

Matt cracked his fists together while the two beasts in the back were fighting it out. The dragon was clinging to the large blackbird and biting into its neck, its powerful claws sinking into the other soul-beast spirit flesh as it got maimed.

Chapter 164

A shadow bent at an awkward angle turning into a claw as it tried going for Zhang Dong’s throat. Before it could reach it’s designated spot the man in white rapidly dodged to the side. His whole body was covered in glowing Qi energy, his hair fluttering in the wind while crackling with electricity.

Wu Ming did his utmost best to deliver killing blow after killing blow to this younger cultivator, but to no avail. His opponent was very slippery and even when he was unarmed he managed to deliver several blows while countering.

“I guess that’s how far you can go, huh?”

The battle turned somewhat one-sided. Matt found that his speed, power, and even resilience was above this Dark Palm elder that was already in the middle stage of the nascent soul realm. He wasn’t sure if this old man was a good reference point though. Just as his strength was above him due to having a better base thanks to this system of his, someone else could very well outrank this guy even in the early stage.

He didn’t come out unscathed though, he suffered a couple of slices from that black sword. They were quite shallow though and he reasoned that if he had similar graded equipment that this fight would have been even easier. From this, he started thinking that he should have no problem with cultivators that were in the early stage at all. He could probably fight a couple of them if they were at the middle stage. If one was at the late stage, he wasn’t all that sure the jump in power might be massive depending on the grade of their cultivation method so he needed to take people at that realm on an individual basis.

‘I don’t think there are any people with cultivation methods at the immortal level in the Dark Palm Sect, but there could be manuals like mine in this world.’

After meeting Feng Liena he knew that there had to be people like him in this land before. There might even be some that are living around here just as he is. Sometimes he came across structures that didn’t fit the Xianxia vibes all too well, or certain individuals that stuck out like a sore thumb. Just like this one

uncle that looked like a butler of a noble house that was staring at him from afar, probably not realizing that Matt here could actually see him all the way from here.

‘Well, Alfred there doesn’t look that hostile, he is about as strong as this Wu Ming... but can’t really be sure...’

Matt looked to his opponent that was hovering in the air. The man’s lip was cut and he was bleeding, his left shoulder was uncovered and it looked like something had burned it. His eyes were bloodshot and he was staring in Matt’s direction with indignation. He had various emotions going through his mind, but mostly it was fear and anger.

“You will never get away with this, if you kill me the sect elders will hunt you down like a pig!”

‘Oh, here it comes.’

Matt raised his hand, which made the sect elder quiet down in surprise.

“Hold up there, old man. You aren’t seriously going to tell me to spare you now... like what’s the point of telling me that your sect is going to get me?”

Matt wasn’t sure why the cultivators at certain positions liked to throw their faction’s weight around the moment they got in a pinch. If he let the man go, he would only increase his enemy count. He was sure that this guy would quickly report everything that transpired here, if he silenced him now he would even gain some time.

“What? Do you think I’m joking? The sect will eradicate your entire clan, everyone that is related to you will die, if you dare to lay a hand on me!”

Matt squinted at the man that was spouting nonsense, maybe he had punched him too many times and his brain wasn’t working right?

“Yeah... like they weren’t going to do that anyway, I bet you would be at the forefront of that...”

The large golden dragon flapped its large bat-like wings behind where Zhang Dong was hovering. Wu Ming was right in front, his own Soul-Beast was slowly flickering in and out of existence as it had been bullied by the golden dragon. Matt had spent slightly over two years in this world still, he wasn’t really used to taking lives. He had realized by now, that sometimes it was necessary to survive, for him or for the people that he was protecting. He wasn’t fighting for himself anymore, if he went down his whole clan would probably follow suit. Also, this man probably had a large body count behind him, so he wouldn’t be losing any sleep after killing a murder hobo like this.

“Think we have talked long enough...”

The white-haired man proclaimed while closing his eyes, the dragon behind him gave out a loud roar that caused the surrounding scenery to vibrate. Zhang Dong moved his right hand forward, four fingers closed with only the index finger pointing out. The digit was placed right in front of his face, spiritual energy gathered towards the tip as the whole area resonated with the sound of thunder and crackling electricity.

The dragon behind him wasn't being passive either, his large jaw sprung open and those sharp chompers came out. The Soul-Beast took in a large breath, its chest expanded, and started to glow as it prepared for its own attack.

"You people love clashes like this, don't you? Will you face me head-on, or will you run like a coward?"

Wu Ming's whole face contorted, his teeth clenching tightly while blood dripped from his mouth. He couldn't remember a time where he was disrespected this much, this was something that he could take lying down. He reacted promptly, his black blade in his hand as he started pouring the last ounce of his energy into his weapon. The black Raven behind him screeched out loudly and started to mimic the golden dragon as it gathered large amounts of energy into its beak.

The whole place rumbled, the ground shook and the winds picked up yet again. The people back in Jade Grass City were starting to get worried, they could see two lights in the distance. Some of the people could even make out the appearance of those two Soul-Beasts, the two being huge as they were. The growling and high pitched bird squawks were heard even back here, some people were bleeding from their ears if they didn't cover them up in time.

The two energies collided with each other. It looked as if a shadow was trying to engulf a golden beam of light in the distance, the two repelling forces struggled for just a moment before one of them won out. The black light bent inwards as it was overtaken by the bright holy lightning energies, what followed suit was a giant explosion that made the whole place shake as if it was struck by an earthquake above eight on the Richter scale.

A dust cloud of massive proportions was formed, hitting the city from the side after the clash of the two nascent soul masters. Buildings shook, glass shattered and people were screaming everywhere. The whole triform alliance was mostly on their ships now, their mouths agape as they continued to look at the massive explosion in the distance. The only thing on their mind was who the victor of this battle was, but not like they had the luxury of going there to find out.

"Everyone, we must leave now!"

The elder members started shouting out while their spiritual flying ships rumbled into motion. The winds caused them to shake but it wasn't something that would bring their large flying vessels down. They need to use the massive confusion in the city to get away, luckily the Dark Palm sect base in this city was already hit by the Zhang Clan Patriarch. This allowed the group to slowly rise into the air and fly in the direction of Spirit Spring City as ordered by Zhang Dong.

Out in the distance in the middle of the storm there floated a lone cultivator. His hair was pure white and his body was draped in bolts of lightning that were slowly flickering in and out of existence.

"Hmm..."

Matt looked in the direction of where his enemy was in, not much was left besides a giant chasm that was blasted by him and his golden dragon. The Dark Raven was nowhere to be seen and he also saw a fallen body of the cultivator that he was fighting. The body wasn't moving at all, blood was also running into the destroyed ground underneath.

"Something is off..."

He closed his eyes and empowered his senses to the extreme. He had perceived something during the clash that he had with this old man, it was as if he gave up halfway and let himself get blasted into smithereens. The man's end came a bit too easy and he had a suspicion as to why.

"There you are..."

His eyes shot open and crackled with lightning, he blurred from his position and took flight in a certain direction. In the distance there was something flying away, it was Wu Ming but only a part of him. This was something that cultivators called a nascent divinity form. People that had reached the nascent soul level possessed an ability to survive in their soul form even if their fleshy body was destroyed. They were a lot weaker like this and required outside help to fully restore their old battle potential. With the help of some treasures, it was possible but highly unlikely.

"N-no...stay back!"

Wu Ming looked back as he felt the cultivator with white hair going after him. He had given up on the battle in the hopes of getting away and sacrificing his soul-beast. The other man had homed in on his nascent divinity form faster than he had hoped for. If he managed to get to the main sect area he would be safe, so he mustered all of his remaining Qi and flew forward.

"Sorry... but I can't let you escape old man..."

Matt was a lot faster than Wu Ming even when the Dark Palm elder was at full power. He didn't have much trouble in catching up to him and with no one to aid this man he was at his mercy.

"W-what do you want, I can give you unimaginable riches! I-if we work together we might be able to take out the sect leader!"

The man started breaking down, he stopped with the threats and tried acting subservient instead. He was even willing to throw his so-called cherished sect under the bus to save his life.

