

Unfathomable 331

Chapter 331

Zhang Dong felt the lightning energy rushing into his body. Thanks to his superior cultivation technique he was purifying this energy into its most potent form before absorbing it. With this gorilla-like monster now dead he had reached the 6th level of Qi condensation which put him at the halfway point towards the foundation establishment level.

With having lost most of his cultivation level he was weak and susceptible. However, there was one good thing that came out of this. With the added knowledge and the increased soul power that he achieved from the other world, he would only get stronger.

He would be now able to recreate his foundation with his own two hands. It wouldn't be based on the system but on his own knowledge of the DAO that was more advanced than it ever was. When he recovered all of his lost power he would be many times stronger than he was before his loss.

'It is good to think about the future but I should survive this first...'

After Zhang Dong took care of his enemy the other two Thunder Ape's turned his way. Their friend gave out quite the cry for help after he pierced his chest.

"He killed it?"

Xia Yanmei looked at the damaged sword in her hand. Even when successfully hitting the two beasts this blade only left scratches behind. The girl might have been the young lady from a clan but she wasn't that strong. The people that were left here were only servants that gave up the way of the cultivator a long time ago.

Now some hope had appeared, the strange man that she helped nurse to health had awoken. Previously she couldn't feel much spiritual energy from him but now it seems that he was her equal.

She was somewhat happy while also surprised. The man didn't seem that much stronger than her but he managed to kill one of the Thunder Apes alone. She on the other hand even when getting help wasn't able to deliver a damaging blow that would turn the tide.

"E-everyone... let us help that stranger, he looks capable!"

The people here jumped to the side after the two remaining beasts charged at this man. They nodded at the order as this did seem like a good opportunity to turn this around. But as they started running towards this man, he turned to them and shouted.

"You should stay back, you'll just get in the way!"

Everyone stopped at Zhang Dong's words. Xia Yanmei in particular was shocked at the response. The man looked half dead but for some reason, he wanted to fight the beats on his own. He shouted loudly so even the people in the audience heard it.

"Is he mad?"

"He did kill that one Thunder Ape but isn't he getting ahead of himself?"

“Another Calf that does not fear the tiger!”

The people that were previously cheering for him changed their tune. He would get his chance to prove himself though. While everyone watched from the sidelines Zhang Dong waited for the gorillas to engage in the fight.

His cultivation was still slightly below these giants but with his purified cultivation arts he would make up for it.

This time around both of the apes jumped up in the air, similar to what the first monster did. After tussling with the other Ape, Zhang Dong was now used to their attack pattern. He waited for the right moment and slid to the side while evading the large descending fist.

Even though the ground was cracked from the impact he didn't lose his balance. A swift knee with some Qi gathered on it collided with one of the beasts sending it tumbling back. The other one was quick to discharge some electricity but it was ineffective.

The Thunder Ape that was hit was surprised by how much pain it was feeling from that flying knee it took. With the increase in cultivation, Zhang Dong was now able to deliver painful punches that would make even those Ape second guess themselves.

While the one that was hit backed away slightly the other one charged. It swung its large hands around at a fast rate while trying to hit its target. Zhang Dong could feel the wind pressure from each attack passing his body as he evaded.

Even though he leveled the playing fields he still would suffer greatly if he got hit even once. His body had lost all of its refinement and he would need to reabsorb more items. This was not something he could do now so his Qi cultivation would have to suffice.

The old man in the VIP booth continued to look at the baffling display of skill. The young man that was fighting was constantly getting stronger. He could feel the young man move on from a very low level of Inner Aura realm to the middle stage in a couple of minutes. It seems that he was getting progressively stronger as time passed.

The way that he was fighting also told a tale of its own. He was very strategic with his movements the Thunder Apes even if stronger were just dumb beasts, they could not comprehend what was happening.

They constantly bumped into each other and got in the way of their own attacks. The young man was clearly playing with them while recovering his strength. The old man started to get worried, this man was an enigma that could belong to some strong force from somewhere. He was just too good at fighting, this was not something that could be learned at a third-rate clan.

“GUOOOhhh...”

Another Thunder Ape fell to the man's attack. A large explosion of lightning energy was discharged by the silver-haired man didn't seem to care. It was as if he was immune to pain and only looking at the leftover opponent.

It turned to a one-on-one once more. It seemed that the man was done with running as his strength increased again. He met the gorilla's fist with his own and to the surprise of everyone the exchange was equal.

Previously he was evading blows and slipping small jabs to weaken this monster, now on the other hand the two started slogging it out. The Ape monster could not last long as it succumbed to the many blows, the last one ending up in its chest before it died.

'This could be bad...'

The old man thought while rubbing his beard. How strong would this man be when he fully recovered, would he be able to go against him. If so would he spare him and the young master that trapped him in this arena?

He then looked at the man again and gave out a sigh of relief. There was still one thing that would protect him and the young master. The man was still wearing a slave collar around his neck, unless he reached the realm above the Inner Aura realm, he wouldn't be able to remove that item.

"Y-you..."

His attention was brought to the side. The young lord he was tasked to protect slammed his fist into the rocky balustrade while looking at the arena. All of the apes were dead and not that many people had died.

"Who put that man in this event? I'll have his head! He isn't even part of the Snapping Turtle Clan, who is responsible for this?"

It seemed that the young master was sure that this was some kind of ploy. This also made this old man think, maybe someone was trying to make the young master look bad or maybe even to besmirch the Clan's good name.

"Young master Dai Rong, you promised to let us go if we survived."

While everyone was stupified Xia Yanmei saw this as a chance to escape. There was a promise given and with so many people present it would be a hit to the Clan's face if they didn't follow up on it.

"Promised? Yes, the promise still stands but you are not done yet, more beasts await! If you manage to survive I will be true to my word!"

The young master laughed while sitting down again. The gates where the apes walked through started rumbling once again as more beasts awaited.

"Lightning White Tigers! I heard they are a special breed that the White Tiger Clan has managed to produce! The Snapping Turtle Clan is finished!"

"They even have an alpha that is at the late stage of the Inner Aura Realm!"

Zhang Dong looked at the group of six tigers. Five of them were slightly stronger than the Apes he faced previously. There was also a larger one behind them, radiating power of about the Qi condensation 9th level.

'Lightning White Tigers huh?'

He walked forward while the large group of people backed away while holding their rusted weapons. While passing next to what looked to be the leader in Xia Yanmei he spoke out to her.

"Young lady, please move back and just protect yourselves, you can leave them to me."

"W-what? B-but there are so many we should work together..."

"It's fine, leave this to the adult."

He replied while charging forward, his legs started exuding static electricity of the golden coloring and to some, it looked as if he was skating on the ground.

While Zhang Dong moved towards he was thinking that he could not be any luckier. All of these beasts had electricity in them, through it he could quickly recover his power. The people here probably didn't realize this yet and he would capitalize on this fact.

"RAWERrrr..."

The tigers growled and charged at the sole person stupid enough to engage them in an open battle. These white tigers had a small horn on their forehead, through it they could discharge concentrated electricity at their enemies, which they did.

Even when this blue energy connected with the man he didn't falter. He looked even more ecstatic whenever one of them connected with him directly.

"Common give me more, that's not enough!"

What followed was a strange battle indeed. The man seemed to just dance around these monsters. It was as if he was trying to force them into a long-range battle but whenever a bolt of lightning came he didn't evade it. He continued to laugh and cackle like a madman while everyone watched, baffled more and more by this display.

Lightning White Tigers, Thunderous Green Tipped Snake, and even the Red-Bolt Devilhound was not his match.

"More give me more... this is not nearly enough!"

Zhang Dong turned to the VIP booth where a certain scared young master was looking at him.

"What are you? How could you kill all of those beasts yourself! Did the other clans send you?"

"Young master Dai Rong, we need to end this. That man is dangerous, activate his slave collar, I will get rid of him personally after he is moved back to the dungeon. We can also kill the remnants of the Snapping Turtle clan after they are gone from the city and still retain our face!"

The old man to Dai Rong's side sent a hidden message to the young master that only the two could hear. Dai Rong's face that had a frown on it quickly recovered as he stepped forward and started talking.

"Well done, you have won this event, as promised you will be set free!"

"Huh, it's over?"

Zhang Dong looked to this Dai Rong with a raised brow, the people that were huddling in the back were quite surprised as well.

"But you there, you have been impudent so you need to be punished!"

Dai Rong pointed to Zhang Dong while activating a treasure that looked like a wristband. The moment he did Zhang Dong could feel the collar around his neck activating. It didn't explode but instead started delivering large amounts of electricity directly to his neck.

"Bwahaha, you serious?"

A strange laughing sound escaped from Zhang Dong's mouth as he lit up like a Christmas tree and then collapsed on the ground.

"Take him away!"

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"Hey, aren't we free to go? Didn't the young master promise?"

"Be quiet slave, the young master gave the order for you to remain here, be glad that you are still alive!"

The slightly rusted-over dungeon doors were closed by the guards that quickly went on their way. This was the exact same cell that the people from the Snapping Turtle Clan occupied before the arena event. Now the survivors were back in it, along with the man that saved them all, Zhang Dong.

Everyone saw him being electrocuted to a crisp by the slave collar. They suspected that the young master just wanted to kill the man out of spite but after they investigated they could hear his heart beating.

"Will they really let us go?"

Xia Yanmei asked one of the elders from the Snapping Turtle Clan.

"They might... but their assassins will be not far behind."

"Yes young missus, that Dai Rong can not be trusted, you must flee the first chance you have, some of the Clan members were able to flee! It is still possible to rebuild our clan!"

"Yes, what the old lady is talking about makes sense."

"Huh?"

The group of people that were talking turned to an unfamiliar voice and could see the unknown man there. They all jumped back after seeing him standing up as if the heavy electrocution never happened.

"Is something wrong? Is there something on my face?"

Zhang Dong answered while dusting his already mangled clothes off slightly.

"The honorable senior is fine? But the slave collar?"

The people quickly backed away from Zhang Dong. He had left a lasting impression on these people after massacring all those lightning beasts that the White Tiger Clan was known for.

“Ah, this?”

Zhang Dong grasped the collar around his neck and started to pull on it from both sides. The item activated once more and started delivering electric shocks. The people quickly jumped back while not knowing what this senior was doing.

“S-senior what?”

“It’s fine, this has no effect on me.”

