

The Immortal's Wine Store

#Chapter 261 - Day Of The Recruitment - Read The Immortal's Wine Store Chapter 261 - Day Of The Recruitment

Chapter 261 - Day Of The Recruitment

It was the first recruitment day of Jiu Shen's Heavenly Sword Tower.

The announcement of this recruitment was so abrupt, but the area around the tower was already packed with a huge number of young elites from all over the Profound Dragon Continent.

The Silver Wing Empire became the focus of the whole continent because of this event and those that initially wanted to attack it immediately ceased their movements. Who would dare to attack the empire that was under the protection of Jiu Shen?

The Blue Fang Empire who was about to show its claws also recalled its troops after hearing about Jiu Shen's prowess.

"To think that I would actually meet an acquaintance here. It is good to see you here, Brother Zhu!" Liu Mengdi greeted when he saw a familiar face among the crowd.

Zhu Ren turned his head around and was pleasantly surprised to see Liu Mengdi. He then smiled back in response and said. "Oh, so it is Young Master Liu!"

This Zhu Ren was one of the final eight participants of the Annual Martial Arts Contest. His name became even more popular after his great display of skill in the art of spearmanship during the contest.

"How have you been, Brother Zhu? I heard that a lot of sects invited you to join their ranks, but you refused all of them." Liu Mengdi said, feeling a bit intrigued.

Zhu Ren shook his head and replied. "None of those sects caught my eyes, and I just can't picture out myself following those so-called top sects. I want to practice my spearmanship to its peak and my instincts are telling me that this is the place where I should be."

Liu Mengdi was a bit surprised by Zhu Ren's dream. Everyone knew how hard it was to train the spear, but this young man in front of him does not even look bothered about it. A feeling of admiration suddenly rose from his heart as he looked at Zhu Ren.

"Hahah! With your skills and talent, I am certain that you will gain the approval of the Heavenly Sword Tower! Come on! Let's go and find the others before the recruitment starts!" Liu Mengdi laughed as he walked forward.

Zhu Ren did not even have the time to decline his offer so he had no choice but to follow Liu Mengdi. However, he also wanted to see the other participants in the martial arts contest.

"Brother Zhu, I heard that Young Master Beiming Chu will also apply here... I thought that guy would only stay in the Beiming Family's manor and serve as a soldier of the empire, but it seems like he also has the same goal as you." Liu Mengdi whispered to Zhu Ren.

Zhu Ren's ears perked up when he heard him mention that name.

Beiming Chu was also one of the final eight participants of that contest and everyone witnessed his wild way of fighting. He also managed to make 'that guy' pull out his sword.

"Beiming Chu, a man who made Yang Zenke pull out his sword..." Zhu Ren muttered under his breath.

Liu Mengdi nodded his head and thought about that crazily strong youth. "Yang Zenke... He is training under Sect Master Jiu Shen. He should be here, right?"

"Ho! Isn't this Young Master Liu Mengdi and Young Master Zhu?!" A cheeky voice suddenly drifted behind them, making both men unconsciously turn their heads around.

When they saw who the speaker was, their mouths suddenly twitched.

"Gre-Greetings, Your Highness, Princess Sylvia!" They both greeted stiffly.

Sylvia pouted and pointed at the two men as she grumbled. "You both don't have to be formal with me! Especially you, Liu Mengdi! Don't forget that you still owe me when I helped you that time at the store! Hmph!"

Liu Mengdi was tongue-tied when he heard her words. Zhu Ren was similarly speechless, but none of them dared to talk back to this little demoness.

Standing behind Princess Sylvia was Prince Dante. He stepped forward and tried to ease up the atmosphere. "It's great to see you both here. Do you mind if we come with you?"

Zhu Ren opened his mouth and wanted to decline his offer, but he closed it back up when he saw Sylvia glaring at him.

Liu Mengdi secretly sighed and nodded his head with a bit of reluctance in his heart. He was worried that this little girl might again do something that would endanger them.

Thinking about it, Liu Mengdi prayed to the gods that nothing bad would happen.

"Don't worry. I won't let this little girl wander around without permission." Prince Dante assured them when he saw the look on their faces.

Princess Sylvia stuck her tongue out and harrumphed.

"Let's go near the entrance of the tower. I saw the young elites of the Alliance going that way." Prince Dante's words immediately made them interested.

They have heard a lot of the Alliance and it was said to be the foundation of the Profound Dragon Continent.

Many top cultivators and experts are among their ranks. The younger generation in the Alliance is also trained with a generous amount of resources and time, making them a step ahead of their peers.

Under the lead of Prince Dante, their small group went towards the entrance of the Heavenly Sword Tower.

Along the way, they met some of their friends and acquaintances, making their small group much bigger. They also met Beiming Chu and the others from the Beiming Family.

"We are finally here after that tiring training..." Han Sen said as he looked at the imposing sword tower ahead of them.

"According to Lord Hu, today is the recruitment day of master's Heavenly Sword Tower. Some of the guys we met at that contest might be here." Yang Zenke said with glistening eyes.

Han Sen and the others nodded their heads at his words.

"Come here, you brats! Don't let Sect Master Jiu Shen wait too long for you!" Hu Xiandao shouted at them.

"Yes, Lord Hu!" Yang Zenke and the rest immediately ran towards Hu Xiandao. They were excited to see Jiu Shen once again...

Chapter 262 - First Test

"Greetings, master!" Yang Zenke and the others youths greeted respectfully. Xiao Hua and the young girls of the Ice Cloud Sword Sect also greeted Jiu Shen with reverence.

Jiu Shen sat lazily on his chair while stroking a sleeping chubby white cat in his arms.

This group of young elites stared at the pair with great respect and worship. Some of them were able to witness the prowess shown by Jiu Shen and Ice when the Xue Family rebelled. They no longer dared to look down on the fat snow-white cat lying peacefully in Jiu Shen's arms.

Jiu Shen remained seated as he turned his gaze to the young cultivators in front of him. "You've done a great job on surviving inside the Endless Forest. I've even heard that some groups managed to defeat strong savage beasts during your training inside the forest. As a reward, I am willing to accept all of you as disciples of my Heavenly Sword Tower. Of course, you are free to decline this offer."

Jiu Shen's words made Yang Zenke and the others excited and they hurriedly kneeled and prostrated as they said in unison. "We are willing to become disciples of the Heavenly Sword Tower!"