"Sorry, but there is no way I can trust someone like you."

Matt moved his hand out, Wu Ming's spirit form trembled and stopped in place as he felt a massive amount of spiritual energy surrounding him. Without letting the old cultivator spout more nonsense he clenched his fist shut, the energy around the soul quickly surged inwards and crushed the disembodied soul into nothingness. A small explosion reverberated after the deed was done, followed by an eerie silence.

Matt looked at his clenched fist, it was clenched firmly and unmoving. He opened up the fist and looked at his palm as if he was trying to check for something. Soon his hand began to tremble, the moment it did his facial expression also flickered with emotion, sweat running down his forehead.

"Heh... still can't handle it well without that technique..."

He gave out a sigh and clenched his fist back, the trembling subsiding in a matter of moments, and his facial expression went back to a more neutral look. The man looked at the scenery for a moment and then flew back to where the body of the man he just slew was. He didn't forget about taking the black sword and the man's spatial ring, now what was left was to move to the next step of his hastily put together plan.

Chapter 165

Matt leaned down and touched the dead body of elder Ming on the forehead. The man's body soon started vanishing out of existence turning into dust before his eyes. What was left was his robe and whatever else he was wearing. Everything was tossed into the storage ring while Matt himself started to examine the new one he got as his loot.

'What do we have here...'

He noticed that the ring didn't really have much preventing him from peeking inside. He thought that someone from a big sect would have some defensive measures preventing others from taking their stuff. Maybe the elder didn't think anyone would be brazen enough to actually steal the ring they always wore on their hand. This type of ring only had a simple lock that only worked when the owner was still alive, maybe this was considered enough.

'Well, not like mine has more to lock it either...'

He glanced inside and saw a nice stash of spirit stones, lower graded, and middle graded ones. Besides that, there were some old cultivation manuals, various pills, and quite an amount of treasures.

'Was this guy some kind of collector...'

There were various items just floating in there, weapons, necklaces, rings, herbs, and even some booze that looked quite expensive. He didn't really have time to look over all of this throughout so he focused his senses to see if there was anything at the nascent soul level, he already had the black sword with him.

'Not really that much in here...'

There was a couple of heaven graded techniques in here, even the manual for that shadowy cultivation art that Wu Ming was using. But it wasn't really anything better than what he had obtained from that secret ground.

'There is another heaven realm weapon in here, guess even elders don't have enough cash to have many of those around... or maybe he didn't bring his whole stash along with him.'

The other item was a large black glaive, it was an early heaven graded weapon and kind of what he needed right now.

'I'll use this to get my body refining to the next level... the sword I can use for combat, it's also a middle graded one. Don't really see any demonic techniques in here, though that guy with the soul gem didn't have any demonic arts in his own spatial ring either.'

He rubbed his chin and shrugged, he had managed to loot two Dark Palm Masters and was a lot richer but this wealth wasn't nearly enough for what he was planning to do. No, he would need a lot more, mostly more spirit stones or beast cores, any treasures that could be used to increase his spirit point count would do.

'I guess I should go back into the city, there should still be some loot left in that base of theirs...'

There was no more danger waiting for him there, besides this one Buttlar looking guy that was still looking at him from the distance. The man didn't feel hostile though, the aura he was exuding was mostly just curiosity than malice.

'No use fighting a fight that I can avoid, shouldn't get too cocky...'

He thought to himself while flying back into Jade Grass City. After taking the residual energies of the two nascent soul fighters the city looked deserted, everything was closed and was covered in a layer of dust. He could feel people hiding in the buildings while he was flying by, but they were just scared civilians that he wouldn't bother with.

"Greetings, seen something you like?"

Matt asked the man that hovered down from the giant golden dragon gate. The two men looked at each other, their spiritual senses clashing against each other as they tried to feel each other out.

"Why yes good fellow, you have given this old man quite the show to watch."

The man gave a little bow, the monocle that was sitting on his face almost slipping out during it.

"Ah, sure... I'll keep this quick as I don't have much time. What is your stance on all of this?"

Matt was now holding the black sword in his hand, looking quite menacing. His Soul-Beast was also hovering in the back but outside the city, mostly there to alert him if any other nascent soul trouble arrived.

"No need for that look ol' chap, the Yinglong Pavilion always remains neutral in situations like this, there is nothing to fear."

Matt raised his eyebrow and then looked at the large store's name. He even recalled selling some of his crafted items and loot at a less prominent branch store.

"But if I may, could I pose the same question to you ol' chap. You're not thinking about robbing my good establishment here, are you now?"

The man's aura warped and you could see a cold glint behind those eyes. This pressure washed over Zhang Dong's body making him take a step back in surprise. This man was certainly stronger than that previous opponent that he fought just recently. Battling would be unwise, his plan of sacking this place was now being questioned by himself.

"Robbing? Me? No... I was just going to grab some stuff I left behind at the Dark Palm Sect."

Zhang Dong straightened out, his aura getting unlashd into the surrounding area and canceling the killing intent that was produced by the old English gentleman looking fellow. The man's face twitched slightly, his facial expression going back to a cheerful smile as if nothing happened at all.

"Well that's fine, as long as you leave Yinglong Pavilion out of your disagreement with that Sect, we will always remain neutral. I can give you my word."

Matt nodded, he already had a big faction going after him, he didn't want another one to be after his head. Previously he thought that this place belonged to the Dark Palm Sect. He had no problem in robbing his enemy blind, but this was another power altogether.

"Mmm."

He clasped his hands and did a little formal bow before jumping up and heading into the distance. The old man gave out a sigh of relief the moment Zhang Dong left.

'I might be getting too old for this.'

The man chuckled slightly while pulling out a handkerchief. He wiped the sweat from his forehead that came running out right after the other man had left. He had managed to scare him away, but he knew that if a battle ensued that his chances of winning were slim.

'Where did such a man come from.'

The man named Tian looked in the opposite direction that Zhang Dong flew off. In the distance, he could see a large looking beast. This was the golden dragon that was guarding the area, the peculiar thing about it was that it was still out there even after the battle had ended.

'He must have immense spiritual energy reserves to be able to do this, is he really only at the early stage?'

The man shook his head, thinking to himself that the man had to be hiding his true cultivation realm. Having a Soul-Beast so early in the cultivator's life was unprecedented. It was more realistic that the man with white hair was hiding his true level, he might even be at the late stage.

'I must report this, it would be better not to make an enemy of him.'

While the butler was blowing things out of proportions, the cultivator in white had arrived at the mostly destroyed outer sect base of the Dark Palm Sect. There was quite the number of injured people as he had fired off his Qi blasts in a random direction. Even though he was mostly aiming for injuring people, there could have been fatalities.

"Oh no...w-why is that man back!"

"What happened to Elder Ming..."

People shouted out and screamed as they saw the Nascent Soul cultivator approach them slowly. Before they could react to his approach they felt their legs giving out. An oppressive force washed over them and it felt like gravity was increased tenfold. They couldn't do much besides going down to their knees, their faces pale from the strain that their bodies were placed upon.

Zhang Dong's eyes flashed with divine power, it would be quite easy to just flatten all of these people right here right now. This was the group that was going after his newfound family. The question he had thought was if these people were all cold-blooded murderers as the man that he just clashed with. His sense washed over them, their bodies trembled in fear and he could even hear some of them weeping.

"I'm really not cut out for this..."

He shook his head and increased the pressure that his aura was applying to the people that were actually still conscious. He heard cries of protest but soon the whole place quieted down, the only thing that he could hear was silent breathing. Everyone that was in the vicinity of his aura attack had passed out, their lives weren't in danger though.

"Not like the lower cultivators matter that much, the battle will be decided by the elite few."

He knew that it probably wasn't wise to leave the enemy soldiers alive, but this world worked differently. The few outweighed the many, what counted were the nascent soul elders that were at the top. He could more or less focus on those, if he managed to get rid of them the battle would be won.

"Well, better get what I came here for..."