Even when he was getting electrocuted he was still able to talk as if it was normal. After a couple of seconds, the slave collar started losing its charge and was promptly ripped open from his neck.

“White Tiger Clan you say... could you tell me where I am? I don’t recall such a clan existing...”

The young master that was sitting in that VIP booth wasn’t all that strong. After a quick scan with his system, he came out at around the Qi condensation 7th level. Zhang Dong had reached the 12th level now and was already close to going beyond.

There was one old man next to this youth, he gave off the feeling of a master above the foundation establishment level but there was something strange. The spiritual energy was similar but not quite, so was also the cultivation of the people around here.

“This is the city of Xuanhai.”

“Xuanhai? In which part of the Azure Dragon Empire is this?”

First were the clan names, now the city names had a different naming scheme than what he was used to.

“Azure Dragon Empire? Doesn’t Senior mean the Emerald Phoenix Empire?”

The people in the room looked at Zhang Dong as if he was being silly. He on the other hand started sweating as he had never heard of this Emerald Phoenix Empire.

“Ah, I know!”

An old man called out from the side as if he remembered something.

“In one of the old scriptures there was an old map, If I’m not mistaken, this Azure Dragon Empire is to the far west of our Emerald Phoenix Empire.”

“To the west?... how far is it!”

Zhang Dong swooped to where the old man was and grabbed him by the shoulders. He then promptly started shaking him around while his eyes bulged out.

“Ahhh...I-I’m not sure... It was an old map, it is forbidden to talk about what is outside the borders...S-senior please.”

“Ah sorry...”

He quickly let the man go while trying to get out some more information. From what he got was that there was some vague information about the Empire that he came from but it was something that was hidden away from the masses.

“The old map showed some kind of blockade between our empires but that’s all I know senior.”

“Is that so...”

Zhang Dong tried to remember if there were any mentions of this other Empire here. The maps that he had access to didn’t show anything to the east. There could very well be some kind of wall or natural phenomenon that divided these two empires. There were some rumors about other tribes or countries existing but nothing too explicit. The Azure Emperor kept everything under wraps and only he and the top two sects had that information.

‘This at least confirms that I’m on the right planet... now I must get home...’

A weight was dropped down from his shoulders as he now knew that he was in the right place. What he needed to do now was to return home while recovering his cultivation.

The biggest problem as always was time. He had no idea how long he had been away as he already saw that time between the worlds worked differently. For all he knew, hundreds of years could have passed or maybe just minutes since his departure.

‘This empire will have a different calendar...’

There was no way for him to calculate the right time. The stars that surrounded this huge planet moved around as if they had a life of their own. This made it impossible to use astrology to determine anything. What he was left with was a general direction, he needed to go west.

“Good, there is one last thing I’ll have you do for me...”

“Y-yes Senior?”

The old man asked while he saw a hand moving towards his neck. In a matter of seconds, Zhang Dong was grasping the man’s slave collar. The old man screamed out in shock as he knew that such acts would only activate this collar of death.

“N-noooo!!.....huh?”

Even when the collar activated and he could see the sparks fly around, he didn’t feel any pain. Instead, he saw the senior before him absorb the electricity. Then when the slave collar was out of juice he just ripped it to pieces.

“Can you all line-up, I’ll remove your collars...”

After fifteen minutes or so, Zhang Dong was sitting next to a pile of broken slave collars and a bunch of prostrating cultivators. Even Xia Yanmei, their mistress, was down and asking for help.

“I don’t really have time to help you regain your clan, at most I can help you escape from this dungeon but then you will be on your own...”

“You will help us escape? T-that will be more than enough honorable senior!”

Xia Yanmei replied while bobbing her head up and down out of gratitude. Zhang Dong on the other hand grasped one of the damaged slave collars and examined it.

Slave Collar [Broken]

Common [High Grade]

‘This thing had enough power to contend with a Qi condensation practitioner up to the 12th level...It might be enough...’

“Could you tell me about this Empire of yours and also inform me if any trouble is coming, I must regain some of my lost strength.”

After absorbing all of that electricity he was almost ready to re-create his foundation pillar. This process was unknown to him as he arrived in this world as a core formation expert. Now before he did attempt a breakthrough he wanted to do something about his body refining.

The people followed his instructions, it was clear that he was home. In this world, if someone was considered a senior the juniors would follow his instructions the best they could.

Zhang Dong believed that the old fart that was with the young master would come for him. He would probably arrive here to either question him about his origins or just to kill him and to hide the body.

He was too much of an anomaly to be without backing. Which wasn't wrong but his backing was in an empire on the other side of the planet. It was better to dispose of someone like him as they did already cross the line. Normally a senior in his position would not forgive such a transgression. Thus it was best to get rid of him while he was weak and defenseless.

While thinking he grasped one of the slave collars. He injected some of his spiritual energy into it which changed its color to red. Soon the people here saw the broken slave collar being absorbed into this man's body.

‘80% in one go? not bad!’

His bronze body shot up quite fast and almost reached the middle stage after absorbing this one collar. There were many more, he hoped to attain his silver body which would really be helpful against the enemies from this Clan here.

“Don't mind me, tell me about this city, empire and even about your cultivation...Inner Aura Realm was it?”

Xia Yanmei nodded while sitting before Zhang Dong, who was in the process of absorbing all of the collars. There were close to thirty people in this cell so he had a bit to go through.

An explanation of the current world affairs, or at least of what this small clan members knew of, started. This empire was very similar with it being divided between other powers but it was slightly different.

There were sects but they didn't really focus as much on controlling the lands as the Azure Empire counterparts. This was mostly due to a smaller number of cultivators on this side, this being due to the way they cultivated.

While in the Azure Dragon Empire it was easy for anyone to gather Qi up to the 3rd level of Qi condensation, here it wasn't. The Inner Aura Realm was the first one but was a lot more difficult to achieve. After examining the people here and asking about how they would be ranked he came to a conclusion.

The Inner Aura Realm at the early stage put someone at around the 4th level of Qi condensation right off the bat. This was probably why it was so much more difficult to achieve. It also only went up to about the 9th or 10th level of Qi condensation when it entered the late stage.

There was no grand circle small realm as all of the smaller realms here ranged from early to late. What they lacked in small realms they made up in larger realms. After the Inner Aura Realm, there was the Martial Master realm, which when fully mastered was at about the strength level of an early foundation establishment cultivator.

After it came the Martial Grandmaster realm followed by the Martial Saint realm. There were six in total with the Supreme Saint cultivation realm trading blows with the Nascent Soul level realm from his empire. It was a bit confusing but he believed that the power cap was the same in both empires. If not, then he might have some trouble in going back to his own side.

With less cultivator power the sects established giant secret grounds where they took disciples in. They left the 'mortals' to their own devices and didn't care about anything else than cultivation. Some of them sometimes visited the cities but most of the time clans like this here only remained. Someone like a Martial Saint level cultivator would be hard to find as they were off cultivating somewhere and part of a larger sect.

The geographical and historical lessons continued for some more as he cultivated. Time was of the essence he needed to get out, luck wasn't on his side though. He already imagined what would be happening after he left that door...

Emerald Phoenix Empire realms:

Inner Aura Realm

Martial Master

Martial Grandmaster

Martial Saint

Supreme Saint

Saint Emperor

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A man with a bag over his head was being dragged through a narrow corridor. On the sides, there were steel doors with malnourished prisoners peeking out. Barely anyone was even looking through the small openings in the door, the will to live had long faded from their eyes.

The man was being dragged by two soldiers, their faces somewhat covered by pointy helmets. Both of them arrived at the end of this prison in a certain room.

“Senior, we have brought him over as you instructed...”

One of the men spoke out while he and his partner threw the passed-out person onto the floor.

“Good, is he still unconscious?”

“Yes senior.”

The old man with a red beard nodded while moving closer. In his hand, there was a sword and it looked like he was about to use it.

“I don’t know who you are, but for the prosperity of my White Tiger Clan you have to disappear.”

The man said in a monotone way while plunging his sword into the man’s chest. The man that the sword went through twitched slightly before he could feel the life leave his body.

“Hm...?”

This White Tiger Clan elder noticed that something was off. The way his sword went into the man’s body was strange. He saw him fight during the event, someone that was on the brink of the Martial Master realm should not be this soft.

He quickly sliced open the sack that was covering this man’s face. The first thing he noticed was the lack of white hair that the man at the arena was known for.

“What... isn’t this...”

The face that this now dead body had was something he recognized, it belonged to one of the guards that brought it in. The man quickly looked to the guards but only spotted one of them.

“Not showing any remorse...”

Before he could react a person grabbed him from behind. This person had a hellishly strong grip and put him in a chokehold almost instantly.

“I wanted to give you the benefit of the doubt, but you killed him instantly...”

An unfamiliar voice and a strength that went above anyone that should have been staying in this prison.

“Who are you? Do you really want to make enemies of the White Tiger Clan?”

The old man could feel the grip on his neck getting harder. He tried to activate his own Martial Master cultivation level that was at the late stage. Even when he did, he could not make the man budge the slightest.

“Enemies? Think we are long past that point...”

“Guhh...N-nooo...y-you...”

A peculiar crunching sound could be heard by the second ‘guardsman’ in this room. The strong senior before him stopped his struggles and his hands started flopping around without any strength in them.

The man that had killed this elder let go and removed his helmet. His appearance was the spitting image of the dead guard on the floor but soon it started to shift into this old man’s.

“I guess we will have to do it this way...”

Zhang Dong spoke out while now having the appearance of this White Tiger Elder. While going through the dead man's clothes he thought to a few minutes before.

He had absorbed all of the slave collars that were in the room, this was enough to push his body refining into the silver body stage. The silver body put him on equal footing with a foundation establishment cultivator.

In these lands, a Martial Grandmaster would at most reach the power level of a foundation establishment cultivator at the great circle. This was also probably the level of the patriarch of this clan. He wasn't that sure but it would align with how the smaller clans in his world worked.

A Martial Saint was equal to a core formation practitioner and the step into that realm would be a big bottleneck. This Clan was on the lower end of the totem pole. Thus he assumed that the enemy he would be going up against was a late stage Martial Grandmaster.

His plans weren't to fight it out with the whole clan. They could have magical items that boosted their levels, maybe more of those beasts. It was nice to absorb all that electric energy but he could not fight a whole army, at least not yet.

Zhang Dong removed the old man's clothes and put them on. Luckily he was wearing the more baggy robes which allowed him to fit his larger frame into them. The technique he was using only allowed him to shift his face for now.