Their heartfelt voices echoed inside the room like a clap of thunder, but Jiu Shen wasn't bothered by this. He gently lifted the chubby white cat in his arms and rose to his feet.

"I still have one reward for each of you other than becoming disciples of my Heavenly Sword Tower..." Jiu Shen's words instantly made their eyes twinkle with excitement.

Jiu Shen did not waste any more time and waved his right hand.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh.

Yang Zenke and the others suddenly felt a small object on the palm of their hands, and they were startled when they discovered what the object was.

"A spatial ring! And the space inside should be at least nine cubic meters!" One of them eagerly shouted after checking the spatial ring in his hands.

"Wait. There are a few things inside." Han Sen said and took out a small book that was inside his space ring.

[Heaven Smiting Sword Technique]

Han Sen's eyes almost popped out after reading the book's imposing name.

"This..."

Yang Zenke and the others immediately took out the items inside their space rings after seeing the dumbfounded look of Han Sen.

The corner of Jiu Shen's lips curved upwards upon seeing this scene.

"Inside your space rings are the items given to all Inner Disciples of the Heavenly Sword Tower. You should all wear your new robes after leaving this room." Jiu Shen said calmly.

"Yes, master!"

"Since my Heavenly Sword Tower is now officially established, all of you must call me Sect Master in the future." Jiu Shen added sternly.

"Yes, Sect Master!" Everyone nodded their heads in understanding.

"Good! All of you can leave. Yang Zenke, you stay. I still have a few things for you to do." Jiu Shen said to Yang Zenke.

Han Sen and the other disciples immediately left the room with excited faces. Even the girls who were usually reserved had similar expressions on their faces.

"Sect Master, what do you want me to do?" Yang Zenke asked with his head down.

Jiu Shen walked towards the nearby window and gazed at the people crowding at the entrance of the sword tower as he said. "Bring Liu Mengdi inside the tower and give this to him."

Swoosh.

Yang Zenke caught the space ring with one hand.

"I will get it done, Sect Master." He said in a respectful tone.

"Leave."

Yang Zenke bowed his head before he left the room.

"Liu Mengdi... Wasn't he the guy who fought toe to toe with Beiming Chu? If not for his carelessness, the outcome of that fight might have been different..." Yang Zenke muttered to himself.

"Brother, they are starting the recruitment. Look!" Princess Sylvia said as she pointed at a cold-looking woman standing at the entrance of the sword tower.

Prince Dante and the rest of their group stared at the woman and walked towards her eagerly.

"Greetings. Allow me to introduce myself first before I begin the first round of the test. My name is Xia Xinyue, an elder of the Heavenly Sword Tower." Xia Xinyue introduced herself in a cold and calm tone.

She immediately attracted everyone's attention after that short introduction.

Xia Xinyue was pleased when she saw that everyone was now looking at her.

"Our Heavenly Sword Tower will only accept the best young elites among the younger generation. We care not about your background and we will accept everyone even if they are commoners or servants. However, in order to gain the chance to become disciples of our sect, all of you must pass three tests. And I will be the overseer for the first test." Xia Xinyue said while scanning the crowd with her icy gaze.

The eyes of Prince Dante and others instantly glistened with anticipation.

'It's finally starting...' They muttered in their hearts.

"The first test is the easiest and you won't have to do anything other than placing your right hand on this crystal ball." Xia Xinyue slowly said while showing them a crystal ball that was 12 inches in diameter. The crystal ball was glowing with a dim brilliance, but everyone knew that it was no ordinary item.

"This crystal ball is called the Brilliant Star. It can detect anyone's age and talent as long as they place their right hand on top of it. Just so you know, our sect is only accepting those with ages twenty-five years old and below. And you must be able to light up at least five stars inside the crystal. Now, I want all of you to line up..." Xia Xinyue spared the bullshit and immediately asked everyone to line up.

After Xia Xinyue announced the commencement of the first test, a few other cold-looking women stepped forward while holding a piece of crystal ball in their hands.

Prince Dante and the others eagerly lined up with the other young elites, and a few of them even cut in line just to get ahead of everyone else.

"No cutting in line! Disobedience means instant disqualification!" Xia Xinyue shouted coldly as she glared at the crowd.

After that, no one dared to disrupt the queue anymore.

Chapter 263 - End Of The First Test

"This crystal ball looks the same as the one used to check our cultivation when we registered for the annual martial arts contest. The only difference is that this one can measure our talent, but is that really possible?" Zhu Ren whispered softly.

"Come on, Brother Zhu! Sect Master Jiu Shen is even capable of defeating Alliance Head Situ. It should not be a surprise if he has these kinds of items." Liu Mengdi patted Zhu Ren's back forcefully as he uttered those words.

Princess Sylvia nodded her head in agreement and she even wore a proud look as if she was the one who was being complimented.

"We will know soon if this item is really capable of doing such a thing... It's now my turn. You guys can wait for me here." Beiming Chu said before walked towards Xia Xinyue.

Prince Dante and the others glanced at him closely. They were eager to know if the Brilliant Star was truly capable of measuring one's talent. After all, they haven't heard of anything capable of doing that...

Beiming Chu paused in front of Xia Xinyue and stared at the crystal ball she was holding.

"Place your right hand on top of it." Xia Xinyue said in a calm tone.

Beiming Chu no longer hesitated. He slowly placed his hand on the crystal ball and when his skin touched the surface of the crystal, he felt a warm sensation spreading through his palm.

The dim Brilliant Star emitted a faint white light that glowed briefly.

"Beiming Chu. Twenty years old. Seven stars. You passed the first test." Xia Xinyue announced with an unchanging expression.

Beiming Chu was absentminded and he only recovered himself when he heard Xia Xinyue's words.

He was glad that he passed the first test, but he was bewildered about the meaning of his seven-star talent.

He walked back towards Prince Dante and the others with a calm look, but the curiosity in his heart intensified the more he thought about the result.

"Just what does it mean..." He muttered under his breath.

"Congratulations, Brother Beiming! So far, you have the highest talent among all those that had themselves tested!" Prince Dante said with a warm smile. He was genuinely happy that his friend passed the first test without any problem.

"Alright! Now, it's my turn! I'll be back right away! Hehe!" Princess Sylvia grinned as she walked away.

After less than a few minutes, she came back with a stiff smile.

"Why do you look unhappy when you passed the test?" Liu Mengdi asked, feeling quite confused at her expression.