He closed his eyes and focused again, his energy washed over the area. Soon enough small trinkets and bags were floating upwards, these were all the spatial rings and bags that these Dark Palm Sect members had on them. Matt used his enhanced senses to home in on the peculiar aura that these types of treasures had and so he was able to identify them for a faster looting time.

He didn't really go through any of them just yet though, he just placed everything in a regular bag that then he inserted into his own high-quality spatial ring. There was a certain danger in having so many treasures that worked on spatial laws, if he tried cramming everything into a badly made storage device it could very well cause an explosion.

That's why he only trusted his very own storage ring that he received from the system. This thing was high quality and wouldn't break even with multiple other dimensional devices stored inside it.

"Should I take their robes... Could probably get some raw materials if I deconstruct them in my crafting abode."

Nothing was safe from his clutches, the people were left in their loincloth but everything else was cleaned out. Anything that was identified as a crafting component was going into the bag. The previously destroyed area was left with a bunch of naked people, even parts of the buildings were missing. The floor tiles that had some residual Qi in them weren't left behind, much less for any bronze or iron statues. The vault was cleaned out, not a single book remained after Matt was done here.

"Okay, think I got everything..."

He took another look around him, making sure that there weren't any secret chambers hidden below the estate. His senses weren't picking up anything of notice though.

"This is the thing that I came here for though."

He pulled up a map, it was something he got from one of the rooms that the Dark Palm members probably held their meetings at. It had some basic information scribbled on it, so he could easily decipher it. It had the location of their cities marked in and also where they bordered with the other sects. He could even see the current city and also Spirit Spring City on it, the font for his city was quite tiny though making him think that they weren't taking it very seriously.

"There... they do have one of those..."

"I need to go, they might increase their guards... but I don't think there should be more than one nascent soul cultivator guarding it."

Matt nodded and brought up his system map, this thing was quite handy for times like this. He put in the coordinates and now only needed to fly in the direction that the map was guiding him towards. The place where he was going was deeper in Dark Palm Sect territory, but he had no choice he needed the resources that were at his next destination to go through with his plan.

Chapter 166

In a faraway location, a small group of people was standing in a certain place. The atmosphere was tense, everyone had a solemn expression on their face while talking.

"What should we do... the Sect Master is still in seclusion, it would be unwise to interrupt him."

One of the old men in the room said in a grim voice. He then glanced at the others that were with him, this being three other men at his age and an old woman.

"No, we should report this as soon as we can! What if he punishes us for not doing it swiftly enough."

The woman said while trembling slightly, the simple thought of that made this person panic outwardly.

"Yes the information was dire, but... will you be the one to report it? How will you explain yourself?"

The old woman averted her gaze from the man and quieted down. No one here was willing to be the bringer of bad news, everyone was afraid of how the leader would react to it. The group of five was standing around a table, on that table lay a crumbled tablet with the name 'Yang Kai' written on it.

"Maybe we can withhold the exact time of this event transpired?"

A slightly chubby man said while whipping his forehead with some white cloth.

"Can't we put the blame on a junior member, just tell him that they mixed things up?"

The man laughed slightly while the others looked at him strangely. Throwing another person under the bus wasn't something they were against, but not like they had a reason to do that just yet. They weren't really at fault here and needed more information before deciding. Before the group could come to an agreement another person burst into the room while shouting.

"Bad news, bad news!"

This man's eyes were wide open and he was carrying a similar-looking tablet that was there on the table. It was cracked in the middle and he was holding each piece in a separate hand.

"What is this? You dare to come into this meeting that we the Grand Elders of the sect are having!"

The man stopped and looked like a frog was stuck down his throat, he quickly regained his composure and dropped down to his knees, his head hitting the floor.

"I do not dare Grand Elders! New circumstances have come to light, Elder Cuifen had ordered me to gather information about the 'situation'. A-a new problem has arisen."

The man visibly shook while not looking up, the five people in this room were all Grand Elders of the sect and were of the Nascent Soul level. He wouldn't dare to speak any more than this without their approval.

"Yes, I gave him that order, but you were supposed to be discreet!"

The old woman glared at the man that had burst in through the door, but her rage soon subsided as she knew that he probably had a reason for that.

"Speak, what has happened? I hope for your own sake that it's important."

The woman scoffed and then sat down at the table with the other three elders.

"Y-yes, I thank you for your benevolence grand elder!"

The man moved his head up and then presented the broken tablet so that everyone could see what was written on it. The moment he brought the two pieces together the characters for 'Wu Ming' could be seen by the grand elders.

The five elders were visibly shocked, one of them slammed the table while shouting.

"That bastard Wu Ming is dead? How is that possible, he was one of us!"

The elders looked at the person that was showing them the broken tablet. They all could feel that this was really the spirit tablet that belonged to one of the more fearsome grand elders from their sect.

"T-there is more, by the Grand Elder's order we looked into lord Yang Kai's whereabouts. We have reason to believe that the young lord had left the sect not too long ago together with Grand Elder Ming. Their location was Jade Grass City that is situated in one of the lower regions."

The man hastily recited everything he knew, he brought up that the two left for the auction house about two weeks ago. They had information that the two did indeed arrive at their destination and that the so-called Dao festival for the lesser clans was held there.

"Then all communications halted you say?"

The man that was asked nodded while replying.

"Yes, we have been given a report that the region had gone dark, we are not able to reach the outer sect that is located there or any of the sect members that reside there."

One of the Grand Elders rubbed his beard while thinking, his eyebrows slowly changing directions.

"That is indeed peculiar... sounds like some organized attack by some other sect."

"I agree, someone had to have planned an ambush for either the young master or Wu Ming, maybe even both."

The Grand Elders all quieted down, this was turning out to be worse than expected. The Sect Master would have to be given this information, a nascent soul grand elder had just perished. There was also suspicious movement in the background, they had to be really careful now. These people were naturally

suspicious, there were many reasons that could have lead to Wu Ming's death. They hoped that it was only some kind of internal struggle rather than with another sect.

"We should report this to the Sect Leade..."

"Bad news...BAD NEWS!"

"What is it now!?"

Just before the man could finish his sentence another man in a Dark Palm sect robe burst in through the door. The five elders looked ticked of which made the man instantly drop down to his knees right next to the other man.

"R-reporting... there has been trouble at one of the Sect's treasured sites! I-it has suffered an attack by a nascent soul enemy!"

One of the Grand Elders slammed his fist on the table which made the wood that it was made from a crack.

"What is this, are we truly being attacked? Who is this person that attacked us? What is the site that was attacked? What of the damages?"

The man shouted out questions in rapid succession that made the Dark Palm member's eyes spin.

"The site that was attacked is the Glacial Gorge, where the sects spirit stone mine is located."

The people that were in the room gasped, this mine was one of the more lucrative places that the sect had it was even protected by a nascent soul elder at all times.

"T-the assailant has been identified as..."

The Dark Palm member stopped before saying the name, the pause clearly noticed by the Grand Elders in the room.

"Well, who was it? Who dared to attack our mine!"

The man that was kneeling shivered somewhat before finally replying, the information causing mostly confusion among these elders.

"The attacker has been identified as, Grand Elder Wu Ming!"

Everyone looked at the man with a funny expression on their faces. The five nascent soul elders glanced at the other man that was holding the tables, the name 'Wu Ming' clearly written on it. Another hand smacked the meeting room table turning it into dust, the two men that came with the bad news jumped away in fright.

"What nonsense are you spouting, Wu Ming's spirit tablet is broken!"

The man kept kneeling while replying in fright.

"T-this is the report I was given!"

"Explain in detail, what happened there! How long ago was this, is this 'Wu Ming' still there?"

Another elder threw his two cents in, the five were sure that something had to be off with this story. Either this was some kind of imposter or Wu Ming was scheming something behind their backs.

"Yes, the report stated this..."

.....

A while earlier, somewhere out in Dark Palm sect territory.

"I'm getting close to the destination, I should change now."

Matt came to an abrupt stop while flying through the air. He glanced at the surrounding area, pine-like trees that were covered in snow-filled his vision. He landed on the ground and made sure that there weren't any people in the area peeking in on him.