Due to his low cultivation level, shifting his body shape was impossible. He was a bit taller than the man he replaced as well as packed on more meat. The baggy robe hid this fact slightly so he hoped he would be able to make his escape.

The man had a spatial ring with him, in it, he spotted something similar to spirit stones. Some weapons, other robes, pills, cultivation materials, and even some scriptures and manuscripts. He would need to examine them later as for now he only needed the sword that the man was using.

Spirit Steel Jian

Mortal low grade

The sword was your regular double-bladed design and the quality wasn't all that great but it would have to do for now.

“H-how can I help, senior?”

While he was rummaging through this man's belonging the other guardsman called out to him. This man belonged to the Snapping Turtle Clan. A few moments ago the two guards arrived to take him here. They were quickly knocked out and this man had the closest appearance to one of the other guards so he took him along.

The young lady that apparently came from the main family was now in charge. It seemed that she was putting her hopes on him now. Left with no way out he did look like the best option. They probably hoped that he would be enraged at the lack of respect and then the assassination attempt.

Zhang Dong didn't fault his attackers for much. They were just trying to protect their own clan and thought this was the only way. He would not show mercy to people like this anymore though. He did not have enough strength to be lenient here, the man showed no mercy so he would not either.

"For now keep watch..."

He needed to think, the most troublesome part was now over. The elder that seemed to be the strongest person around was now gone and he defeated him without alerting the others. This gave him now the option of sneaking out of this dungeon.

No one would stop a high ranking elder and they would probably avert their eyes. The only problem would be the young master, if he ran into him, his cover might be blown.

Then there were the Snapping Turtle Clan members left in the cell. It would be easy to abandon them here and just sneak out by himself. Him getting out of the city would be almost assured if he just ignored them.

This was not how he lived his life though. This group of people aided him, they put bandages on his injured body. He might have died if they weren't there so now he owed them.

"Hm..."

There was not much in this room, it looked to be an office where probably one of the guard captains resided in. For now, he stashed the body in a closet that had some weapons in it. He also found more keys, probably to the other cells and to the exit.

"Is there nothing else...what is that..."

There was a desk in this room, in it he found a map. It depicted this very dungeon along with some areas around it. He was versed in reading maps so he instantly spotted a few interesting things.

"There was an old sewer system that connected to this prison..."

Luck was on the side of the Snapping Turtle Clan as he found them a perfect escape route. This dungeon was built upon another structure that connected to some underground tunnels. It was time for a prison break.

What followed was a silent escape, after gaining the looks of an elite senior from the White Tiger Clan Zhang Dong could walk freely through this dungeon. Thanks to how it was built he was able to disable the guards without the others being able to notice them.

After about thirty minutes all of the guards that were on the level were out of commission. They were tossed into one of the cells without their weapons or any clothes. Those were given to the slaves that were strong enough to hold them.

"Great Senior please tell us your name!"

Xia Yanmei was now looking at the disguised Zhang Dong. The slaves that had their collars removed were now moving through a narrow hole in the wall that he made with a well-placed charged punch. It would lead them to a series of tunnels that ended at the edge of the city.

“Does Zhang Dong and United Element Sect ring a bell?”

He asked but the girl didn’t seem to know this name.

“Senior Dong from the United Element Sect? The Snapping Turtle Clan will remember this favor!”

Soon everyone had gone through the hole opening but Zhang Dong remained outside. Xia Yanmei and a few of their clansmen remained while looking at their savior. It seemed odd to them that he was not moving forward, it was as if he had other plans.

“Senior, you aren’t coming?”

“No... I need to figure out some things, this will be a good opportunity to gather some information.”

He replied while delivering a punch to the walls above this hole. The rubble covered up the escape route and would make it hard for anyone to follow after.

‘Well then, it’s you and me Bob.’

After giving out a sigh he headed up, he needed more information and that information could have been gotten in the White Tiger Clan. With his current incomplete disguise, he would have trouble moving freely. Thus before leaving there was one thing that he needed to do, reach the foundation establishment level!

He had noticed that this clan was versed in the dao of electricity. Even the doors here were electrified and would deliver small shocks to whoever touched them. With this in mind, he headed into a certain spot that he noticed on the prison schematics.

“It should be here...”

He pushed the large door open and inside he found the item in question.

Thunder Crystal

Mortal middle grade

This yellow crystal was in the middle of this room. It was floating around in a glass container to which many thick cables were connected to. This was this prison’s power source and the perfect item to further his cultivation.

During the breakout, he had already absorbed quite a lot of energy from the slave collars of all the prisoners that were here. This Thunder Crystal here was just the item he needed to complete his transformation.

“I’ve seen my disciples do this... it should not be that hard...”

“I don’t have much time... they will notice that something is off soon...”

Zhang Dong looked to the pile of disabled slave collars that he absorbed previously. Along with the Thunder Stone before him, it would need to be enough.

He was a bit surprised about how much of a bottomless pit his own cultivation had become. Ever since returning it felt deeper like he needed more to retrace his old steps. This was all due to his increased understanding of the Dao he studied and also because his soul had expanded.

With all of the energy that he absorbed from these common higher quality common grade items, he should have normally been able to create his perfect foundation pillar. That wasn’t so, he needed to go further beyond and absorb all of the energy that this prison facility had to offer.

Zhang Dong had already fiddled around with his system. There were some problems related to his cultivation. Due to it being so low most of his system functions were turned off or limited.

The map’s range had shrunk to about a hundred meters and he could not access things like his crafting abode. For that, he would need to wait till he achieved the core formation level. The teleportation function was also offline and so was his clan building window.

Without it, he could not check for his family members nor his disciples. He had no idea if they were alive, how much time had passed, and even where he was. After cultivating he needed to gather more information before deciding on his next destination.

‘I need to focus... the system is not helping me with this anymore...’

In the beginning, he mostly relied on the system, he could even spend spirit points directly to achieve breakthroughs. Now on the other hand it was all up to him but he wasn’t afraid. His Dao was supreme and he had all the knowledge that he needed. The only problem were the cultivation resources and time.

Before sitting down in front of the Thunder Stone he took out the sword that he got from the White Tiger elder. He started slicing the ground in front of the crystal, soon it took the shape of a combination of a magic circle and a formation.

Thanks to his time in the world of magic he had learned a few tricks. With this specialized formation, he would be able to hasten the process while also making it much easier. With it, there would be no wasted energy and he would be able to absorb it to its fullest.

He finally sat down in the lotus position and started to concentrate. The orange thunder crystal was radiating electrical power but soon it started to flow into his dantian. Everything became dark and he knew that the people outside might notice this.

It started to materialize as if it had always been there. A large pillar started to form inside of him. It was longer and thicker than it ever had been before, pure gold and radiating holy lightning energies.

The whole place rumbled as he opened up his eyes. Yellow light and electricity escaped from them and lit up the darkened room. The people outside heard a strange thunderclap below ground which was followed by an earthquake.

Thanks to Zhang Dong's special formation the spiritual energy was contained to this room. The people outside would not notice that he was breaking through but he could not do much about the quaking.

'Be formed... my prime pillar!'

He willed it into place and it formed inside of him. It stood tall like a monolith and it was just the first one of many. Around it, he would fashion even more pillars which would then be used to create his golden lightning core. Its might would eclipse the previous one just as this prime pillar overshadowed the old one.

"Whew..."

He gave out a sigh of relief after successfully going through his first major change. Due to the purity of the way he cultivated there were no impurities in his body.

After standing up he started checking if he made any mistakes and how much power he really had.

'This... I'm much stronger... about the level of a great circle foundation establishment cultivator...'

He was a bit astonished by the jump in levels, he was only in the early stage but with this amount of power, he would be able to contend with the strongest masters in this realm. This was due to his repeated enhancements of his cultivation skills and due to the increase in his soul power.

'I'll absorb these later, I should go...'

After stashing the broken slave collars he left this room. They had no lightning energy in them anymore but could be used to bolster his silver body further.

"Elder, what has happened..."

Zhang Dong was quick to return above ground. Before the guards could look into the dungeon prison below he was there to block the path.

"It's nothing, the prisoner was a bit tougher than I expected, I had to use some strength to get rid of him..."

The dungeon below was reached by elevator which led to a checkpoint. They were now at this point, this room had been previously cleared out by him which raised some concern with these men.

"Elder, where are the other guards..."

"Don't worry about them, they need to do some cleaning, now let us depart."

He gave the older while giving the two men here a stern look. They quickly clasped their hands and headed towards the elevator. The good part about being in this world was how the seniors were treated with reverence.

Now after reaching the foundation level his disguising technique was able to shrink down his body to mimic the White Tiger Clan leader fully. Only a core formation cultivator above the early stage would be able to notice this disguise.

They all headed up and before leaving he gave the order to not let anyone descend into the dungeon for the day. With this, he would have some time to go through this clan's library and gather some information.

"You."

"Yes, Elder?"

Outside he found some White Tiger Clan members lazing about.

"I need to visit the clan's library, guide me to it, junior."

"Ah... of course elder, follow me."

The young man looked a bit surprised at the order. Zhang Dong knew that the person he was impersonating probably knew where the library was. Luckily for him, a junior would not ask any questions even if he acted a bit out of character.

"You may leave."

The young man clasped his hands and was on his way. The building that he was led to was quite large and inside he found quite a number of scriptures.

'They sure like to keep a lot of texts in this world...'

Even though this clan wasn't really that big, they owned large buildings like this one. The city was also highly populated which in the magical land would be seen as gigantic. This structure had the usual oriental feel to it, with lots of dragons and qilin ornaments all over the place.

Zhang Dong's system at least kept its knowledge gathering function but he needed to give each book a poke before it could be started. So he got to work, tracing his finger along with the book covers while moving next to the bookcases.

Most of it were just cultivation methods for the younger generation. Inner Aura techniques and a few Martial Master scripts. This was more of an open library, it made sense that the quality would be lower than what the inner circles had access to.

This didn't matter much to him, he was mostly interested in the lay of the land. Where he was and where the Azure Dragon Empire was located from his location. After wondering for about thirty minutes he finally found what he wanted, a large world map.

'This is different than the maps that I remember...'

He rubbed his chin while bringing up the image of the Azure Dragon Empire. It was a holographic image that only he could see. After moving it around a couple of times he was able to connect it to this map.