Princess Sylvia pouted as she replied. "I thought I had a higher talent, but it seems like I'm just a seven-star talent like Brother Beiming."

Prince Dante chuckled and the others chuckled secretly when they saw her distressed look, but they were also surprised when they heard that she was only a seven-star talent.

Cough! Cough!

"Ehem!" A faked cough suddenly interrupted their train of thoughts and they immediately turned their heads to glance at the newcomer.

"You... You... You... Yang Zenke?!" Liu Mengdi pointed at Yang Zenke with a look of shock.

"So it's Brother Yang! What brings you here?" Prince Dante pulled the shocked Liu Mengdi and stared at Yang Zenke with interest. He was truly curious about this young man who managed to awe everyone with his savage way of fighting.

Yang Zenke nodded his head at Prince Dante and replied in an indifferent tone. "I'm here under the orders of Sect Master Jiu Shen. I have something to give to Liu Mengdi."

He sounded rude and arrogant, but none dared to voice out their displeasure. Not even the little demoness dared to show a hint of hostility on her face.

"To me?" Liu Mengdi pointed at himself with a perplexed look.

Yang Zenke nodded and said. "Take this space ring. Sect Master Jiu mentioned that you are now a disciple of the Heavenly Sword Tower. You don't have to join the assessment anymore and you can go inside the tower with me."

Liu Mengdi's eyes widened.

"Hahaha! To think that Sect Master Jiu was not joking with me at that time! How foolish of me to doubt him! Hahaha! Let's go!" Liu Mengdi burst into peals of laughter as he thought about it.

Yang Zenke then glanced at Prince Dante and the rest and said. "I know all of you will be accepted as disciples of the Heavenly Sword Tower, so I won't offer you guys any words of encouragement. You can go look for me after the assessment is over."

After saying those words, he did not even wait for any reply before walking inside the sword tower.

"Good luck, all of you! I'll wait for you guys inside!" Liu Mengdi chuckled before following Yang Zenke.

Beiming Chu and the others stared at their figures speechlessly.

"That Yang Zenke guy still looks unapproachable as always." Prince Dante muttered.

Everyone else nodded their heads at his words.

"His confidence in us is pressuring me. I just hope that all of us can truly pass all three tests." Zhu Ren added with a somber tone.

"I don't like that guy! Hmph! I'll smack his face after I get inside the sword tower!" Princess Sylvia harrumphed.

Beiming Chu and the others merely smiled at her words. They knew that she was just spouting nonsense, but none of them said anything about it lest they incur this little demoness' rage...

The first assessment continued for a few more hours.

There were thousands of applicants, but only several hundred remained after everyone was tested.

Xia Xinyue surveyed the crowd with her cold eyes and announced. "All of you passed the first round of the assessment and I congratulate you for that. Now, please go inside the sword tower and take a rest. We have already prepared your accommodations, so you have nothing to worry about. As for the second test, it will be held tomorrow morning, and latecomers are immediately disqualified!"

The words 'immediately disqualified' resounded inside everyone's head like an eruption of a volcano. They silently told themselves to never be late for the second test tomorrow...

Chapter 264 - Truth About The Brilliant Star

Inside the only room on the topmost floor of the sword tower, Jiu Shen sat on his chair with a calm look on his face. Lying peacefully on his embrace was a little girl with short white hair. She had a wide smile on her face, a clear evidence that she was having a good dream.

Behind the two of them was a tall young lady with long purple hair. She was looking at the man in front of her with respect and admiration.

"I'm again one step closer to my goal..." Jiu Shen muttered under his breath. His indifferent eyes flashed intensely for a moment.

This wasn't the first time that Long Meili heard her master speak about this goal of his, but she always tactfully chose to remain silent during these moments. She knew that Jiu Shen had his reasons for suddenly establishing a sect after living an idle life inside his store. As Jiu Shen's subordinate, she would always remain at his side, ready to do his bidding...

"Knock. Knock. Knock."

"Come inside." Jiu Shen said when he heard the knocking on the door.

Creak.

Jiu Shen stared calmly at Xia Xinyue who had just stepped inside the room. The coldness that she showed to the young applicants earlier was gone and was now replaced with a warm and docile look.

"Sect Master, the first assessment is now over. From the initial 13,689 applications, 758 of them passed. With all due respect, I think the standard is just too high for the applicants, and there might only be a little more than a hundred after the final assessment. Do you still wish to continue with the same arrangement?" Xia Xinyue asked with concern.

She was the one who tested the applicants' talents and she saw a lot that she deemed worthy of nurturing. However, most of them failed to reach the standards set by Jiu Shen.

Jiu Shen's expression remained the same after hearing her words. It was as if he had already expected to hear those words.

While gently rubbing the hair of the little girl in his arms, Jiu Shen replied with an indifferent tone.

"Xinyue, only those that are accepted by the Brilliant Star possesses the fate and talent to surpass the 9th-rank Saint. However, how many of these talented young elites could attain such a level of cultivation in their lifetime? I can indeed help those with lesser

talents to overcome that realm, but it would take many years and a lot of valuable resources to do this. I did not establish this sect just to create a massive army..."

Jiu Shen did not want to linger for too long in Nuar. That's why he only chose to accept the best young elites of the Profound Dragon Continent. Besides, he did not mention one thing to Xia Xinyue regarding how the Brilliant Star works.

It is not just capable of measuring one's talent. It is also capable of measuring a person's fate, luck, and willpower! That means those that passed the first assessment were not all talented individuals. Some of them might just have a sufficient amount of luck and fate or high willpower.

Jiu Shen sacrificed a bit of his soul power to create a few of those crystal balls, but he knew that it was worth it. After all, the heaven-defying ability that it has is just too important to achieve his goal.

Xia Xinyue no longer pressed the matter when she saw Jiu Shen's unchanging look.

"Sect Master, is there anything else you want me to do?" She asked with her head down.

Jiu Shen was about to say no, but he suddenly felt the little girl in his embrace sucking his thumb like a vampire.

"Have the kitchen staff prepare five bottles of milk for me and bring it here immediately." He said while looking at Ice with a gentle expression.

Xia Xinyue knew that the milk was meant for Ice, but she still nodded her head as she responded. "Yes, Sect Master."

The room lapsed into silence after that and Xia Xinyue took this as a sign to leave the room.

Creak.