"This probably isn't going to work... but better than just going in guns blazing."

He took out the spatial ring that belonged to the nascent soul elder that he had killed not too long ago. He took out one of the robes that were placed there. He changed into it, a large dark palm insignia was now on his back. His facial features soon shifted and his body began getting smaller. Who walked out from the snowy forest was someone that was the spitting image of Wu Ming the Dark Palm Sect Grand elder.

"Hmmm... testing, testing... you are courting death! ... Almost...how about... I, your Father..."

Matt made it sure to have the exact same voice as the man he killed. He could mimic his appearance and maybe some of his mannerisms but he couldn't do the same with his cultivation method. He also had the dark sword to protect himself with, he would have to hide his lightning and divine techniques while being at that mine. This was the best plan that he came up with, which was probably better than just barging in there.

"This should at least give me the drop on them."

He slumped his shoulders forward and took into the air once again. He placed the new won sword to his side and was sure to look as constipated as he could.

'They shouldn't ask too many questions if I look pissed of, right?'

He was close to the spirit stone mine, his map even started picking up some life signals. The moment he pushed into the nascent soul level his system also had an upgrade. His map range had increased and it even started giving him more info. The number of colors that the dots had increased, the color pallet showed him in what cultivation realm the person there was. If they were hostile or dangerous they would just flash instead of appearing in red.

'I also got that free technique with my skill tree.'

Going back a week, after Matt had pushed into the nascent soul realm the system provided him some rewards. He received a free skill for managing to cultivate into a greater realm on his own without using the systems help. This was something new, as the system never really rewarded him for doing things himself. He never got anything when he was going through the core formation realms on his own. This made him think that it could be another change that happened after the secret ground adventure.

The skill here was the Soul-Beast one. This was the reason he had it ready so early after reaching his new realm of power. He even received a small creation kit with a couple of options to design his monster. The choice was limited to some beast types, like large monster birds like a phoenix, flying serpents with wings, even a giant option. Matt was still someone influenced by his western earth values so he went with a popular choice and created a dragon.

There wasn't much to choose when it came to the features. The dragon was big and golden from the get-go, probably due to the way his cultivation method was upgraded. He was able to change the eye color and choose how bulky the dragon's body would be. The body choices changed the statics making the beast be more speed or power-based. He went with the middle choice not wanting a glass cannon or a slow tank, an all-rounder is what he decided on.

While Matt was remembering his Soul-Beast choices he had finally arrived at his destination. He saw a wide gorge, it was all covered in ice but looked like it was made from blue crystals instead. There were many holes in these crystal-like walls, probably leading into the mine shafts inside. There were settlements on both sides of the large gorge. These buildings looked rather plain and boring, probably only being used as cheap housing for the people working there.

From the top, rocky stairs with ramparts were leading into the previously spotted large holes. He could see people moving back and forth while pulling out carts filled with rough looking ores. Even from here he could feel spiritual energy coming from those ores, small crystals were sticking out of those chunks which made Matt's eyes glisten.

'Time to get this show on the road.'

He thought while his face went into grumpy cultivator mode, the people below slowly getting aware of his existence.

Chapter 167

A man with a slight hump on his back and quite the lengthy protruding upper teeth was looking at some papers. He was sitting in a large leather chair, the desk he had the papers on looked to be quite robust and made from some rare spiritual wood.

"The production has increased by 1% for this month..."

The man murmured to himself in a silent voice, the parchment he was holding had various numbers written on them. This was the monthly report from this spirit stone mine. Everything that was excavated was listed in here, how many tons of spirit stone ore there was as well as its quality.

The man took out a pen from the side and started scribbling something down on the same report. Some of the numbers slowly shifted to something else. He placed the pen that was made from a large green feather to the side and then he glanced at the parchment again.

"The production has decreased by 2% this month, think we'll have to make an example of some of the workers and cut their pay again, hehe~."

The man's eyes turned into crescent shapes, his thin, crack lips quickly turning into a devilish grin. The man didn't have much time to enjoy his scheming as he heard a knock on the door. He flared his nostrils at the sound and placed the paper down on his desk before replying.

“What is it? This better be important!”

At the call another person entered the room, he looked like your average cultivator. He gave the usual courteous bow before the man and then started talking.

“Reporting to the Grand elder!”

With annoyance the man waved his hand, letting the other person know that he was allowed to speak.

“An honorable guest has arrived today, he wants to meet you, Grand Elder Zhu”

The man raised his eyebrow wondering who this honorable person was.

“Well? Does this honorable guest have a name or title?”

The man already had beads of sweat forming on his forehead by just being here. The nascent soul grand elder was giving him the death glare, but he had to perform his job and bring the information over as the other person was even more frightening.

“Yes! It’s Grand Elder Wu Ming from the main sect!”

The elder named Zhu showed a lopsided grimace after hearing the name of the person that had arrived.

“Elder Wu Ming?... did he say what he wants from me?”

Zhu moved one of his fingers to his mouth and started chewing on it, his eyes glancing to the paper that he just forged to show that the mine was doing worse than it actually did.

‘Are they on to me? Did someone rat me out? Is it a coincidence... I was sure to not leave any evidence behind...’

The man started hastily contemplating, the voice of the other person in the room finally snapping him back to reality.

“Yes, Grand Elder Ming gave instructions. He wants to have a meeting with Grand Elder Zhu, he requested it be a secluded room. He mentioned that he doesn’t want to be disturbed and that everyone should leave the premise for your discussion.”

The man gave a rapid-fire recount of the order he got, the thing he wanted to do the most was to leave. The moment he mentioned Elder Ming’s name the other grand elder started leaking his nascent soul aura. This spiritual pressure that he was exuding now was making this cultivator’s body shiver.

“Grand Elder Ming said that he is in a hurry and would like to have a talk as soon as possible. That was all, Grand Elder Zhu!”

The man with the overbite looked down onto the desk while thinking.

‘Why does he want to meet me in a separate room... maybe he wants in on the deal too?’

The man strained his brain trying to figure out Wu Ming’s purpose here. Why was he making an unannounced visit to this cold and gloomy place? At first, Zhu thought that he was ordered to check up on him by the other elders. But this was Grand Elder Ming, he was one of the stronger members of the sect. If there was a problem they would probably send an elder that was in the early stage, just like him.

‘No, Ming only cares about face and treasures. He probably wants to extort me for some spirit stones. He probably needs more to satiate that treasure addiction he has!’

Wu Ming’s love for treasures was widely known throughout the sect. The man spent most of his time going from city to city to visit auction houses. Some people even speculated that he was so easy to punish people for showing disrespect only to rob them and get his hands on their treasures and spirit stones.

‘Shit, does he have some proof? No... he doesn’t need it. If I deny him he can order an investigation!’

Zhu knew that if an official investigation took place, they would find inconsistencies in the numbers. He was fabricating the reports here and there to siphon spirit stones for himself, even if the amount was trivial he was still stealing.

The old man stood up and slammed both his palms down on his expensive-looking desk, the item almost breaking from the strike. This startled the messenger here, that was still standing there waiting for a reply or for a sign that he could leave.

“You... go tell Elder Wu Ming that I will meet him shortly, also guide him to my personal cultivation room!”

The man bowed and quickly shuffled out of the room, finally free from the oppressive aura. Elder Zhu on the other hand had his jaw clenched and was gritting his teeth.

‘I have no choice, I have to share some assets with him. If he reports me to the council, I’ll be severely punished and they’ll probably resign me to the border region.’

The region that this elder was fearing was one bordering with a hostile sect. In that place battles between the two factions were commonplace and even nascent soul elders like him had to take part in them.

The old man put on his game face and headed out. He needed to at least get a good deal out of it, after Wu Ming was on his side he would also be implicated in the scheme with him. This might also be a good thing in disguise as he could get the backing of a senior Grand Elder.

‘Hm, with him on my side it would be less stressful to pull this off... and there is still a lot of spirit stones to go around...’