This Emerald Phoenix Empire's west border somewhat aligned with the Azure Dragon Empire's east border.

'By the looks of it... I'm all the way here...'

It didn't look too good, he was all the way on the other side of this country. The United Element's Sect location was also on the edges. The traveling distance was immense and he wasn't even a core formation cultivator so flight was not a possibility.

'How am I going to get all the way there...'

He knew that the journey would be dangerous. This world was filled with many demonic beasts, evil cultist organizations, and people just waiting to stab a person in the back. The lack of his original cultivation was a problem, it seemed that getting it back would be the best option.

The new calendars that this empire offered also didn't answer his question about time. His system window's clock had also been reset along with the reboot so he had no idea about how long he was missing.

From his standpoint, some months had passed which in this world didn't mean much. His sect still had some nascent soul elders to protect it. Unless the news of his disappearing was announced he didn't see other sects attacking, not after he easily defeated those nascent soul elders on the sect meeting and also crushed that sword sect Patriarch.

'I'm no use to anyone if I die... I need to at least reach the core formation level and gain access to my crafting abode.'

A plan formed in his mind, there was no helping it, he wasn't strong enough. There were many Martial Saints that were about as strong as Core Formation cultivators from his empire. They would pose a large threat to him so he needed to be careful.

He needed to find a good place to cultivate, a place with lots of lightning energy. Then the other option was to gather items like those Thunder Stones. Luck was a bit on his side with that part as he was in a clan that studied the Dao of lightning.

It was clear to him that somewhere in the deeper regions of this clan there were cultivation resources that he could use. They had already crossed the line with him so he would not feel bad if he stole them all.

The only problem would be their strength, he felt like he should be on par with someone at the great circle of foundation establishment but that was only in theory. Was this Martial Grandmaster a bit stronger than what he believed? Only after clashing with someone like that would he know.

"There you are Elder, I've been looking for you, did you take care of that slave?"

While Zhang Dong was contemplating his next move he heard someone call out to him. The tone and voice sounded familiar. He just turned around while grasping his red beard, his eyes on the young man and the girl next to him.

"Mmm, it is done... Young master..."

Chapter 335

"Good work, I knew I could count on Elder Zhuao!"

Zhang Dong might have looked like this White Tiger Clan elder but he was unsure about his mannerisms. He only saw the man for a few minutes before snapping his neck so there was not much to go off of.

“How about that Xia Yanmei?”

“Don’t worry young master, everything has been arranged, they will be disposed of by my men...”

This seemed to have been the plan. This elder Zhuao feared Zhang Dong the most so he wanted to deliver the killing blow himself. The rest of the Snapping Turtle Clan weren’t as important, none of them had the strength to go against anyone close to a Martial Master’s level.

“Splendid! I’ll be sure to mention Elder’s name to my father!”

“To the lord?”

He answered while trying to sound ecstatic. Thanks to going through this library he had an idea about the power dynamics of this clan. The name of this young master was mentioned in one of the newer scripts.

His father was in line to be the next Patriarch while at the current moment the grandfather was still in this position. He was a Martial Grandmaster but was already close to 150 years old. His time was slowly coming to an end as these cultivators could reach about the age of 200.

This Dai Rong was the first son of the next in line to be the Patriarch. Due to this, it seemed that he liked to throw his weight around just like the other young masters from this world. The ‘event’ that Zhang Dong was in proved how little he thought about other people. In his eyes, this young master was already too rotten to be redeemed. Already many people had died because of him and if Zhang Dong didn’t step in there would be more carnage.

“Yes, we will return now Elder, my father has called for me, grandfather has called for a meeting! Maybe he will announce father as the new Patriarch!”

“Ah, of course, young master.”

He nodded at the young man that started laughing maniacally. The girl next to him didn’t look very taken back, she clung even more as if this young man was a meal ticket to a better life.

This was a good opportunity to look at how the clans in this empire operated. It was also dangerous, if his cover was blown he would be up against a whole clan of fighters. With his current cultivation, he was at least confident that he would be able to escape. That is if there were no Martial Saint level cultivators around.

For now, he followed after this young master, he knew that this elder was the main bodyguard but there were also a few other weaker clan members around for the ride. As they went through the city he watched as the people bowed their heads at this young man.

No one dared to meet his gaze and even the children were kept away. Dai Rong seemed to enjoy how much everyone was afraid of him. His cultivation wasn’t even that great, he was an Inner Aura middle realm cultivator. Even those apes that he fought against would be more than a match for this haughty youth.

While exploring the city with him Zhang Dong's mind started to wonder. He remembered the world that he visited before. The people there seemed to have free will but some of them acted like a personification of tropes.

Was it the same here? Were these young men and women forced to act like this due to the world's system? Or was this just the result of their upbringing? It could have also been a mix of the two and only more mindful individuals would be able to break free of the imposed programming.

His wife and the people around him did change somewhat after he appeared. They did become less bloodthirsty at least when around him. What would they do in a remote city? Would they revert to some pre imposed haughty programming if they met someone below them that was seeking trouble?

There was also another bigger problem on his mind. He remembered the king from that world. He was some kind of watcher left behind by whoever created these worlds. If that world had someone like that, then one could have been left behind here as well.

There was one person that fit that bill, the Azure Dragon Emperor that towered over everyone. There was also the monarch of this Emerald Phoenix Empire, it could be him instead, maybe even both he had no idea of knowing.

In that world, he was lucky enough to be much stronger than whatever the heroes were capable of. Thanks to that he could defeat that watcher in battle. In this world on the other hand he expected these watchers to be above the nascent soul great circle realm.

'Maybe with my current soul level I could...'

"Welcome young master Rong!"

He snapped back to reality after hearing the young master's name being raised. They had finally arrived at the meeting place. There were other young masters with their own bodyguards and retainers gathered.

'I should focus on the problem at hand...'

He straightened out and started looking around. They were on the outside in some kind of garden, there was quite a large fountain in the middle. Around it, many youths gathered and were talking about some current events.

'There are a lot of youngsters here, looks like this

Announcement

will concern the younger generation...'

He didn't think that Dai Rong would be getting the

Announcement

that his father was becoming a Patriarch. Maybe instead he would have to contend with the other young masters for some special cultivation technique or cultivation resources.

The cultivators loved to put their younger generation against each other to thin out the herd. Only the few that remained at the end would be given proper management to advance further in life.

‘Hm... those people seem a bit different...’

In the distance, he spotted an old man with a long gray beard. He was wearing the White Tiger colors and he was walking with two other people. All of them were at the Martial Grandmaster level. The peculiar thing about this was that the two were much younger than this man.

“It’s the Patriarch, who is he with... those robes... The Thunderbolt Hall?”

‘Thunderbolt Hall?’

Even without knowing who this faction was, he had an idea. It suddenly became apparent what this was all about.

‘So... they are here to recruit the young masters and mistresses to their faction...’

This wasn’t anything new, larger sects sometimes sent out elders to recruit promising young people to their factions. The White Tiger Clan and this Thunderbolt Hall seemed to have a similar cultivation path, which made things even more obvious.

“The Thunderbolt Hall!”

The young master next to him looked at the two people that were walking with his grandfather with hungry eyes. It seemed that he also realized what this was about.

“All of you, pay your respect to the honorable seniors!”

The Patriarch shouted out after he arrived at the scene with the two Thunderball Hall Elders. One of them was a handsome man that looked to be in his mid-30s while the other was a woman of jade-like beauty. Both of them were wearing white robes, with the characteristic flowy long sleeves.

“I have gathered you all for this occasion to pay your respects to the great Thunderbolt Hall!”

Everyone including Zhang Dong bowed their heads while their old Patriarch talked. He was then promptly interrupted by one of the members from this sect.

“You don’t need to bow your heads, we can’t stay here for long and we came to do business.”

Normally it would be considered very rude to cut off the Patriarch from this Clan that ruled this city. No one could go against this powerful sect though so everyone had to keep their mouths shut.

“We will conduct an aptitude test for all the middle stage Inner Aura practitioners under the age of 19. If they manage to pass it you may join the next test for the outer Hall disciples!”

The youths eyes opened up wide as they started to sparkle. This was a great opportunity for their Clan but even more for themselves. Being part of a larger sect meant more cultivation materials, better techniques, and a possibility of reaching the higher realms of strength.

Everyone from this clan knew that they were just frogs inside of a well. Only if they were accepted by one of the larger sects like this Thunderbolt Hall would they be able to join the cultivation giants.

These sects liked to create trials for young members with high aptitude. They would go around picking them out from the local cities and clans. There was always an age limit as the older a person got the less they could achieve.

Zhang Dong was not interested in this test nor this sect. He did not have the time to dwindle here. The prison he left was empty and all the slaves were gone. He didn't think that anyone would rush to this gathering as they did not have the prestige for it. It was safe for now but he needed to be careful.

'I should avoid the sects for now... they probably have core formation level people in it...'

While Dai Rong was busy drooling at the jade-like beauty that was next to the man from that sect he started thinking. They would be testing all the youths and all of the big shot clan members were probably gathered in this very room.

Just as in any clan there were many people in it. He was looking at at least fifty youths that could be picked up by these two sect members. While they were busy with their tests, he was planning to slip away. He knew a lot of stealth techniques which would come in handy now.

"You will spar with each other, the winners will have the chance of coming with us..."

'Great... they are going to host a tournament, I should have enough time to ransack this place...'

Zhang Dong smirked a bit while the White Tiger Clansmen started moving outside this area. They were probably heading to a place where they could spar. Dai Rong had long forgotten about his bodyguard that most of the time was hidden in the background. Thanks to this he was able to slip away into the shadows.

The technique he used allowed him to blur his body slightly. People that were below his cultivation level would not be able to notice him. Even the people on the higher realms would have trouble to discern him from the scenery. His hiding techniques worked even better if he remained perfectly still.

'I should probably start with that one...'

In the distance, he saw a large pagoda building. It looked like the most important structure and was also in an elevated position. It was from the way that the Patriarch came along with the two sect members. It was probably his own house and would have the best cultivation resources.

'I'll get what I can and then I should leave...'

Zhang Dong's body disappeared unnoticed by the masses, it was time to regain some cultivation resources that he had lost.

Chapter 336

Elder Zhuao or at least a person that looked like him was in the process of rummaging through the White Tiger Clan main building. While everyone else was busy cheering for the young masters and young mistresses he was busy trying to find things that had electric energy in them.