"Master, do you want me to massage your shoulders?" Long Meili asked as she held Jiu Shen's stiff shoulders.

Jiu Shen was silent for a moment, but he still nodded his head to accept her offer. His neck and shoulder felt a bit stiff after holding Ice in his embrace for too long. A good massage might help him...

"So this is the Heavenly Sword Tower. I can't believe that it is even more gorgeous inside! It looks even more imposing than the headquarters of the Alliance!" Prince Dante said with a look of shock.

"Your Highness, you've been to the Alliance's headquarters before?" Zhu Ren asked curiously.

Prince Dante nodded his head and replied. "Yes, I've been there twice when my father, His Majesty, had something to report to the Alliance. That place has thousands of supreme individuals, but I doubt if one of them could even beat Sect Master Jiu."

Zhu Ren and the others nodded their heads in agreement.

Their group was currently seated cross-legged inside one of the sword tower's training rooms. It had such a vast space inside that it caused this group of youths to remain standing dumbfounded for more than ten seconds when they came inside this training room.

"Among our group, Brother Zhu has the highest measured talent. He is actually an eight-star talent!" Prince Dante said in admiration.

Zhu Ren felt a bit overwhelmed when he sensed the gazes of his friends.

"Yeah. I never thought that this spear maniac is actually hiding such monstrous talent..." Beiming Chu shook his head with a wry smile.

Zhu Ren felt a bit embarrassed, but he was a bit curious about how the Brilliant Star measured their talents. In his opinion, his talent was definitely not the best in their group, but the results showed by the Brilliant Star proved otherwise. Was it broken? Or was there something else about it?

"Just that, from the name of this sect, its focus should be on swordsmanship. Would you really be able to improve your spearmanship here?" Prince Dante glanced at Zhu Ren with a solemn look.

Chapter 265 - The Emaciated Girl

Prince Dante and the others talked for a few hours before they went to the rooms prepared for them.

Creak. Click.

Zhu Ren gently closed the door of his room and surveyed it with awe. He could not believe that he was inside such a luxurious room. Never in his life did he wish for such extravagance.

In front of him was a huge bed with a soft mattress made from the fur of a Furret Fox, a savage beast known for its fluffy and smooth fur.

He glanced around the room and saw a table and a chair, both items did not look ordinary at all. They were also made from precious trees and other items.

"And this is just the sect's guest room. I wonder what the living quarters of the disciples would look like..." Zhu Ren muttered to himself as he sat on the bed.

He recalled the results showed by the Brilliant Star and pondered deeply with his eyes closed.

"Do I really possess such terrifying talent? Certainly not... During my childhood, I was even ostracized and bullied because of my slow cultivation speed. I worked hard and practiced more than my peers. When they were asleep, I was thrusting my spear without rest... Just how did I manage to get that kind of result from the Brilliant Star?" Zhu Ren rubbed his temples.

At this moment, he knew that there must be something else about the Brilliant Star, but he chose to not disclose it to his friends. He was afraid that the elders of the Heavenly Sword Tower might disqualify him if he spread what he learned.

"For now, I should forget about it. I will use the remaining time to consolidate my cultivation..." Zhu Ren said as he sat cross-legged.

"Sect Master, it is time to start the second assessment. Do you want to watch how it goes?" Xia Xinyue asked as she looked at Jiu Shen with an affectionate gaze.

Jiu Shen thought for a moment before shaking his head. "I don't need to see it. Besides, I already have an idea on how many of them would pass."

Xia Xinyue raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Sect Master, can you tell me more about your guess?" She asked.

The corner of Jiu Shen's lips rose upwards as he replied. "You'll know about it soon. I know that you want to see how those applicants will do on this assessment."

Xia Xinyue sighed in regret with she heard his reply. He was still the same man who wants everything to remain a mystery... She thought to herself.

"By the way, who is the overseer for this assessment?" Jiu Shen asked curiously.

Xia Xinyue stared at him and replied with a smile. "It's Sister Lu Sulan."

Jiu Shen nodded his head when heard the name. "I see. You can leave now. Just tell me the results after the assessment is over."

Xia Xinyue bowed her head respectfully and said. "Yes, Sect Master."

After Xia Xinyue left the scene, Jiu Shen walked towards his room and gently opened the door.

Lying on top of his bed was the sleeping Ice. She was sucking on a bottle of milk with her eyes shut tight. Long Meili was also on his bed. She was closely observing Ice with a warm smile on her face.

When Long Meili sensed the arrival of Jiu Shen, she stared at the entrance of the room and saw his handsome figure smiling at her. She wanted to greet him, but she saw his signal to remain seated.

Jiu Shen sat beside Long Meili and stared carefully at the sleeping little girl. He gently caressed her cheeks and arranged her hair. He then shifted his gaze to Long Meili and asked silently. "The second assessment is about to start, don't you want to see it?"

Long Meili shook her head and responded in a small voice. "Master, I don't have any interest in those young humans. I only want to remain by your side..."

Jiu Shen smiled at her reply, but his eyes suddenly revealed a profound glow as he said. "Really? However, what if I say that one of them has a dragon bloodline? It's rather diluted, but that girl certainly possesses the blood of a dragon in her veins. She must have discovered the remains of a dragon and refined it to increase her cultivation. It is also possible that the dragon gave its blood essence to the girl before it died..."

When Long Meili heard those words, she immediately became agitated. She abruptly stood up and bowed at Jiu Shen as she said solemnly. "Master, thank you for informing me. I want to see if that girl is really worthy of that power."

Jiu Shen chuckled in his heart, but he put on an unperturbed look as he said to her. "Don't hurt her. She might not know that she received that kind of power, and if ever she passes all three assessments, you will be responsible for her training."

Long Meili was surprised, but she nodded her head gently. "Yes, master."

She then left the room with haste after bowing to Jiu Shen.

Jiu Shen closed his eyes and used his spiritual power to stare at the area where the second assessment was being held.

At the center of that place, he could see a tall tree that was about a thousand meters in height. Its huge branches coiled like serpents and its leaves were lush and full of vitality.

This tree is called the Tree of Illusion and it will serve a great purpose in the second assessment.

Jiu Shen then searched for a certain individual and stop his spiritual gaze on a girl with an emaciated appearance.

This girl looked rather pitiful and the clothes she wore was made from the cheap skin of a savage beast. From her appearance alone, anyone could tell that she came from a humble background. The only good thing about her was her pair of emerald-green eyes that shone with a brilliant light.