He left the room he was in and headed outside. The moment he went outside a cold breeze hit his face, the weather here was quite harsh. This wasn’t much for a nascent soul master like him, his body had long since evolved. Things like trifling cold weather like this wouldn’t even cause him the slightest shiver.

This wasn’t the case for the workers here though. Elder Zhu slowly made his way through the pathway that was embedded into the side of the gorge. He could see the people that were pushing carts, blisters on their hands, and their feet covered in some makeshift wrappings.

The moment they saw the Dark Palm Grand Elder they averted their gaze. Everyone knew that this person was bad news, they already saw people get lynched for small offenses. The people that were working here weren’t doing it by choice, this was a place that the sect sent offenders too. These could

range for people that had some debt that they couldn't pay, to some that had killed or injured someone from their sect.

Human resources were quite easy to come by in this world, so no one really paid attention to the health of these workers. Even if they had short sentences, it was normal for them never to get released unless they had someone with enough backing for the Dark Palm Sect to honor their agreement.

Elder Zhu grimaced while looking at the prostrating mine slaves. Their shady appearance wasn't to his liking, he just wanted them to stay away from him otherwise he could even catch some disease.

"Damn useless bunch, work harder and dig up more stones!"

He said while walking past some workers that stopped with their work to bow before this man. His personal cultivation chambers were buried deep in the gorge as with the close proximity to the spirit stone ores it had superb Qi quality. Of course, there was a limit to how much Qi a cultivator could absorb, if they tried to cultivate hastily they could very well suffer a backlash to their cultivation. Still having a place with constantly replenishing Qi was something sought after and this was also one of the boons of being stationed here.

Zhu continued walking into the mine shaft, one of the branching paths taking him to a large door. Two people were guarding his entrance, they gave him a salute while also informing him that Elder Ming had already gone inside and was waiting for his arrival.

"Be sure to not let anyone inside, unless you have a death wish!"

He glared at the two guards that lowered their gazes. The door slammed shut behind him and he continued walking while increasing his speed, he couldn't let the man wait too long. Still, he felt that he was also a Grand Elder who didn't need to bow his head down towards other people at the same rank.

The winding corridor brought him to another door, this one was already open elder Ming probably being the one that did it. Zhu gave out a small sigh after which he straightened himself out. Well, he at least he tried but his posture was quite bad. Inside was a large circular room, there were many blue crystals stuck in the walls. They were illuminating the whole area giving it a faint azure hue.

The first thing Zhu saw after he entered the room was the Dark Palm symbol on Wu Ming's robe.

'Hm, that robe... he really is here for a business talk if he is wearing that one.'

Elder Zhu smirked to himself and headed inside, making sure to lock the door behind him. He activated the protective seal so that the two men wouldn't be bothered by anyone else.

"Welcome Elder Ming, what brings you to this humble spirit mine?"

He waved his hand around while trying to show a faint smile, though it looked more like a devilish smirk from how this man's face was structured. The man with salt and pepper hair in front didn't reply though, he murmured something while not turning around.

Zhu wanted to lash out, but he held himself back this man was playing hardball.

"Heh, can't hide anything from you Elder Ming, what is the reason that you wanted to meet me?"

Elder Ming seemed to move his hand to his chin as if to contemplate but didn't reply either, Zhu in response started sweating and was the one to speak up first.

"I see... your silence says it all... You wouldn't have organized this meeting without the rest of the Grand Elder's if you didn't know. How about we do a 60/40 split..."

Ming looked to be shaking his head to that proposition which made Zhu's brows to twitch.

"... Do you want a 50/50? You know the burden of all of this lies on my shoulders! If someone finds out I'll be the one to blame!"

The distance between the two got smaller as Elder Zhu started approaching, the other party was keeping silent as if he wasn't satisfied with the deal.

"I'm not going below 45/55, you have to give me some face here Wu Ming!"

The man's eyes were bloodshot as he was staring daggers into the other Gran Elder's back. But then suddenly he noticed that something was off, he caught a glimpse of Wu Ming's side profile. The face was right, this was the man he knew, but something wasn't right.

"Wait...what is tha..."

Before he could react he saw the other man's body blur, a hand grasped his mouth and he felt foreign Qi forcibly getting injected into him. Now he finally saw what the problem was, this person was using some kind of disguising technique. The face and body structure was from the Dark Palm Elder, but the technique couldn't fool a nascent soul cultivators' senses that alerted him to the disguise.

"Dude, what are you even on about?"

The man impersonating Elder Ming finally spoke up, his head was tilted to the side and one of his eyebrows raised. This person was of course Zhang Dong, he wasn't really sure what this was all about but thanks to some kind of misunderstanding he was given a chance to catch this man by surprise.

Chapter 168

Moments earlier in the Glacial Gorge.

Matt was standing in the room that was filled with the colorful spirit stone ores. He poked one of the glowing ores, his system instantly gifted him with a prompt informing him that a source of spiritual energy was found. He quickly tapped the 'yes' option and saw his spirit point count rise up by a small amount. The glowing piece of crystal quickly crumbled into dust, the radiant glow vanishing.

'I'm in the right place... but do I have to poke every crystal separately...'

While thinking about his big heist he was reminded about the tragic sigh that he saw in those mine tunnels. The workers in the tunnels were mostly men, but he spotted some women here and there. Children weren't spared either as they were pushing the carts, why they were forced to do this was something Matt was asking himself.

'Is this how most sects operate in this world? Or is this one especially rotten?'

His contemplation was broken by a sound behind him. The door swung open and what seemed to be the man in charge walked in. Matt wasn't sure how he should play this out, he talked his way into this spot and just wanted to incapacitate this guy before getting all the loot.

It would be much easier if he managed to do this on the down-low, so he lured his target into a secluded location that was even provided to him. His opponent was here now, but how could he catch him off guard without alerting the rest of the people in this mine. Surely if they started fighting, the whole thing would become quite annoying to pull off. He wanted to suppress his opponent, but for this, he needed to get closer and not alert him to his true form.

The moment the Dark Palm cultivator walked in he started to talk. His way of speaking was quite rapid which left Matt with little time to reply. The moment he gathered his thoughts to respond the man resumed his monologue himself. He had no idea what he was talking about, but it was something concerning this spirit stone mine? Why was he getting offered a 50/50 split, what was that man even on about, Matt was quite at a loss for words. But, luck was on his side as the man had gotten into strike distance without him even having to say anything.

"Wait...what is tha..."

Matt felt the man's spiritual sense washing over him and he realized that his disguise technique was seen through. This wasn't a problem though, the man he was facing was weaker than Wu Ming and he had the element of surprise. He covered Zhu's mouth with his hand and clenched it tightly, his golden aura activated and his lightning Qi forced itself into his opponent's body.

"What are you even on about?"

He was able to disarm the old man with a hump on his back, he wouldn't be able to move a muscle while he was getting bombarded by superior Qi. The Dark Palm member found himself getting raised up into the air by the intruder that was using Wu Ming's appearance as a disguise. He tried mustering up all of his might, but his nascent soul was getting locked down by an immense force.

"Well, it doesn't matter. I don't have time for your antics..."

Elder Zhu couldn't do anything as the Qi of divine thunder entered his body. It traveled through all of his meridians and even made its way into his dantian, destroying everything in its path. The painstakingly created nascent soul was destroyed, the core crumbled and the foundation pillars shattered into million pieces. What was left was a husk of an old man, his body dropping to the floor, his eyes vacant. The attack was focused on his enemy, no Qi fluctuations were able to make it outside, none of the other Dark Palm sect members would be able to sense a thing.

"Not sure how long you will be able to live like this. Just see it as a new life as someone that you despise the most, a person with no power."

Matt looked at the man on the floor, he was out cold and had his cultivation crippled. The most difficult task was done and he now had free reign in this area. He looked around the cultivation room that this man used for seclusion. Besides the glowing spiritual ores there wasn't much here. There was some furniture like a closet, this closet was used to stash the passed out person.