“Elder Zhuao? Why aren’t you with young master Dai Rong?”

“Um...”

Zhang Dong in his disguise was now looking at two guards. They were standing in front of a large door that led into the clan treasury. The men here were at the lower end of the Martial Master realm which was quite high for simple guards.

“Oh...actually the young master had tasked me to take one of his weapons from the clan’s treasury...”

“From the treasury?... but the young master doesn’t keep his weapons here...huh?”

Before the man could finish the sentence he felt a palm hitting his chest. The air was instantly knocked out of his lungs and he crumbled like a piece of paper on the ground.

“Elder Zhuao what are you...”

The other man pointed his spear at this elder that delivered a devastating blow to the other guardsman. Before he knew it, the same palm was descending onto his own chest. After the moment of impact, he flew towards the wall and left a human-shaped hole on it before also passing out on the ground.

‘It’s not very well guarded... they probably don’t expect anyone to do anything while the people from a powerful sect are visiting...’

He smiled a bit, this was the perfect chance to rob this place and make a clean getaway. Zhang Dong was aware of what happened during such occasions. All the big shot elders from the clan would be there and they would all watch.

They all had some promising youngsters in their own camp. All of them wanted to have ties to a larger sect, it would allow them to toss their weight around even more.

If a clan of similar strength went against them, they could scare them into capitulation by just having one of their family members be an outer sect disciple. Everyone knew that such a position was trifling but a large sect to save face, would not allow such a person to be looked down upon.

“Hm...easy...”

He moved over to the large gate and gave it a poke with his index finger. The door lit up in blue light but quickly dimmed before it opened itself. It had a simple low grade lock along with a protective formation. It was quite rudimentary for someone of his expertise. The two passed-out guards were dragged inside this treasury and he closed the doors behind him. The time he had was unknown so he needed to work fast.

Spirit stones, weapons, armor, and even books were all in here. It was more of a large hall with closed windows than a treasury. Even before making a step forward, he could see that there were more formations to keep unforeseen guests away.

'Illusory formation? Alarm formation? They even have a slaughter formation by that large pile of spirit stones...'

While slowly moving forward he started to disable every formation. The large pile of spirit stones was clearly a trap. Normally no one kept them out in the open as they were stored in spatial rings like the one that he had now.

If someone tried getting close they would be affected by the defensive formation. Even someone at the foundation establishment level late stage would not come out in one piece. While defending himself the alarm would also go off, this would bring all the elders from the clan here.

'That's all...'

It was time to clear this space out, the spirit stones made their way into his spatial ring. There were other storage devices here, all of them were locked but he could disable those later. All the scriptures, weapons and herbs were taken away. He had no time to cultivate or go through them just yet,

Just as he had thought this clan had a lot of cultivation resources related to Lightning DAO cultivation. None of them exceeded the mortal grade though, at most he could hope to get to the great circle of foundation establishment before reaching a bigger bottleneck. Even that was far-fetched as his new cultivation required far more to get up than it previously did.

After about ten minutes he had everything inside of his spatial rings. The one that he borrowed from the real Elder Zhuao had reached its limit. Luckily there were some more spacious spatial rings in this very treasure room.

He now had a couple of those Thunder Crystals as well as some Lightning herbs. With them as a base, he could actually prepare some pills that would produce better effects. There was even a nice pill cauldron here that he could use, it would be enough till he gained access to his crafting abode that needed him to be at the core formation level.

'Now to get out of here... I should be in the clear...'

The two guards were left in the room with the treasures. He activated one of the formations that would force them into a long-lasting dream. With it active, they would not wake up unless someone entered this room.

On the outside, he slowly closed the door and reactivated all of the locks. He added a flair of his own, even with the person who had the key came, they would not be able to enter. They would need to either be more knowledgeable with formations than him or force their way in.

He heard some shouting in the distance, it seemed that the people were cheering out loudly. The young masters were probably giving their all in crushing each other's dreams for the future. It would not surprise him if some had prepared underhanded methods to achieve victory.

'Would this be the place where the hero came out on top and got accepted into the prestigious virtuous sect?'

While trying to act naturally he moved back through the corridor. The whole experience in the other world was still bugging him. If that world was made to work as a novel or game, was this one exactly the same?

The most bothersome point in this was the people here. In the beginning, he felt that it was just their upbringing. If he showed them the correct path they would see it and switch their mindset. What if he was wrong? What if these people were just cogs in a large clock and their ways could not be altered.

“Elder Zhuao? There you are, why did you leave? I need you to give me my good sword for my next battle! I’ll be facing that lowly bastard Dai Reng, he thinks he can take my spot in the Thunderball Hall!”

During his contemplation, he spaced out slightly, the young master that his persona was tasked to defend was now next to him. He was alone and looked quite annoyed, he could also spot some injuries here and there it was clear that he fought in some of the battles with the other youngsters.

“Your sword young master?”

“Yes, the Jian...”

Before the young master continued he stopped and pulled out a communication jade. Zhang Dong had one of them as well, this one was also lifted from the original Elder.

‘To everyone of the White Tiger Clan, Elder Zhuao has betrayed us, all of the slaves have been freed from the lower dungeon...’

It was a mass message to everyone from the clan. It looked like they had found him out a lot sooner than he anticipated.

“Elder Zhuao betrayed us but he is...”

Before Dai Rong could speak out he found his mouth being grasped by the person impersonating Elder Zhuao. Dai Rong started to squirm around while trying to signal for help but before he could he felt an invading force entering his body.

Zhang Dong infused the young master with his superior spiritual energy which made the young man unable to move. He quickly ducked into one of the many side rooms while still holding the youth by his face.

‘Damn, they know who I am... should I change into one of those guards...’

He started to panic a bit, changing into the treasury guards was one option but he did not take their clothes. He did not get a good look at them either and impersonating people he did not get a good look at would be problematic.

“I guess you will have to do for now...”

The young master on the other hand would be less suspicious. While everyone was looking for Zhuao, he would temporarily use this youth’s appearance and quickly leave. He could also try to overpower the elders that were gathered here.

This was a bit problematic as he could not move fast. He did not have any transportation treasures nor a flying sword that he could even utilize. How many Martial Grandmasters were here was also unknown to him. Then if a Martial Saint appeared he would be doomed.

“Don’t worry I won’t kill you... but your days as a young master are over...”

Zhang Dong had no pity for this youth. He was already over the age of eighteen. His behavior and character seemed to be cemented. Already people have died due to his actions so there would be no mercy.

Without being able to move, Dai Rong succumbed to what Zhang Dong had planned. The youth’s cultivation level was erased as his dantian was obliterated. This wasn’t quite the end as his face was next.

With other techniques that he had read about, he started to change the young master’s appearance. Dai Rong was considered a handsome young man but after a minute his facial features were average at best.

Zhang Dong did this as he couldn’t have them discovering the young man’s body while he was still here. The vocal cords were also damaged so he would not be able to explain himself to his elders. He would be seen as a commoner, nothing more than a mortal. What he could do now was live his life as a servant.

“You won’t be able to speak for a few weeks but not like anyone will believe you... Live your life as the thing you hate the most...”

With one last jolt of spiritual energy, he made the young man pass out. When he woke up his life would be over. No one would be able to recognize him, he would probably be reduced to being a slave or a servant. After being the reason for the downfall of the whole Snapping Turtle Clan this would be just the right punishment.

The robes were switched out once more and he let the passed out Dai Rong with some old clothes that had not much worth. For a final touch, he doused the youth with some alcohol. With some luck, the people that found him here would think he was some random drunkard.

Back on the outside he quickly made his way out of here, everyone was already aware of Zhuao so he expected more people to start patrolling.

“Ah, there you are, Rong’er!”

“Uh...?”

He replied while looking at a certain man that approached him. His appearance looked familiar as it was the spitting image of Dai Rong’s face just somewhat aged.

‘Oh, brother...’

Chapter 337

"Is something wrong Rong'er, you look a bit pale..."

"Ah no... I'm fine."

"That's good, I'm counting on you to win the position at the Thunderball Hall. With that, your old man's position as the next Clan Patriarch will be secured!"

Zhang Dong in his young master disguise was about to jump out of the window while this man approached him. His true son was out cold in one of the away rooms. From what he knew, this man that was Dai Rong's father was close to becoming the next Patriarch.

"Also, have you seen that treacherous Zhuao? He has betrayed us!"

"Elder Zhuao? No... he vanished from my side when the seniors from the Thunderball Hall arrived."

"Don't worry, we will find him, for now return to the central courtyard, we can't have the seniors wait!"

"Yes, father..."

While looking for an escape route he saw more people coming. His 'father' ordered them to escort him to the place the test was taking place. There were two of them, all at the lower end of the Martial Master level.

Without being able to make his escape he was forced back into the large space where the 'test' was taking place. There he saw two youths fighting against each other, they were both holding swords that were giving out small sparks into the air. Their robes were all cut up and it seemed that everyone was taking things very seriously.

At center stage were the two Thunderball Hall elders. They seemed bored out of their mind while looking at the youths fumbling around. Zhang Dong could tell that these prospects would have not made it into his own sect even if they tried. Their form was bad and they were slow at reacting, it looked like two kids with sticks were just randomly hitting each other.

'It would be better to just lose instantly and then run away...or should I...'

Getting involved any further than this was problematic. His disguising technique had been upgraded to an immortal level technique back when he had the points to spend for it. It would allow a person to hide their appearance even from elders two large realms above them. Only someone at the nascent soul realm would be able to see that something was off.

From what he could tell this Thunderball Hall was a sect that was similar to the old Huo Clan. Their strongest member would be someone at the Supreme Saint realm. These masters were slightly above the core formation great circle realm but not quite in the nascent soul level. If that sect even had someone at this realm was also up to debate.

'No, I have enough items... can't be too greedy.'

This sect probably had lightning element resources as well. If he wasn't strapped for time he could very well pretend to be a young disciple. After gaining some trust and cultivating more he could 'borrow' some resources and finally head home when he gained the ability to fly on a sword.

'I'll just lose on purpose, can't keep pushing my luck.'

Zhang Dong had already taken a lot from this clan. That treasury was probably not everything that they had but it probably amounted to a big chunk of their savings. The rest would probably be some trashy techniques that the Patriarch's attained which he didn't need.

"I...yield..."

The fight was over and one of the young masters was victorious over the other. The fight lasted for a while and was kind of a slogfest.

"Good... with this only sixteen candidates remain, continue."