"From the constitution of her body, it looks like the dragon willingly gave her its blood essence. Without it, this girl would have already died from hunger and lack of nutrition. What a poor soul..." Jiu Shen muttered softly.

Chapter 266 - The Second Assessment Begins

Prince Dante and his friends stared at the tall tree ahead of them. It was so huge that they had to look up even when they were still quite a distance away from it.

"How did Sect Master Jiu Shen put this giant tree inside this place?! Before we entered the room, I thought it was just another training area, but to think it would be this vast..." Prince Dante said without hiding his astonishment.

"Brother, Sect Master Jiu should have used a higher level of space manipulation to create this place. I mean, this vast expanse of land is many times larger than his store's interior, so this place might have consumed a few of his resources. Even so, Sect Master Jiu's power is still as inestimable as always..." Princess Sylvia smiled proudly as she said those words.

Prince Dante and the others nodded their heads at her words. None of them could remain calm at the sight of this shocking scene.

"I wonder what the second assessment will be like?" Beiming Chu muttered curiously.

"No one knows, but it is definitely not so simple." Zhu Ren said in a serious tone.

The group stopped beneath the huge tree where all the other applicants waited. Every one of them was looking curiously at the tree that was even larger than many giant savage beasts. They were wondering as to what kind of tree it was that it even made the renowned Sect Master Jiu Shen placed it inside his sword tower.

"This tree..."

Clap! Clap! Clap!

A series of clapping sounds caught everyone's attention.

They stared at the woman who came down from one of the huge tree's branches and observed her. From the clothes she was wearing, they were certain that she was an elder of the Heavenly Sword Sect, so their gazes instantly turned into respect after realizing this. None of them even dared to ogle at her great figure in fear of incurring her rage.

"Good day, everyone. I am Lu Sulan, the overseer of the second assessment. All of you are the ones with the most supreme talents in the whole Profound Dragon Continent. However, not all of you will become disciples of our sect." Lu Sulan observed the crowd with a neutral expression.

"Lu Sulan? Isn't she the sect mistress of the Ice Cloud Sword Sect? How did she suddenly become an elder of the Heavenly Sword Tower?"

"Brother, you are not from the Silver Wing Empire, so you must be unaware of the relationship between Elder Lu Sulan and Sect Master Jiu Shen. The latter took the former as his disciple after acknowledging her talent in swordsmanship. This news was told to me by my family's patriarch, so it should be reliable."

"Silence!" Lu Sulan did not shout and merely uttered those words with a calm expression, but all the applicants felt their bodies going cold when they heard her voice.

After making everyone shut their mouths, Lu Sulan continued. "In front of you is a mysterious tree that Sect Master Jiu Shen managed to uncover from a distant place. He called it the Tree of Illusion because of the ability it possesses. At the moment, you are still unaffected by its strange power because of my interference, but after I take out the object protecting all of you from the tree's power, you'll understand my words."

Everyone became slightly perturbed when they heard the origin of the tree, but no one made a fuss when they saw Lu Sulan's serious expression.

"The second assessment will determine your battle abilities. In this test, you will awaken in a place where lesser demons are everywhere. Your goal is to collect the tokens that will be dropped after killing the lesser demons. Only those with at least ten tokens will

pass this assessment. Are there any questions before we start the test?" Lu Sulan glanced at the crowd with an indifferent look.

Someone from the applicants raised his hand and asked. "Elder Lu Sulan, can we work in groups during this assessment?"

After hearing this question, Prince Dante glanced at his friends and nodded his head at them. "We don't know what might happen in that place, so we should stick together as a group."

Lu Sulan's expressionless face suddenly changed. She was now wearing a mysterious smile on her face as she replied in a cold tone. "There is no rule on how you will get the tokens. Whether you stay in groups or stay alone is all at your discretion. Every one of you is free to do anything in that place as long as you don't kill the other applicants. Remember, everything that happens in that place will be seen by me and even Sect Master Jiu Shen might be observing what will take place, so give it everything you've got."

Another person raised his hands but his words immediately made the other applicants alarmed.

"Can we rob the other participants of their tokens?"

Lu Sulan was quite surprised when she saw who asked the question. It was actually a girl wearing shabby clothes. The most surprising thing about her was the apathetic gaze coming from her emerald-green eyes that shone with a bright luster.

Lu Sulan smiled at her and did not offer any answer. She merely waved her right hand and said. "Good luck, everyone. I will wait for your return..."

The bodies of all the applicants became sluggish as Lu Sulan said those words. They could see that the scenery in front of them was slowly warping, making them feel dizzy and nauseous.

Lu Sulan summoned a gentle wind and made everyone lie in a comfortable position.

Swoosh!

A tall young lady with long purple hair suddenly emerged in front of her, shocking Lu Sulan.

"Young Miss Meili, what brings you here?" Lu Sulan asked as she looked at this beautiful woman.

Long Meili glanced at the collapsed applicants on the ground before turning her gaze to Lu Sulan. "I want to see what is happening inside the World of Illusions."

Lu Sulan smiled as she took out an object from her space ring. It was a small metallic ball made from an unknown material. She then poured her true essence to activate it.

A huge screen was then shown to both women. On this huge screen, they saw what all the applicants were doing.

Long Meili removed her gaze from the screen and scanned the applicants lying on the ground using her spiritual vision. Her gaze then stopped on a pitiful-looking young girl. "There you are..."

After that, she moved her gaze back on the screen.

Chapter 267 - Sylphie Northcut

Inside a lush forest full of overgrown trees and dense shrubbery, an emaciated young girl slowly walked forward while holding an old worn-out sword in her hands. Her long brown hair was messy and dry, but the young girl did not even bother to smoothen it.

"I have to pass the exam no matter what I have to do!" She muttered fiercely to herself. Her emerald-green eyes flickered intensely as she spoke those words.

This young girl's name is Sylphie Northcut, a daughter of a wealthy noble family in a faraway kingdom.

The girl was living the dream life of many other kids. She had all the luxuries she could ask for and her parents had always given her the best food. However, everything came to an end when their kingdom was attacked by three neighboring kingdoms. Her family joined the war, but their kingdom was easily defeated by the combined might of their three opponents. The girl's parents died in battle and she was taken away to be sold as a slave. Everything became hell for her for over five years, but she refused to give up and she finally managed to escape from the Crimson Sun Sect who had bought her. She then coincidentally passed through the assessment being held in the Heavenly Sword Tower and joined the crowd of applicants to escape the pursuit of the Crimson Sun Sect and here she was in the middle of a forest, participating in the second assessment.