He contemplated on going for the kill, but he realized that that would only alert the other party to his whereabouts faster. He knew that just like his clan the Dark Palm sect probably had ways of tracking their more treasured members. Yang Kai and Wu Ming had to go, but he had a smokescreen covering Jade Grass City in the form of the communication jades not working. He feared that if he offered this elder, he would quickly have a bunch of them flying here as one of them had already died recently.

"They will probably be on alert, don't have that much time to do this."

He rubbed his neck while looking up, his eyes locked on his new target.

"Now to the next step! Spirit stones, come to daddy!"

Matt moved out his hand, his newfound telekinesis like abilities forcing all of the glowing stones from the walls. He gathered everything up in a nice pile and proceeded with the absorption process, this netting him some ten thousand of spirit points right off the get-go.

"Hm... not bad for a start...but I need way more than this..."

He brought up his system map, he was deep underground and his spirit GPS was showing him all the corridors in this here mine. He used his waypoint finder to select all of the places that had the thickest spiritual energy, there were a few. Now he could just fly outside and start absorbing everything in a fit of madness.

He dismissed that idea, he'd have some nascent soul goons on him the moment someone saw him running around in a frenzy. His disabling aura couldn't reach around the entire mine, there were just too many people around, someone would report it. He decided to take a slow stroll and even use the dark palm members to his advantage. Why does he need to gather it all himself, when the sect members will gladly do it for him instead?

'Think they have a main storeroom for everything think I can use that, this guy also had quite the small fortune in his storage ring.'

Matt was sure to disrobe the enemy sect elder and take all his storage treasures. He even found a heaven graded weapon in there, this made him want to cultivate his body refining technique even more. Time was of the essence though and he had no idea when he would be found out.

He fixed his robe and looked back into the now dark room. He scanned the place with his spiritual sense not finding anything worthwhile to take so he headed out. He followed the only corridor that he could all the way back to the large door where the two guards were at.

"Greetings to Grand Elder!"

He waved his hand at the two that bowed once again, the constant polite conversations were slowly getting on his nerves.

"Be sure not to disturb Elder Zhu, he had some things to think about and won't be going out of the chambers for a few days."

The two weren't in a position to question Matt that was disguising himself as Wu Ming. They couldn't do much besides bowing and returning to their post, unless something drastic happened they would follow

this order even if their life was on the line. The grand elder's word was law and not many could go against it.

While walking through the long corridor Matt brought up his map. He moved his hand over to his system screen and made the whole image that was now in 3D spin around.

'This thing sure got a nice upgrade after I reached the nascent soul realm. The whole system might be somehow powered by my cultivation.'

He could see the whole spirit stone mine in his game-like interface. It showed him multiple corridors, those probably mined out by the slave workers here. The system was even able to find mineral deposits. He just needed to put in a search term and the system would work its wonders. He wrote spirit stones in and everything went into the familiar color scheme ranging from green to red. Red showed the biggest spirit stone deposits while green just meant that there was none there.

'I could probably scan the areas around my cities to find mineral pockets in the future, wonder how far the scanning range is...'

He tossed that idea to the back of his mind for the time being. That was probably a very lucrative idea if he found a spirit stone mine for himself or even a mine with some rare metals for crafting. But now he had to focus on the problem before him, absorbing all of the spiritual energy that was in this place.

While looking at his system screen he managed to come out of the corridor that led to elder Zhu's chamber. He was now at a forked road, he could even hear the sound of pickaxes hitting rocks in the distance. There were even shouts of people, probably the guards that were forcing the workers to work harder.

"Hey, you there!"

Matt moved his chin up at a random guard, the guard instantly straightened out and moved closer while bowing.

"How may I serve you, esteemed Grand Elder?"

Matt made sure not to make eye contact, letting the guard know how much below him he was like a proper Grand Elder would.

"Yes, send a message to the person responsible for storing the spirit stones. I want all of the stones to be carried into one room for a proper inspection! Remember that I am a busy man, so hurry up I want every single stone from this mine to be gathered in one location at once! If they ask any questions, say that Wu Ming gave the order and that Elder Zhu has been relieved of his duties for the time being!"

He tapped his foot which produced a slight shockwave, his aura burst forward making a lot of people in the vicinity take notice.

"Be sure to also include the raw ores, have the workers help out if needed. Also... after they are finished I want them to exit the main mine, I have to give it an inspection too!"

He made sure to sound as loud and imposing as he possibly could. He was the only nascent soul cultivator here now, so no one could defy his order. The guard just shivered and nodded, he then took off to get the main manager informed about the order.

Soon he heard people shouting about and shuffling around. The guard was really speedy with his order, as the man responsible for the logistics of the stones even showed up to make a proper greeting. He looked quite chubby and was sweating a lot, but didn't cause much trouble after getting the stink eye from this Zhang Dong in disguise.

'While they are gathering the stones I'll look at the map, need to find the main vein that links all the spirit stones together.'

Matt rubbed his palms together, he wanted to milk this mine dry. It was slightly disappointing that he needed to cash the spirit stones into points right of the bat, but he didn't have much choice as he needed a large amount of them for his next step.

'Hope those guys agree to my plan... I just need to come up with a new faction name...'

Chapter 169

Everything was abuzz, people were running through the mine shafts pushing carts and even carrying stones by hands. Things like spatial rings were forbidden, the sect leaders not wanting workers to steal anything. This increased the workload on them though, but that was a price the men in charge were willing to pay.

"Quickly, the Grand Elder has given his order, we must carry it out!"

Everyone was scared of the new Grand Elder that showed up. The people were speculating but they knew that something was off about this situation. The old Grand Elder Zhu was missing now, some came to the conclusion that he was probably embezzling funds from this mine and he got caught red-handed. He was probably getting punished now, but this didn't explain why they were gathering every single spirit stone they have mined into the biggest storeroom here.

The Grand Elder in question was just floating outside the gorge at the moment, seemingly looking into the air while flicking his finger. No one dared to comment as they just hurried up with their work. This mine wasn't all that huge, so in a couple of hours, the last minecart with some raw spirit stone ores was dumped into the storeroom.

The whole room was radiating with spiritual energy now, there was a big mountain of pure refined stones in one corner. Another large pile of the raw ores right next to it. People were even having trouble breathing in this room, too much spiritual energy in one spot could cause something akin to poisoning if your cultivation wasn't high enough to resist.

"This is all we were able to gather Grand Elder Ming!"

A man in a long robe and a funny looking long hat bowed while the elder named Wu Ming stood just before the entrance to the storeroom. He had a vacant look and was just staring at the piles of gem-like stones just piled up to the roof.

"Grand Elder?"

Matt twitched and coughed into his hand before turning to the sect manager that was responsible for gathering everything here.

"Mhm, is this all of it?"

“Yes my lord, everything that hasn’t been shipped yet is all gathered here! It’s half a year’s worth of what the mine produces.”

The man replied while looking at the shiny pile in the storeroom, the spiritual energy making his eyebrows shake slightly.

“This is half a year’s worth...”

Matt mumbled to himself while the man next to him continued.

“Yes Grand Elder, you arrived a week before we were planning to ship the stones to the main sect, the processing of the stones takes a while so we don’t ship it out often.”

‘They probably also have to have one of their nascent soul old farts act as a bodyguard. Probably that’s also why they don’t transport monthly.’

Matt’s reasoning, in this case, was, that the old nascent soul masters would rather cultivate in peace than act as convoy security. They probably came to a consensus of doing it twice a year.

“Mhm, leave me now, I need to check on the spirit stone... quality... don’t let anyone else enter this room!”

Matt waved his hand and the large door behind him closed shut. He was now alone in this room, he felt like he was getting a tan from just standing in this radiant blue glow. He moved over to the biggest pile of refined stones and slowly placed his palm on it.

Spiritual energy source detected, absorb Y / N ?

He tapped the ‘Y’ on the screen, the room quickly filled up with a bright light. The whole blue spirit stone mountain began compressing into itself the moment the system started its absorption process. Matt didn’t have much time to react as the mountain of stones quickly turned into a fine powder. He quickly glanced at his spirit point count that was shooting up and reaching into the millions without much effort.