The Thunderball Hall elder waved his hand while still looking bored. He was not giving the youths any time to take a break. It was obvious to Zhang Dong that he just wanted to get this over with.

"Of course seniors... start the next match! Dai Rong, Dai Reng!"

He would be the first to begin this round, his opponent was the young master that Dai Rong was previously complaining about. By the naming sense, this was either a brother or some close cousin.

"Finally, I will be able to crush you while all of the elders watch!"

His opponent was also quite handsome with similar facial features to this Dai Rong. The biggest difference was the lack of long hair which was just at neck length. His opponent was holding a two-edged sword, similar to what he found in Elder Zhuao's spatial ring. He had replaced it for Dai Rong's ring for now but he did not intend to use a weapon.

"You've been awfully quiet, already shaking in your boots before your tragic loss?"

Zhang Dong didn't reply much as he was trying to lower his cultivation level. If his fist connected with this kid at full strength he would just explode into chunks of meat paste. With his silver body, he could not be harmed by this youth at all, even the elders from his clan would have a hard time even giving him a scratch.

"Don't listen to him Rong'er, show him what I taught you!"

"Be victorious Reng'er!"

His father cheered him on from the side while another man did the same for the other youth. He could feel that the two old men had similar strengths and were close in age. They might have been brothers by the similar appearance, maybe even fighting for the position of Patriarch.

"Take out your sword!"

"I don't need it for someone like you..."

Zhang Dong replied while in Dai Rong's form. He feared that his superior swordsmanship would be a dead giveaway. There was also the problem of containing it as he feared killing the youth by mistake.

"You dare?"

It seemed that his reply was taken as a taunt instead. His opponent's face went red and he charged forward while Zhang Dong waited in one spot. After absorbing some of the technique books here he knew what these youths would mostly be using.

He took on a battle stance, his hands in front of him in the form of claws. This was one of the more basic techniques that was called 'White Tiger Palm'. It had a few forms that would not give him trouble when being performed.

"White Tiger Palm?"

Some of the elders rubbed their beards at the strange approach that Dai Rong was taking. This technique was quite rudimentary and mostly just a set of clawing and palm techniques with nothing much to them. It wasn't very flashy nor was it good or bad in any way shape or form. It seemed to them that Dai Rong was not taking his opponent seriously.

'I need to make it believable... I'll dodge his charge and hit him a few times to not look totally incompetent...'

This was a good chance to lose, his opponent was some kind of rival. This meant that it would not be seen as strange if he lost to him. It was also one of the beginning matches so he could pretend to be injured and then escape.

"Take this Thunder sword!"

Dai Rong's sword started giving off faint sparks of electricity while he performed a vertical slash towards him. He wanted to laugh at the technique's name, as the sword was far removed from being coated in lightning energy.

First, he needed to show off his own skills so at the right moment he dodged the blade's attack. Then his palm descended towards Dai Rong's chest. He added the minimal amount of Qi into it as the people here would be able to tell if he didn't try at all.

'Just a little tap should be enough...'

Regretfully the technique that he was performing was created with this Empire's cultivators in mind. Even the slightest infusion of his superior lightning Qi into it produced a different result than he expected.

What the elders saw was a bright flash of light followed by a loud thunderous roar that mimicked that of a tiger's. The palm connected with Dai Rong's chest, sending him flying. The robes on his back exploded while showing some burns in the form of a tiger claw on the youth's back.

"Reng'er... NO!"

The young master's father quickly jumped in to save his son. He grabbed him mid-flight and started doing his utmost to remove the invading electric energy from his body. Even he, someone that was a lower level Martial Grandmaster was having trouble in doing so.

'What the hell...'

Zhang Dong stood shocked while looking at his palm. He didn't think that this low-level technique would react in this kind of way. His aim was to have his opponent retreat slightly before the fight continued in Dai Reng's favor.

"Was that really our White Tiger Palm?... could it be... the Secret Thunderous White Tiger Palm?... how did the boy learn it... The technique has been lost to us for centuries now..."

The elders mumbled with each other while the people from the Thunderbolt Hall's finally showed some life in those bored eyes.

"Rong'er... how... you didn't even tell your old man that you mastered the Secret Thunderous White Tiger Palm! Well done!"

His 'father' looked quite pleased by the turn of events. Everyone was looking at his son as if he was some kind of prodigy. It looked like he had figured out the proper way of restoring an old lost technique.

'Shit...'

Zhang Dong started to sweat and also remember that time when Beatrice was going through her tests. It seemed that unless he played dead without even grazing his opponent he could risk winning. Due to this, he decided to play it up, they thought he performed some kind of secret art so he would stick to it and retire early.

He clutched his chest as if he was in pain and went down to his knees. His face started to go pale, sweat dripping from his chin onto the ground while everyone watched in fright.

"Rong'er? What's wrong?"

The father was quick to appear to support his collapsed son that was in the moment of faking to pass out. The plan was to now make it seem that he used too much Qi for that one attack and would not be able to continue on with the tests.

"F-father, I've used up all of my spiritual energy... I... I don't think I'll be able to continue..."

It was easy for him to fool these low-level cultivators. He was able to lower his own cultivation and his father after examining would see his son's cultivation be minuscule.

"I'm sorry, I think someone else will go with the Seniors..."

He started to close his eyes and pretend to pass out. If he wasn't able to continue then the Thunderball Hall would not take him.

"Rong'er?"

He could feel his 'father' picking him up from the ground. Now he only needed to be carried away to a more secluded room to make his escape.

“Wait!”

“Senior?”

‘Hm?’

With eyes closed, he could hear one of the Seniors from the sect approach Dai Rong’s father.

“This trial is over, we will take this youth with us!”

‘Eh???’

He wanted to open his eyes and ask what was going on. Luckily for him, the Senior from the Thunderball hall continued with an explanation.

“We have seen all of your juniors fight, none of them have the talent of this youth, it doesn’t matter that he can’t continue with the test, he is clearly the most promising of them all!”

With that, he had earned the prestigious position of Thunderball Hall disciple, his escape plans were put on hold for now...

Chapter 338

Lin Qiao and Zhou Dongmei were the names of the seniors that hailed from the Thunderball Hall. After he showed them a glimpse of his aptitude they were eager to add him to the juniors of their sect.

“Take care Rong’er!”

“Ah... yes, goodbye father...”

They were now ready to leave. Luckily the two didn’t want to stay for even a day longer in this small city. Thanks to this he would be able to finally leave. The bad part about this was that he was now stuck with these two Martial Grandmasters. He felt that he could take them in a fight but not like he wanted to start one here.

‘The journey to their sect will probably take a bit.’

He believed that these two were probably traveling on foot or in some kind of caravan. With this in mind, he could sneak away during the night. With his techniques that could hide him in the shadows, it would be easy to just leave.

Zhang Dong also did not have any malice towards these two here. They were just doing their job of picking up new recruits from the smaller clans. There was no reason for him to cause them harm.

‘If I vanish during the night, they might just think that some beast took me away while they slept and not look into it too much...’

Dai Rong was still someone from a smaller clan. Even though he was like a prince here, outside the city he would be nothing special. If he vanished and his body was not found, no one would really bother to look into it. It was just how this world was set up, danger lurked everywhere and junior members were prone to disappearing.

“Junior, let us depart, we will instruct you on the way there.”

“Yes, Senior.”

It felt strange to bow his head to this random lower sect elder but he needed to do it for now. The group of three left the White Tiger Clan main house. The original young master’s body had not been discovered and they were in the process of going into the treasure room. He was in the clear as now with the sect members around, no one would bother him in the slightest.

This didn’t stop the White Tiger Clan members from following them all the way through the city. They also made a loud scene as they wanted to know that a member of their family had made it into a prestigious sect. With this their reign over this area was secured, no clan would be able to do anything about it out of fear of retaliation.

‘Wish this ends fast... also where are we going... this isn’t the exit gate from the city...’

He expected to go towards an area where there were caravans, maybe there was another group of junior sect members outside waiting for them. These two also weren’t at the core formation level so the ability of flight should have not been something they were capable of.

Instead of the gate that led out of the city, they climbed up some kind of building. It was quite high and reached up to a hundred meters. On the top he found something interesting, it was a boat that was anchored to the building. Why was it anchored? Because it was floating around and even the wind here made it move from side to side.

“Junior you look surprised, this flying treasure is one of the many wonders you will learn to accept at your new home!”

Lin Qiao proclaimed while acting quite proud. Zhang Dong was more surprised by the fact that this item was given to these low ranking elders than the flying boat itself. It was quite small, the size of a bass boat with only four seats.

He could feel some kind of item inside of it, probably making it float. Compared to the Argonaut 1 that he created, this looked more like a toy. The man looked to be quite proud of this little thing as if it was a great treasure.

“Surprised? Ah yes, Senior...”

The woman didn’t say much, she just quickly jumped up onto this boat and took a seat. She took out a large umbrella to cover up from the sun and it seemed that she was ready to go. Zhou Dongmei gave off the vibes of that unapproachable jade beauty, even this man that was here with her was continuously glancing at the good parts.

“Get on junior, we must hurry back to the sect!”

Zhang Dong looked behind him, some White Tiger Clan members were there. Dai Rong’s father looked quite proud. He even started feeling bad about stashing his son in a room without a cultivation base.

When he left this spot this man would never see his son ever again. Though he knew that it was also this man’s fault for bringing him up like this. Even if this world was affected by some sort of programming there were ways to change it.

His own family members from the Zhang Clan changed their ways. The two disciples that he brought up could have ended up as haughty young masters but instead, they treated people as equals. The only one that he couldn't really change was his grandfather that continued to 'grow' the family even if he told him not to, many times.

He hopped onto the small boat that looked more like it was meant for fishing trips and they blasted off into the sunset. The boat was not as fast as a flying sword would be, but still much faster than walking. He could tell that Lin Qiao was inserting his Qi through his legs into this boat to move it around. The rest was done by the item itself.

'It's more similar to the flying boats from the magic world than from here...'

In his empire, it was hard for anyone below the core formation level to use such a thing. Most sects didn't even bother to create small flying vessels like this one. It was better to just use all the resources to create a large one that could transport more people. Here on the other hand it seemed that the resources to make the boats float were easier to come by.

Now, this was a problem, he hoped that they would be traveling by something else. Maybe even camp out in the woods at night where he could remove himself from the equation. Now he was sitting next to the haughty-looking jade beauty. She did not talk and the man called Lin Qiao was quite the reverse.