"I heard a lot about Sect Master Jiu Shen from the disciples of the Crimson Sun Sect. Even the sect master is afraid of Sect Master Jiu Shen. I just hope that I can pass all three assessments and become a disciple of the Heavenly Sword Tower, but would they really accept me if they learned about my identity?" Sylphie muttered worriedly.

"They will! The elder yesterday said that they would accept anyone regardless of their status as long as they could pass all three assessments! I still have a chance!" The young girl gripped her sword tightly before hastening forward with glistening eyes.

Zhu Ren stared at his surroundings with a calm look and checked his body to see if he was injured. He then heaved a sigh of relief when he felt that nothing was wrong with his body.

"So we are separated inside this forest... I assume the other applicants are already starting to hunt those lesser demons. I should begin hunting as well and I might even find the others along the way." Zhu Ren said as he pulled the spear behind his back.

This spear was a gift from his deceased grandfather and this had been with him since he started learning about spearmanship.

Zhu Ren dashed through the forest in a practiced manner. It was as if he had suddenly become a veteran hunter.

The truth was that Zhu Ren's talent was not exactly great, but he had compensated for his lack of talent through sheer effort and willpower. He practiced his spear techniques with little rest and even trained himself in the outer parts of the Endless Forest. That was why he was able to run inside this forest with such familiarity.

Hm?

Zhu Ren stopped in his tracks and jumped on top of a huge tree's branch. He then stared at two strange creatures walking alertly down below.

Those creatures had a humanoid figure except for their grotesque appearance. Their skin was dark purple and their muscles screaming with power.

"Are these the lesser demons? To think that I'm so lucky to stumble upon two of them after arriving here..." Zhu Ren muttered to himself excitedly.

He stealthily pounced towards the defenseless backs of the creatures and aimed his spear towards their vital spots.

Zhu Ren was now an early stage 5th-rank Spirit realm cultivator and he even had the power to confront those at the mid stage 5th-rank Spirit realm!

Puchi! Puchi!

The two creatures were not even able to emit a shriek before they died under Zhu Ren's surprise attack.

Their bodies exploded into motes of white light and dropped two tokens on the ground.

Clink. Clink.

Zhu Ren grabbed the two tokens with a smile and said. "Those guys are indeed lesser demons. I never thought that they would be so weak for a 5th-rank Spirit realm creature. Brother Beiming and the others should be able to easily get these tokens with their strength. In that case, I have nothing to worry about."

He then moved ahead with confidence.

"Master, I have learned the identity of the young girl." Ren Shuang said as he bowed at Jiu Shen.

Jiu Shen stared at him and nodded his head calmly. "You did great in finding it after only a day."

Ren Shuang did not raise his head and replied immediately. "Master, that girl came from a small kingdom and it was rather easy for me to uncover her identity."

"I see. Then tell me who this girl is." Jiu Shen said.

"This girl is called Sylphie Northcut, the daughter of Franklin Northcut, a count of the Iron Sand Kingdom. However, after the fall of the Iron Sand Kingdom, she was taken as a slave by the Crimson Sun Sect. She lived inside that sect for over five years." Ren Shuang said in a calm voice.

"Hmm... Did you find anything suspicious about her parents?" Jiu Shen asked curiously. From what he saw about Sylphie's constitution, he learned that a dragon had given her its blood essence willingly. However, this blood essence was weak and faint, and it was only enough to enhance her physicality to a certain degree. Even so, this small enhancement was also the reason why she was able to live until today even with the lack of nutrition.

"Her mother is a viscount's daughter and there is nothing noteworthy about her identity aside from being one of Iron Sand Kingdom's most beautiful women. As for Sylphie's father, he, how should I say this... It's like he suddenly appeared in the Iron Sand Kingdom and helped its king fight a war. After that war, he was made a count by that king. Also, I managed to uncover the remains of Franklin Northcut from the battleground near the former Iron Sand Kingdom's territory." Ren Shuang replied.

Jiu Shen's eyes flicked in surprise.

"Really? Show it to me." He said.

Chapter 268 - Sylphie In Trouble

Ren Shuang tapped his space ring and took out the corpse of a person. The corpse had multiple sword wounds and bruises, but his expression remained calm even in his death. However, the most surprising thing about this person was that his corpse was still intact even after five years of being dead!

Jiu Shen stood up from his seat and walked towards the corpse presented to him. He then crouched and inspected the corpse using his spiritual vision.

From Jiu Shen's perspective, he could see that this dead person's true essence was actually that of a savage beast! And from the thickness of this true essence, it can be easily determined that this guy was a descendant of a savage beast with a noble bloodline.

"Indeed, this guy has a dragon bloodline in his veins. In fact, this guy's dragon bloodline is thicker than that of Long Meili's before I met her. However, this man still failed his tribulation lightning and he even regressed by two major realms and he only managed to stabilize his cultivation at the peak stage of the 7th-rank Emperor realm. He must have settled down in the late Iron Sand Kingdom after failing his tribulation lightning, but in the end, death still came his way... At least he was able to give his blood essence to his daughter Sylphie before he died..." Jiu Shen said after scanning the corpse with his spiritual vision.

If someone else could have heard his words, they would certainly be flabbergasted. He was actually able to tell what had happened to the man after a few casual inspections through his spiritual vision!

"Master, what do you want me to do with this corpse?" Ren Shuang asked after Jiu Shen concluded his inspection.

Jiu Shen glanced at Ren Shuang and recalled the look of the pitiful girl before he turned his gaze to the corpse beneath his feet.

"I'll keep it myself. You may go back to your post." Jiu Shen said as he put the man's corpse inside his space ring.

Ren Shuang bowed his head before he left.

Jiu Shen went back to his seat and muttered calmly to himself. "That girl must have experienced a terrible life at the hands of the Crimson Sun Sect. If she manages to pass all three assessments, I will help her achieve her revenge..."

Jiu Shen did not even bat an eye at the mention of the Crimson Sun Sect. It was as if this sect was nothing worthy of his attention.

Inside the World of Illusions.

Sylphie glared at the three youths in front of her. She was holding her worn-out sword tightly while sharply observing the actions of the three men.