‘Yikes, and this wasn’t even all of them...’

He stretched out his hand and tried doing something else, he used his spiritual sense to make a connection with the Qi energy that the stones were radiating. To his glee, the system gave him the same prompt about detecting an energy source. He quickly accepted and the whole storage room began shining once more, just this time it was covering a whole lot more surface area than before.

In a matter of moments everything in the room vanished, the refined stones just turned into dust while the rough ores crumbled into smaller chunks of normal rock. The people outside the storage room blinked, they could feel that something was happening inside but they had no way of peeking inside to check.

Before they could come up with a theory they heard the door creaking open. Elder Wu Ming walked out, but he did it in such a fashion so the others couldn’t peek inside.

“Mhm, lock the door and don’t let anyone inside... also direct the slave workers to leave the mines. I must assess the situation, there was an alarming report and it could get dangerous.”

The manager looked at the Grand Elder and then to the side to some of his workers. No one was sure what this man was talking about, was there some unknown dangers in the mine?

"A-are you sure Grand Elder Wu? This mine has been open for years and all the beast within the area have been slain."

The man asked, but the moment he did he felt an oppressive force wash over him.

"You dare question me?"

The manager's face went pale instantly and he began sweating profusely.

"I dare not, please show mercy, Grand Elder!"

Matt sent a menacing glare at all the people that were standing there and then just walked off without saying much. He was sure that they would follow his orders throughout as they were far too afraid of the thing called a Grand Elder.

'People ruled by fear and power, its probably easy to implement in this kind of world.'

While thinking he made his way back into the mine, he had his map opened up and could see the little dots that were representing the people slowly leaving the corridors. His destination was a certain location, he found it through the help of his map. It looked like one big red blob on it, but if you followed it you realized it spread throughout the whole underground area.

This was a giant mineral vein that connected all of the spirit stone ores together, it was truly gigantic.

'I should get even more spirit points from this giant spirit stone vein than from what they gathered in that storeroom...'

He increased his pace, walking deeper into the dark insides of the now abandoned-looking underground mine. Everyone had bolted outside as they were forced by the sect members that were quickly following their elder's orders.

The people outside rubbed their hands together while moving closer. They had been living here for a while now, so they knew that if they stayed close to each other the bodily heat would keep them warm.

"What is happening, those sect uncles have been acting strange lately..."

One of the younger slaves' asked an older looking man, the man delivered a quick smack to the youth's head as a response.

"Be quiet, what will you do if they hear you and give you a good lashing?"

The youth rubbed his head and felt slightly disgruntled, but he knew that this old man was telling the truth.

"Still, old man Su they are acting strange."

The young man didn't give up, he just brought his tone down so that the angry-looking sect uncles wouldn't hear it. The older man nodded slightly, this thing sure was strange. He had been stuck in this god forgotten place for over 20 years now. He was blessed with a strong resilient body, so he managed

to survive this long. In his long life as a slave, this was the first time his captors were acting like that. The slaves were never given time to rest in the middle of the day, something wasn't right.

The old man didn't need to wait much for a reason though. The whole glacial gorge began rumbling and the mine shafts started crumbling. There was a blinding burst of white light that shoot out from the corridors and then the walls started collapsing. It was as if parts of them were removed and the structural integrity of the whole place got compromised.

"W-what is happening, the mine is collapsing!"

The Dark Palm Sect members shouted out in shock. The involuntary workers did the same, luckily at this point in time, there were no people in those mine shafts as everyone was forcefully removed. The people started backing off while the whole side of the gorge that the mine was located in, started to vibrate.

Right in the middle of this was Matt, he was now covered in rubble and just sitting there with not much air to breathe. He pushed his Qi outwards and formed his bubble-like lightning shield that ejected the fallen mine walls from his face.

"Okay, that might not have been the best idea... this place is already falling apart."

He checked his map again, and just as planned he had managed to absorb most of the spiritual energy through the help of the massive mineral vein. The vein connected to most of the spirit stones, those crumbled into dust the moment Matt used his system. This, of course, caused a massive collapse of all the walls, he had just yanked out a massive clump of ore in one go. When the miners did it, they did it slowly and reinforced the walls to that the whole thing wouldn't collapse on them.

"I guess, it's time to go then, this farce has taken long enough..."

He released his divine thunder aura and covered his entire body in it. Matt then headed right upwards while bending his energies to form a makeshift drill. The people outside had taken their time to escape and were looking from afar as the whole place rumbled.

"W-wait, what's that?"

They saw a golden drill shot out from the ground, the energy fluctuations were clearly from a nascent soul master.

"Is that The Grand Elder, what is he doing?"

"Did he cause the mine to collapse, why would he do something like that."

On the other side of the gorge that didn't collapse was the majority of the people, they all had question marks in their eyes not sure what was going on. There was even a louder commotion after two men emerged from the rubble, these were the two guards that were stationed at the secluded chamber that Grand Elder Zhu was resting. The problem was that the same elder that everyone feared was getting dragged by them, and he was quite naked.

Matt looked down at the people gathered there, they were clearly looking between him and the naked man knowing well that only he would be able to put him in that state.

‘Uh, they are already using their communication jades, guess the jig is up...’

He hovered towards the group of people that had evacuated to the other side of the gorge. This side had all the buildings and facilities, while the one that had collapsed was just the mine and didn’t have much besides guard towers and walls to keep people from entering.

Matt looked at the slave workers that looked terrified, the sect members had no idea what was going on but they probably wouldn’t attack or follow him if he just left. He looked at those workers that were in dire need of a warm meal and rest. He couldn’t just leave them there, the mine was now gone. He feared that they would be abandoned or fall to the sect’s rage after they found out that they got sacked by a fake Wu Ming.

So he made a quick decision after spotting a couple of flying ships in the back of that encampment. He was still going to play his part, so he remained in his disguise and just headed towards the people.

“I’ll be taking the workers with me, along with those ships.”

He pointed at the large wooden boats that had the dark palm insignia painted on them. The sect members present here still didn’t know what this was about, was this Grand Elder crazy? Was he betraying the sect? They already figured out that he probably took all those spirit stones for himself from that storage room.

Before they could question him though he moved his hand forward, the three large ships that were in the back buckled for a while before floating up into the air. They were activated by Matt himself and were guided to where the mass of people was gathering.

“Okay, everyone that is not from the Dark Palm sect please gather on the ship, we will be leaving. Oh and one more thing, please gather up every treasure, item, spatial ring that is in the position from anyone from the sect. Follow my orders and no one will be hurt, unless you want to end up like that guy.”

Matt pointed at Grand Elder Zhu, that was wrapped up in a blanket. The guards had rescued him had mostly tended to his needs out of sheer fear of what his title stood for. Though they were a bit hesitant as they had long since noticed that he was crippled.

The slaves were confused, the sect members baffled by the fact that their own Grand Elder wanted to take all their items. Was this some kind of robbery?

Chapter 170

The Dark Palm sect members shivered in the cold, they were left with only their undergarments huddling together in the cold weather. They glanced up to see a rather scary looking Wu Ming that was staring at them. The slaves that they used to abuse were moving all the food to the large flying ships that they used as a means of transport.

They were left with absolutely nothing and had to watch the group of slaves fly out into the sunset. The man responsible for this didn’t leave together with that group, he just grabbed all the remaining treasures for himself. Things like flying swords and communication jades were all confiscated, but they had managed to inform the sect about the trouble happening here. For some reason, the man above them didn’t look that concerned as if he wasn’t afraid of the Dark Palm sect retaliating.

Name :	Zhang Dong
Affiliation :	Zhang Clan
Spirit Points :	89327891
Cultivation Base Qi :	Nascent Soul [Early Stage 0,1%] (Divine Golden Nascent Soul)
Cultivation Base Body :	Core Formation [Great Circle+ 100%] (Golden Body+)

The man in question was looking at his status screen, this encounter had netted him almost ninety million spirit points. He also had a lot of spatial rings and bags to go through so he might be even able to reach over a hundred.