He continued to babble on, explaining how lucky Dai Rong was for being accepted as a trial disciple. Yes, he was only a trial disciple; it was possible to get kicked out. From the explanation given, the young prospects would need to go through some kind of boot camp. Their physical capabilities would be tested, the ones that gave up or couldn't keep up would be thrown out.

'Should I just go there and quit mid way...'

The idea to remain with these two all the way till they got to the sect was tossed away rather quickly. He had already taken too long, he was afraid that the more he hesitated the more problems would spring out along the way.

'I bet that when I get there, it will be even harder to leave...'

There were probably elders that were at the core formation level of power there. Escaping would become hard and the days could continue until finally, a chance was there. He knew that new disciples were looked down upon and not trusted. It wouldn't be far-fetched if they all were forbidden from leaving the sect for many years as a test of loyalty.

'The guy is slightly stronger than this girl... I should take him out first...'

They continued flying and they were now far away for him to act. Previously he thought that he needed to reach the core formation level for him to be able to travel. Now, on the other hand, these two gave him the item that he desired.

Even though he didn't want to steal from people that didn't cross him, this was a dire time. If he returned home and regained his might, he would reward this small sect with some treasures.

'If I knock them both down, they won't be able to follow me...'

The plan was easy, he would just toss the two down from this flying boat. They were strong enough to survive the fall and then could return to the White Tiger Clan city for help. He would also need to take away their communication jades to be on the safe side. If they contacted their sect he might have found himself getting chased before he could change his appearance.

They didn't seem to suspect anything, a good palm strike to the man's back should put him out of commission. Then only the woman would remain, if he acted fast they should not be able to react in time.

He leaned forward while bracing himself, his muscles contracted as he was about to deliver the first hit...

'Huh... what now?'

Before he could go through with his plan he felt something, there were other people moving their way. All of them possessed similar cultivation levels to these two people and he had a sinking suspicion as to why.

"Lin Qiao... Fairy Dongmei, Are you returning as well?"

A boat with two more Thunderball Hall elders moved closer to them. Instead of one trial disciple on that boat there were two. The two boats moved next to each other and Lin Qiao started talking to the man that called out to them.

'Fuck... can I take four of them?'

He was sure that he could knock these two down that were close to him. The other two would be a problem though. At this moment in time, he didn't really have any aerial capabilities. They would sourly give chase the only thing he could do was to destroy the other boat.

Then another problem arose, they would notify their sect members. All of them would swarm to this place. There was nothing but open fields and nowhere to hide. If this pair of elders was so close by, there could be more of them.

'Does this mean...'

Unless he defeated them in an instant it was very likely that he would involve himself in some silly chase. Then if they fetched a cultivator that was at a similar strength as a core formation elder, he might be done for.

Before he could make a decision he felt another power source approaching. Soon one, two, and three more flying boats appeared. Each one carried a Martial Grandmaster level of cultivator; it didn't seem like stealing the boat was an option anymore.

They traveled for about a day, in the end, there were fifty of those small flying boats. Some were larger and carried more trial disciples while most were the same size as the one he came on.

Soon they arrived at the meeting spot, the Thunderball Hall was starting to appear on the horizon. Lightning and thunder greeted his arrival and a large white snow-covered mountain. On it he saw some kind of large tower, the lightning bolts constantly hitting its tip.

'I guess... I'll have to rethink my strategy again...'

Chapter 339

Boats, many boats riddled the sky like flies around the fireplace they circled around a large stormy mountain. On one of these small vessels was Zhang Dong, his eyes glued to the strange structure in the middle.

The tower that he saw from afar stretched all the way up into the clouds and pierced them. There were many lightning bolts connecting with this tower. The stormy clouds circled around it while this tower absorbed these energies with what looked to be many lightning rods.

These rods were sticking out from this tower and glowing red each time the electricity made contact with them. This long tower went down and connected to a castle-like structure right on top of a snowy mountain.

Even from here, he could tell that this storm would be a good power source. If he was allowed to enter it and cultivate, he felt like he could be able to jump right into the core formation level. For this, he would have to make his way up to the very top.

‘Is it worth the trouble...’

Was the thought on his mind. He felt like he already overstayed his welcome here. The best thing to do was to just remove himself from the equation. He could already feel that there were some people above his cultivation level and he had to hope that his disguising technique would not be seen through. It was theoretically core formation proof but that didn’t account for special detection devices or skills that the people in this empire had developed.

“Is this the last batch of disciples?”

“Yes, elder Jingyi!”

While Zhang Dong was on the little dinghy that they called a flying ship he took a note of this Elder Jingyi. He was an older gentleman with long red hair and a well kept beard that was somewhat trimmed to pronounce his jawline.

He was clearly above the Martial Grandmaster realm, somewhere on the onset of the next Martial Saint realm. Zhang Dong did not feel comfortable facing somewhat of that caliber, at least not yet.

His spatial ring was filled with all sorts of treasures that he needed to absorb. Would he have a quiet spot to take in all the weapons to advance his body refinement to the next level? The spirit stones would grant him some system points that he could also directly spend on his cultivation.

For now, he needed to wait and hope for a chance to present itself for him. If push came to shove he already knew where he would be heading.

“You have all been chosen to be trial disciples for our Thunderball Hall. This does not mean that you are part of our Hall just yet!”

This old red-haired man started talking. He gave the disciple candidates the rundown while they listened.

“You all will be tested on your potential, if you can successfully persevere through the coming weeks, you will be able to join the other outer disciples! If you show talent, you might even be able to join the inner disciples and be invited directly into the hall building!”

At the finish of the sentence, the thunderstorm in the background started to rumble. It was clear that the inner disciples were allowed to go into that tower and cultivate with that lightning energy.

Zhang Dong theorized that those lightning rods were some kind of filtering treasures. They probably contained the chaotic electric energy and pushed them into the tower. There the cultivators could use it to cultivate the lightning that was now more controllable.

There was a long-winded speech about how everyone needed to behave and how they were not allowed to leave the sect grounds for now. This is what he had feared, that leaving this sect at this moment would become hard.

Without any means of fast transportation, if one of those Martial Saint’s decided to go after him he would not be able to outrun them. There were not many places to hide around here, they were high in the mountains with only snow and rocks. On foot, he might not be able to make it down this mountain top before someone noticed his escape.

‘I should relax... It’s only been a day since I’ve come here. No one knows that I’m not this young master and don’t think anyone will care unless I start sticking out.’

For now, he decided to reorganize and keep himself hidden. Maybe during the coming days, an opportunity to flee would show itself. There was also the possibility of becoming an inner disciple. Which he would probably not have much of a problem with.

If he was allowed into the tower he would perhaps be able to absorb all of the electricity that it stored. Then after establishing his enriched lightning core he would just fly away on a sword.

He had lost his old spatial ring but there were some leftover items in his crafting abode that might still be there. Though he was not sure about his old items still being stored in his crafting abode. When the system got rebooted they might have been destroyed or used up to help him pass the barrier between the worlds.

“Show the trial disciples their new quarters, then tomorrow we will start the training!”

The long-winded speech was finally over and the red-haired elder flew away on his sword. The rest of them started descending down to the ground.

The main sect building was composed of that large tower with the castle-like structure in the middle. There were also many other smaller structures and houses around it going down from the mountain top. It made it look like there was a city on this large mountain but all the people living here were cultivators.

“You will remain here! An outer hall elder will come and instruct you at sunrise, rest well as you might not have an opportunity later!”

Lin Qiao and Zhou Dongmei were quick to leave after they dumped him onto the ground. Some other elder gave everyone an

Announcement

while pointing to a large wooden shack. It seemed that this would be the place where these trial disciples would be staying.

While paying close attention to the surroundings he slowly followed after the youths. The doors to this large shack were quite squeaky and the inside looked quite minimalistic.

“What is this? Do they expect us to live here?”

There it was, the first complaint. One of the young masters that was brought up with a silver spoon started complaining. This was only natural, after spending years and being treated like little emperors they now had to live like servants.

This was one of the tactics that the sects liked to put their disciples through. They wanted to show them that they were nothing special and only the strong survived in the end. If the young potential disciples couldn't follow orders, they would be quickly reprimanded and punished.

This looked more like a barracks for guardsmen than something that you would expect to find at a high-class sect. It was apparent that this youth here thought that he would get something like a cultivation cave for himself. These were reserved for inner sect disciples while the outer sect disciples had to always prove their worth.

It was a similar thing in his own United Element's sect, but the dorms that they created for them would be considered rather lavish. The prospects had to share rooms but they were only in twos and could trade in their points for better housing and cultivation resources if they worked for it.

“Be quiet, the elders have ordered us to go to sleep and prepare for tomorrow!”

Another young master called out after hearing this one complain and quickly a shouting match between the two youths was started.

‘Ah... didn't think I'd be part of one of these...’

Zhang Dong knew what was about to happen, the establishment of the pack leader. The ones that thought that they deserved the spot would soon show themselves. This was quite natural when a large group of young men gathered. They were quick to establish a hierarchy between each other but this meant that there would be bloodshed.

“You dare!?”

“Why wouldn't I dare! This young master will teach you the error of your ways!”

A fight began and it didn't look like the senior Hall members were interested in stopping them. He could feel some elders in the Martial Master realm looking from afar but they weren't doing anything. This was probably seen as part of the course and if someone got injured during it, it would be their fault.

In the process of the fight, a couple of the bunk beds that were in this large shed were turned into splinters. Soon the young master that was complaining at the start was down on the ground and covered in blood.

It appeared that this young man was part of a group of three. And the two others jumped into the fray to attack the winner. He was not alone though and soon more bodies hit the floor.

The fight was even taken outside, this was a good moment for him to look at the skills that these youths had. They were all past the Inner Aura middle stage with the strongest being at the late stage. Dai Rong would be considered quite weak and at the bottom of the totem pole if he was here.

Within an hour of fighting, there was finally a winner. It was one young master with a larger frame than the others. He was clearly a dual cultivator with both body refining techniques as well as regular Qi ones.

He was part of a larger group of five that all made it into this outer disciple training ground. By being more coordinated than the rest they achieved victory over the youngsters that were mostly without any help. Some of the more crafty ones accepted this as normal and joined this group.

Some of the more stubborn ones were in the process of forming factions of their own. There were about forty people here. Twenty of them had joined this youth group while a few smaller groups that was probably going to try to get their revenge also formed.