"Little sister, just give us the tokens you have and we won't hurt you." One of the three men who looked to be the leader of the three smiled at her reassuringly, but the two guys behind him failed to mask the mocking smiles on their faces.

Sylphie was very familiar with that kind of look. She had faced that kind of face for over five years inside the Crimson Sun Sect, so she did not let her guard down.

"Come on, brother! Let's just cut down this stupid girl and be done with it. Inside this forest, we have no way of knowing how much time we have, so we must hurry in getting the tokens we need." A thin man behind the leader said with impatience. This guy was a peak 4th-rank Knight Crusader realm cultivator. Their leader was a 5th-rank Spirit realm expert and the remaining guy was also a peak 4th-rank Knight Crusader.

If a battle broke out, Sylphie who was only a mid-stage 4th-rank Knight Crusader would face great trouble.

She had no idea that all of them were inside a World of Illusion, so she was very worried about getting seriously injured.

Sylphie thought hard, but she could not find any solutions that could help her defeat these three men. The only option left for her was to escape from them, but could she really escape the pursuit of three cultivators who were stronger than her? In her current state, it was definitely not possible.

The leader glared at his buddy and glanced at Sylphie with a dark smile. "I apologize, little sister, but you forced us to do this. Get her!"

The two men behind the leader smiled evilly and immediately sprinted towards Sylphie with their weapons in their hands.

"Is it over for me? No! I have already come this far! I must not give up! This is nothing compared to what I experienced in the Crimson Sun Sect!" Sylphie shouted in her heart as she darted towards the two men who were moving speedily in her direction.

She did not want to come back to that sect! They did many terrible things to her and she could not imagine what would happen to her if they manage to capture her.

Although she was a slave of the Crimson Sun Sect, Sylphie still had a bit of free time. She used all of her free time to practice the sword techniques that her father had taught her during her childhood. She also cultivated secretly at that time and that was why she was able to reach her current realm despite the lack of resources.

Facing these two men, Sylphie calmly parried their attacks using her superior sword techniques.

Despite the difference in number and cultivation, she was able to fight the two men without being defeated. From this, it could be seen how much effort she had expended to practice her swordsmanship, but her talent also spoke volumes about her growth.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Sylphie could not receive the attacks of the two men head-on, so she could only expertly parry their attacks, but if this continues, she would have to consume more stamina.

'I can't let this drag on! Not to mention that their leader is still here! Is it really over for me here?' She cried out in her heart.

Chapter 269 - Unexpected Turn Of Events

Sylphie already has various wounds all over her body, but the fighting intent in her eyes did not vanish. Instead, those emerald-green eyes flickered with an even more intense glow as the battle continued.

"This little girl is insane! Just give up the damned tokens so we can leave you alone!" Shouted the thin man to Sylphie. He was growing irritated at her tenacious willpower. If not for Lu Sulan's warning about killing other applicants, he would have already used his killing techniques against this damnable woman!

The leader watched the battle between his two buddies and Sylphie with surprise. He found it hard to believe that a little girl was actually able to hold her ground against his friends. Although those guys looked deplorable and dishonest, they still came from renowned families outside the Silver Wing Empire and they had access to valuable resources.

The leader's name is Jon. His eyes flashed as he recalled his tough childhood. Jon could see himself in Sylphie and this made him smile.

"Troy, Hans! Let's go! Just leave her be. We don't have much time to dawdle around here." Jon shouted towards his friends as he walked towards Sylphie.

"Boss, come on! She's already spent! Just give us more time!" Hans, the thin man pleaded to Jon, but he only received the latter's cold gaze.

Sylphie could hardly stand to her feet, but she refused to collapse even in that state. This made Jon admire her even more.

Sylphie was quite surprised that the two crooks actually stopped fighting her when she was already on the verge of being defeated. She stared at the leader who was walking towards her with a wary gaze. This guy was able to command her opponents to stop fighting her with just a few words. She wondered what this guy was up to.

Jon put his right hand inside his pocket and took something out before he stretched his arm to Sylphie.

The girl quickly lifted her sword when she saw Jon's strange actions, but this only made the man erupt into peals of laughter. "Girl, I apologize for hurting you so much. We had no choice since this is part of the assessment. I admire your determination, so I will withdraw here with my buddies."

Sylphie could not believe what she had heard and she was at loss for words. These dirty-looking men were actually quite honorable...

"Here. Take this as our compensation." Jon grabbed Sylphie's shaking hand and placed something on her palm. He then smiled kindly at her before he walked away.

"Girl, if you manage to pass all three assessments, just look for me when you need something." Jon waved his hand without looking back.

Sylphie stared at their departing figures with complicated emotions. She then stared at her hand and was dumbfounded at what she saw. It was a token! There was also a piece of healing pill and it did not look cheap either!

She almost cried at this unexpected generosity, but she was too tired for that.

Without hesitation, Sylphie consumed the healing pill and kept the token to herself. She now has three tokens and this made her feel happy.

"I won't forget this kindness..." She muttered while looking in the direction where she had last seen Jon's group.

Unbeknownst to her, there was a silhouette of a woman standing atop a tree just a hundred meters away from her. "Hmph! At least those guys are not completely disgraceful! Since there's nothing more to see here, I should go find my brother and the others."

Swoosh!

Her shadow vanished in a flash...

"Sect Master, the emperor requests an audience with you." Xia Xinyue's voice can be heard outside his room.

Jiu Shen calmly sat on his chair when he heard Xia Xinyue's words and said. "Bring him in."

Creak.

Xia Xinyue went inside the room with the emperor following behind her.

Emperor Elyk stared at the man who was still calmly sitting on a chair even in his presence. If it was anyone else, he would have already felt offended, but the man in front of him was different.

"Sect Master Jiu Shen, congratulations on your sect's successful establishment and also for the successful recruitment!" Emperor Elyk smiled as he looked at Jiu Shen's expressionless face.

"Elyk, I know you're not here just to say these words. Just tell me what made you come here." Jiu Shen uttered indifferently.

Emperor Elyk chuckled at his words and replied. "Sect Master Jiu, the Alliance sent four of their Alliance Heads to come here including Alliance Head Situ. They were present during the opening ceremony of your sect and they badly wanted to see you, but we could not find you after that. I hope you can come with me to the castle and grace us with your presence."

"I'm not interested in meeting any of those kids." Jiu Shen refused in a calm tone.