‘This should be enough...should I go back to Spirit Spring City or try my luck some more...’

He had set the slaves free, quite a lot of them had their cultivation crippled. They all were wearing slave collars that acted like bombs, decapitating anyone that went out of line. It wasn’t much of a problem to remove them, he also pocketed each one for more resources.

The moment of surprise was gone by now, the sect should have sent someone to take care of him. The question was if it was only a lone nascent soul elder, or would they bring more people to oppose him. He still had no idea how many nascent soul farts this sect had. Besides the two that he took care of, there was one more back at the old secret ground.

To his dismay, he felt something moving towards him from the distance. Instantly he knew that it was the Dark Palm Grand Elders coming to the rescue as he could feel multiple nascent soul cultivators flying this way.

‘One...two...four...five... well... they certainly want me dead if they sent so many old farts after me.’

Matt squinted while looking in the direction that the people were coming from. He could feel that four of those people were in the early stage and one was in the middle stage.

‘I haven’t really been able to rest since I’ve left my city, engaging them would be unwise...’

He looked to the side, this was the direction that the slaves took off. He told them that they should leave the area and hide somewhere till the heat is off. There was a war coming and he had no way of protecting them, also telling them to go to Spirit Spring City would give valuable information away that could come biting him in the behind. He decided to just help them out, but if they made it to safety depended on them.

Still, he couldn’t fly that way as it would expose the slave workers he just saved to unneeded danger. The nascent soul lunatics that were on his tail could slap them out of the air just for fun. He needed to go in a different direction and at least keep those five cultivators busy.

He didn’t get a good look at the people that were chasing him, but from the looks of it, he was getting chased by four old men and one older lady. They were all wearing brownish robes that had quite a lot of sleeve space so that fluttered while they were chasing him.

He took off with a blast, propelling himself forward while holding his hands behind his back. A golden aura surrounded his body that protected him from the wind pressure and any bugs that would normally splatter all over his face if he flew into them. The quintet of angry nascent soul elders saw him taking off and instantly gave chase. One of the elders remained behind for a moment, just to get a more coherent report than what they got from the communication jades.

He was quickly filled in, the Grand Elder that was left for dead even woke up and started complaining but with his cultivation gone no one paid attention to him.

“Elder Guo, you must avenge me!”

The old Grand Elder called Zhu cried out, his teeth rattling in the cold.

“Tend to Elder Zhu, even though his cultivation has been crippled, he is still a Grand Elder, show him some respect.”

The man gave his older while snorting, he didn’t really care much for his fellow Grand Elder, but the hierarchy had to be kept. They couldn’t abandon the old man just like that, at least not in the open. He would be relocated to the main sect and they would see if his injuries could be reversed. If it turned out that he was nothing more than an old man now, he would probably be abandoned or given a teaching role to the lesser disciples.

Guo quickly flew back after the other four members of his clan, he got a more throughout report and it looked like this Wu Ming was an imposter. From what Zhu had said, the man was using some kind of disguising technique. No one below the nascent soul level here was able to see through it, so that made it not all that exceptional.

Back in the sky, Matt was charging through the clouds. The people behind him were slower than him, but he would have to strain his cultivation to actually getaway.

‘Mhm, I’m getting low on Qi here... I used up quite a bit after summoning my Soul-Beast and flying like a madman towards Jade Grass City...’

He thought about his next move, there were a few things that he could do. He could stay and fight those five people that were chasing him, but he didn’t know if he could handle five of them at once or if there were more of them coming. The second option was to run away and he had just the thing to aid him with that. Taking both options into consideration he opted for a third choice that took both into consideration.

The people behind him weren’t really getting any closer and he had to keep this up for a while so that they didn’t go after the slave workers he rescued. For the time being, he decided to bring up his disciple screen, he went to the same section where he bought the fast travel option for his disciples.

Instant Transfer [1 000 000 SP]	Instantly transports the user to his disciple, can also transport the disciple towards their master.
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Large Portal (Two Way) [500 000 SP]	It creates a large portal that allows two-way travel.
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He didn't want to use the portals as that wouldn't be an option during a fight. He also feared that one of those nascent soul farts would send an attack after him, or even dive in after. Then he would need to protect people in his front yard from enemy cultivators. He had managed to procure a massive amount of spirit points with his heist, so he could spend some points on the good stuff.

'I did get that fast travel point option back after I ascended to the nascent soul, but I didn't buy it...'

Besides these teleportation options for his disciples, there was also another one. It was a fast travel point between cities or strongholds that he was the owner of. For now, he could use it for both Spirit Spring City and Moonlight City, he just didn't do it before as he didn't have enough points.

'I can't set up the fast travel point without being at the location... the disciple fast travel system will have to do...'

The fast travel points in the cities were cheaper than the disciple ones, but at the time he just had no spirit points to spare. But thanks to that he managed to find that his disciple tab even had that feature in the first place.

While he was fiddling with his system he felt something. He instinctively dodged to the side and saw a large flaming boulder flying past him. When the huge rock landed down on the ground it produced quite the explosion.

'Oh right... those guys are still chasing me...'

He looked back and saw four people there, the fifth one was further in the back. They were shouting some profanities at him, mostly something to do with courting death and that he should reveal his true identity to them.

He started bobbing and weaving with his entire body as the people behind him continued sending ranged attacks. The terrain below them became riddled with large craters as if the group was composed of modern bomber planes.

"Hey, be careful, what if you hit someone with that?"

Matt that was still looking like Wu Ming returned fire. The Grand Elder that was at the front and also the strongest held out his hand and produced a shield of wind, just in time to receive a golden lightning bolt to it. This caused him to stop in his tracks, his shield cracked slightly but it managed to defend against the charged bolt.

"Lightning? Who is this man?"

"Elder Wan, are you okay?"

The female Grand Elder called out after the man in front stopped after getting hit.

"I'm fine, but this man is clearly an imposter, this is not something Wu Ming was capable of, are there any sects good with lightning magics?"

The group of five continued on while deliberating the true origin of this man they were chasing after. From the exchange Elder Wan had, he knew that this wasn't someone they could take lightly. He had

taken out Zhu without any problem whatsoever, from the reports the sect members in the mine didn't even know that he had been done in till he was discovered by the guards during the cave in.

"Could he be from the Thunder-Storm Sect? But his techniques feel strange..."

The man was a mystery, he didn't fit any nascent soul cultivator that was known to them. They didn't think that he was a renegade or a new prospect as he was far too powerful for that.

"We'll just have to apprehend him and let him spill out the truth himself!"

"Yes, I bet the Sect Leader will reward us if we bring him in alive!"

The five people smirked as they didn't think that the man could get away from them, sooner or later he would tire himself out, and then they would surround him. None of these people thought that the unknown cultivator could handle them all on his own. He was also fleeing so this only confirmed their theory. Still, the quintet knew that an injured beast is the most dangerous one. So, for now, they kept their distance and continued with their ranged barrage. Due to this a long chase had ensued, when it ended no one knew.

...six hours later...

"Hey, what are you people even aiming at..."

Matt shouted while barrel rolling around the beam of heated energy that one of the chasing people fired at him. This wasn't all as a gale of wind blades chased after him the second he evaded the first attack. The people behind him were fuming with anger as the man that they were chasing was quite the slippery eel.

...ten hours later...

"Hey you guys, why don't we talk this over some earl gray tea?"

The group of old farts raged, even more. They pelted him with various ranged attacks over and over again but the only thing that they were hitting was the rocky areas below.

"Damn, if I didn't know it better, I'd say you wanted to kill me!"

He dodged a fire blast to the face, then deflected a couple of sharp icicles that were the size of telephone poles. These Sect elders had various abilities and didn't really stick to one type of elemental attack.

"I'm feeling unwanted here, think I'll just leave!"

Matt shouted out and bolted forward, the group of Dark Palm Elders just shook their fists at him and continued with their chase. It might have looked like he was doing random things at the moment, but he still had a plan in mind. He was heading in a certain location, making sure that the other nascent soul cultivators were mad enough at him to not notice where that was...