They needed to bite their tongues for now but they knew that in the future an opportunity could arise. With that thought in mind Zhang Dong could see the various expressions of the young plotters. Some looked quite pissed off while some others just gave up right at this very moment.

‘Is it over? Great... I think I should try to sleep...’

Zhang Dong and a couple of youths remained in the barracks without going out. After this nonsense was over he moved to one of the beds and decided to meditate. He had just created his foundation pillar the day before and he needed to be sure that it was consolidated.

“Hey, what do you think you are doing? Who said you could take that bed, that belongs to me now!”

Zhang Dong looked at the person that was talking to him. It was a person from the strongest faction, it seemed that he had seen him occupied the bed. He knew very well that this youth was just trying to pull a power move on him to assert his dominance.

“You want the bed? Sure go ahead.”

He did not care about the bed though, he could just meditate on the ground if he wanted. There was no reason for him to stick out just yet and on the first day of getting here.

“Wait! Not so fast... you have a nice ring there... Give it to me!”

Zhang Dong looked at his hand that was now being grasped by this unknown young master. This spatial ring had quite the amount of treasure inside of it and he would not be willing to just give it away.

‘Oh, boy...here we go again.’

Chapter 340

Zhang Dong found himself in a bit of a predicament. He had hoped to avoid confronting the other young testosterone-filled youths. They were all just done pumping their chests out and now ready to collect on the winnings.

The Thunderball Hall did not care about any old possessions that they brought here from their old clans. Thus a lot of the young lords here were still in possession of their spatial rings. He knew of a little technique that could mask the insides of the ring but only when it was close to his body.

If someone decided to take it away then they would see that he had quite the large pile of lower grade spirit stones in there. It didn't seem that this youth was the type that backed down though but he would try to resolve it without too much fighting.

"Are you ignoring this Zhong Yahui? I saw you cower in fear while all of us sect brothers fought, a coward like you does not deserve any cultivation resources!"

The young man named Zhong Yahui reached out with his hand. He was clearly trying to grab Zhang Dong's wrist to relinquish him of his ring.

Even before Zhang Dong could use his superior diplomacy skills it seemed that it was over. This young man had a certain shit-eating grin plastered all over his face. It was clear that he was itching to fight some more, he was probably one of those types.

Some youths that had been beaten up by this young master looked on from the side. It seemed to them that another one would succumb to this bullies' strength.

For some odd reason though they all felt a small gust of wind. A little bit later they saw the smirking Zhong Yahui falling down onto his face while Dai Rong moved to the side.

"Oh... he must have tired himself out during the fights... how regrettable..."

Zhang Dong whistled to himself while pushing the passed-out youth away with his foot. While Zhong Yahui was focusing on his spatial ring he delivered a strike to his neck. He was a cultivator of a big realm above these youths, doing so without being spotted was possible. His arm moved so fast that at most the others could see a blur and feel the wind pressure.

'No one should have been able to see what I did...'

He thought to himself while trying to avoid the curious gazes. It did look suspicious that one of the stronger trial disciples had passed out just like that.

'I don't think they are buying it...'

The youths continued to stare at him and the passed out Zhong Yahui. They were probably not so dumb to believe that a cultivator like that would just go down without a fight. He knew what they were thinking but not like he could do anything about it now.

"What happened to brother Yahui..."

The number two from the group of victorious youths appeared out of the crowd. He was just in time to look at the passed out Yahui who he now called a brother. This was Bai Tu who along with Yahui and Wang Yating who was the strongest had taken over this group of disciples.

“Someone explain this!”

He was quick to grab someone from the peanut gallery. Now after showing his strength he was not afraid to enforce the rules around here.

“He just fell over... I don’t know”

“How does he just fall over, did you gang up on him? I guess we didn’t crush you lot thoroughly!”

The young man he was holding on was already covered in wounds. He and most of the people here had taken part in the fight for the top spot and were now cowering before the might of the top cultivators here.

“Senior brother I’m not lying, he walked over to that brother there and just fell over.”

“Oh?”

The number two from the trio of young masters homed in on Zhang Dong. He had sat down on the bed now and was sitting on it with his legs crossed. Even though he just wanted everyone to go away and leave him alone, trouble was heading his way.

“You! Did you do this to my junior brother?”

For someone like Zhang Dong that was now used to being looked up to, it was hard to get used to getting talked down to. This young man showed no respect, luckily he was talking with someone that didn’t take such things to heart.

“Your junior brother? I don’t know who you are talking about, I’m just trying to meditate, the elders told us to sleep, we should listen to their wise words.”

“The elders? Now listen here you...”

This youth was apparently not having it either. While talking he reached his hand out towards the sitting Zhang Dong. Then, just like before the people in the room could feel a strange gust of wind. Bai Tu was then seen falling backward with his eyes rolling back into his eye sockets.

“They really must be tired, all that fighting must have taken a toll on their spiritual energy...”

He smiled while talking to the rest of the people in this room. Even though he was trying to hide it, it didn’t seem like this group of youths believed any of his bullshit. They started inching away from the spot that he was sitting in. One might have been a coincidence but not two of the stronger trial disciples were down on the ground.

“Junior brother Tu? Junior brother Yahui?”

It was time for the third stooge to appear. Wang Yating was his name and he did not look like someone below the age of twenty. He already had a full-grown beard and was at least two meters in height. There was a certain scowl on his face as he looked at the two young masters that Zhang Dong had knocked out.

“What happened here, you better explain everything to this Wang Yating!”

The tall young man cracked his knuckles while looking at everyone gathered here. The people evaded his gaze but soon they started pointing out with their fingers. Even though their fear of Zhang Dong was growing they still found this brute to be the scarier one.

“So it was you? How did a scrawny-looking bastard like you manage to defeat my junior brothers? Do you dare face me?”

Zhang Dong started to wonder why his infiltration schemes always seemed to backfire. The less he tried to stand out, the more people looked his way. Now, this bear-looking person was trying to start a fight with him and he was slowly starting to lose his composure.

“You want to face me?”

“Who else is there, are you scared?”

“Hah...”

He knew that he should not let himself get yanked down to this person’s level. The young man was half his age, as a proper adult, he should refrain from being too violent. However, this didn’t mean that he wasn’t willing to show the rowdy youths a thing or two.

Slowly he stood up from his spot and took a step forward. Where his foot met was where he dropped one of the juniors of this senior brother. He just used him as a stepping stone to get closer to Wang Yating.

The large man at the sight of that became enraged. This was not due to Zhang Dong hurting his junior brothers in front of him, no. By stepping on them in front of their Senior Brother he was showing disrespect to him, it was a blatant hit to his face.

“You dare step on my brother?”

“Oh, I didn’t see him there, my apologies, Ya-bing was it?”

The large youth started getting red in the face, he was clearly not used to people making fun of him. Zhang Dong knew those types well, if someone stepped on his shoe he would have them beaten to an inch of their life.

“How brazen...”

“Do you think he stands a chance against senior brother Yating?”

“I don’t know... maybe those two really were just tired...”

The other trial sect members started whispering amongst each other while Zhang Dong and Wang Yating headed outside this shack. This time around he was not planning to end it with just a quick hit but there was no reason to destroy the barracks in the process.

‘Those elders could probably feel me do something anyway, I guess I can show them some of my strength ...’

Zhang Dong was slowly abandoning the notion of leaving this place too quickly. From what he could tell there were protective formations as well as Martial Masters spread out everywhere.

The formation that was protecting this sect was at the core formation level, about the later stage. With his current cultivation, he would not be able to disable it even with the help of his knowledge. He would at least need to prepare some items beforehand and for that he needed something and that something was privacy.

His plans have shifted in attaining that, if he was seen as a genius he would probably be given his own private spot as an inner sect disciple. Even some of the outer sect disciples had their own cultivation caves or houses.

There were people watching from the outside and this guy he was facing was the strongest person here. This was not the only barracks with people in it, to get the spot he wanted he would need to eliminate all the other prospects by outperforming them. He could probably use some underhanded methods but those would probably not be needed.

"I'll beat some respect into you!"

They were now outside and everyone was eager to see what Zhang Dong was capable of. The ones that lost previously were hoping that he would win, while also trying to see if they could witness some faults in Yating's technique that they could later exploit.

Zhang Dong was wearing one of those flowy robes that he disliked. He didn't reply to the taunts and Yating finally lost it and charged towards him with a mad rush. His muscles expanded and his fingers turned into blackened claws.

He was using some strange body refining technique that changed his hands into deadly weapons. He did a number on his previous opponents which were full of deep scratch wounds.

Regretfully he was fighting someone much more experienced than him. Zhang Dong was sure to drop his cultivation level to appear as someone at the late inner aura stage.

Yating went in like a savage beast but he was unable to connect with any of his attacks. For his size, he was quite nimble but each time he thought he would draw blood his opponent managed to slip away at the last second.

This was all a show, Zhang Dong was playing it up to the elders that were looking. He wanted to appear as someone versed in fighting by managing to evade each deadly blow after deadly blow.

"Stop running and fight like a man!"

"As you wish."

Zhang Dong replied while stopping in his tracks. He swished his sleeve to the side and stuck out his hand towards his opponent.

"A battle of strength, would that satisfy you?"

"Damn conceited idiot!"

Yating went red in the face but quickly took Zhang Dong up on the offer. He grasped his opponent's smaller hand and began to squeeze while trying to break the fingers. To his surprise no matter how hard

he tried, he could not hear any sound of bones cracking. Instead, he felt like he was stuck in some kind of vice, unable to pull his hand away.

“Did you really think you are the only one that studies body refining techniques?”

Zhang Dong’s hand turned into a silvery color and everyone could see it appear metallic in nature. The bear-looking young man’s digits were promptly snapped and the crunching sounds could be heard by everyone here.

Yating started screaming while going down to his knees, then with a well-placed smack to the neck he was knocked out cold by Zhang Dong. The other young members looked on with horror at Yating’s demise. The monster that defeated them was easily dispatched by this unknown young man, putting him at the very top of their group.

“What is this, fighting between junior members is forbidden!”

Suddenly the Martial Masters that were hiding in the bushes appeared at the scene. There were three of them and they quickly dispersed everyone. The injured Yating was carried out into the infirmary while the rest were ordered to go to sleep. Finally, the first night at the new sect was over, what the next day would bring remained to be seen.