The word 'kids' rang inside the emperor's head like the chiming of bells. Only Jiu Shen was able to speak like this to such individuals. Thinking about it, the emperor could only smile wryly.

Emperor Elyk had already expected Jiu Shen's refusal especially because his Heavenly Sword Tower was still in the middle of recruitment.

"In that case, I shall take my leave. I'm sorry for disturbing you, Sect Master Jiu." Emperor Elyk said in a slightly downcast tone.

"Wait. Before you leave, take this with you and give it to those young ones. I can sense that the demons are planning something and when that time comes, this might come in handy." Jiu Shen said as he flicked a cube-like item to the emperor.

Emperor Elyk caught the item with a look of surprise. He stared at it and sensed a strong power hidden inside when he injected his true essence into the item.

"Sect Master Jiu, this is..." The emperor had no idea what this strange thing was, so he could only glance at Jiu Shen with curiosity, but the man merely stared at him with an indifferent look.

"When the time comes that you need to use its power, just crush that cube. Now leave." Jiu Shen waved his hand and shooed the emperor away as if he was an annoying fly.

Emperor Elyk gratefully bowed his head before he left the room.

Even when he was already outside the sword tower, he still kept on looking at the cube-like item that Jiu Shen handed to him.

"Just what could this be? Maybe I should ask my old man and the Alliance Heads. They might know what this item is..." He muttered before keeping the cube inside his space ring.

Chapter 270 - The Demon Soldier

It was already day two inside the World of Illusions. Some applicants had almost completed the assigned task for them, and the remaining others already had a few tokens in their possession.

Looking at this, more than eighty percent of the applicants would certainly pass this assessment.

Lu Sulan and Long Meili were still watching the applicants with attentive gazes. The latter in particular was looking at Sylphie's screen with great interest. She found the girl's personality was up to her liking and she did not mind if she becomes her trainer.

"If this continues, most of them will pass the assessment." Lu Sulan broke the silence.

Long Meili continued staring at Sylphie's screen, but she still replied in a calm tone. "It does not matter. The master knows that not many would fail this assessment. However, he said that more than half of them will fail the final assessment."

Lu Sulan raised her eyebrows in surprise. "But isn't it the easiest assessment? Why would half of them fail?" She asked while feeling a bit perplexed.

Long Meili glanced at her and said in a cold voice. "The master doesn't want rats inside his territory."

Lu Sulan's eyes flashed with understanding upon hearing those words. She then turned her gaze back on the screen in front of them.

Sylphie kept the token that she had just gotten from the lesser demon that she had killed earlier. Her face was covered in grime and dirt, but there was a bright smile hanging on her face as she exclaimed. "I only need three more to complete the assessment! But before that, I should clean myself first. This smell is killing me..."

Sylphie returned to the pond that she found early this morning and washed clean. When she saw her bedraggled appearance reflected on the pond, a burst of complicated emotions welled up inside her heart.

"Just a little bit more. Once I become a disciple of the Heavenly Sword Tower, I will train hard until I become strong enough to avenge my family and the Iron Sand Kingdom! Of course, the first on my list is still the Crimson Sun Sect!" Sylphie clenched her fists as she muttered to herself. The fury in her eyes blazed like a raging volcano.

After scrubbing her body clean, she then washed her clothes and let them dry on the bonfire she made. She then carefully wrapped herself with the fur of a savage beast wolf that she hunted yesterday.

Crackle. Crackle.

The flame from the bonfire created a crackling sound that somehow alleviated Sylphie's emotional state. She could still remember how her father taught her to create her fire using the materials they found in the forest. It was a happy memory that would always remain in her heart.

Suddenly, Sylphie's ears twitched. She could hear the sound of fighting from a distance away. From the movement of the ground, she calculated that it was approximately a thousand meters away from her.

"This is strange. The lesser demons are not that strong to create this kind of commotion. Are some groups fighting among themselves?" She muttered as she hastily put on her clothes. It was still a bit wet, but it did not hinder her movement, so she did not mind it.

Sylphie dashed towards the direction of the commotion speedily. She was quite curious about what caused the sounds that she heard. Aside from that, she was also worried that Jon's group might be there.

Although Sylphie was not attracted to Jon, she was still grateful for his help and it would leave a bad taste in her mouth if she just left them there, so she had to check the place and see if Jon and the others are there.

"Shit! Why is there such a creature here? Is this also part of the assessment?!" Hans cursed as he stared at the demonic figure wreaking havoc ahead of them.

Jon and Troy were similarly stunned as they watched the demon.

This creature had dark purple skin with numerous veins protruding all over its body. The demonic creature was also covered with plain metal armor and even its head was protected by a spiked helmet.

Even from a distance, this evil creature was giving off a strong aura that made the surrounding applicants feel dread.

Roarr!!

It opened its mouth and emitted a shrill cry that echoed inside the forest.

Prince Dante had also managed to find the rest of his group, and all of them were now staring at the demon with a serious look.

"Brother Beiming, can you block its attack?" Prince Dante suddenly asked as he gazed at Beiming Chu.

The latter was a bit surprised upon hearing the question, but he still answered with knitted eyebrows. "I don't know. I can't estimate this guy's power, but it should be a peak stage 7th-rank Emperor realm creature. If my guess is correct, then I should be able to block two strikes from it."

Prince Dante nodded his head. "That's more than enough, but we need to gather the other applicants. We can't defeat that thing by ourselves. Brother Zhu, Brother Beiming, go and tell the others to come in this direction. I'll buy some time for you guys, but you must hurry. Sister, you should go with them."

Beiming Chu and Zhu Ren nodded their heads when they heard his words, but Princess Sylvia was a bit worried about her brother. She could not allow him to fight that monster alone.

"Brother! But that thi-"

Prince Dante covered her lips with his hand and smiled at her. "Trust me. That guy is not enough to kill me. Besides, I still have the protective item given to me by grandfather."

Princess Sylvia was still worried, but when she saw the confident look of her brother, she could only nod her head unwillingly. "You have to be careful. I'll beat you up if you get hurt!" She threatened.

Prince Dante chuckled at her words. He then glanced at Zhu Ren and Beiming Chu. "I'll leave my sister to both of you. Please protect her."

The two men nodded their heads solemnly as they promised. "You have my word. We won't let anyone touch her."

Prince Dante felt reassured at their words. He then shouted. "Go!"