

# Zhanxian

## Chapter

### *002 – As Executioner*

Going from the Greatest Heaven Sect back to the Yang village was a one month journey. The sect was responsible for fare and wagons when they came, but these washouts had to make their own way back. The Yang village youths weren't particularly prosperous, and could only take this more than month long journey on foot.

Everyone had considered this point, and they had all brought some silver coins before leaving. They bought a large pile of steamed buns in a small store at the foot of the mountain, using bundled skins as bags and ate them on the way. Peasants walking on long journeys wasn't any strange thing, and they didn't have any farm work to hold them up anyway. If by chance they had an immortal destiny, they would transform from fish into dragons, and if not they would return to resume their lives.

Yang Chen had already recovered his usual friendly disposition. With his target set, Yang Chen didn't become irascible. Never one with strong opinions, in the eyes of his comrades, Yang Chen seemed to have become his own person, polite and amiable, always smiling, but also capable of easily getting the others to do things according to his suggestions. Nobody felt anything was strange, it was just that what Yang Chen said seemed very reasonable.

Casually finding a pretext, Yang Chen left the group and set out alone. The others didn't feel that anything was strange, practically everyone assuming he wanted to return to see if he couldn't get another chance, but nobody said anything, and just let him leave.

Yang Chen naturally didn't return to the Greatest Heaven Sect like everyone thought, but rather turned right around and entered the mountains. With a woodcutting blade on hand and his ten thousand years of experience, Yang Chen could casually find food and drink. The reason Yang Chen avoided everyone, was because he wanted to start forging his body.

Such forging was entirely different from cultivation, it didn't draw *qi* into the body to cultivate *qi* refining arts, but rather used external martial skills to practice external martial arts styles, turning his body more powerful. As for internal arts, he didn't practice any of them.

To cultivating disciples, martial arts seemed like utterly inferior methods. As long as one trained with *qi* to build a foundation, one would naturally have spiritual power to nurture the body, a hundred times more efficient than external arts forging. Besides, practicing martial arts seemed like a complete waste of cultivation time. If one had time, it would be more cost effective to consider refining pills or excavating some spiritual stones.

Yang Chen was no idiot, with ten thousand years of cultivation experience, he knew better than anyone how large the difference was when cultivating with a strong body compared to a weak body. Perhaps the difference wouldn't be too visible in a few centuries, but the gap was frightfully clear when ascending for real.

The foundation was most important for cultivating, and besides the most basic cultivation spiritual roots, the foundation was embodied in an even sturdier physique. A good foundation meant even more powerful development.

Efficiently building the body was the first step. Even the road of cultivation wasn't only about studying methods of cultivation, while ignoring the body. Spiritual power could admittedly strengthen the body after reaching a certain level, but strengthening a weak scholar and a robust body still had different results.

At the same time, one cultivating warrior skills and one who spend all day long meditating also had fairly considerable differences in fights between cultivators. Yang Chen's goal was to use external martial arts to refine his muscles and bones before starting to cultivate.

There was another reason for only cultivating external arts, and no internal arts. That was that old devil Yi's spiritual root improvement devil art could only be used before cultivating. There was basically no way to deal with the restrictions of the cultivation method.

Besides martial arts, there was also running, jumping, and a string of other methods to improve the body's flexibility and speed. On the way back to the village, Yang Chen was jumping rather than running, and relied on his knife to find all his food.

Over more than ten days, Yang Chen's memories returned with increasing clarity. Everything from the time of his youth returned once again to his mind. While forging his body and running, Yang Chen soon reached an ordinary mountain.

This mountain wasn't far from a small time, but very few people came here. The mountain was barren, with almost not a speck of spiritual *qi*. There was a tiny mountain temple, long since in ruins, with the temple walls half caved in.

Yang Chen stood in front of this mountain temple, carefully making sure that this really was that mountain temple in his memories. Then he smiled, pushing open the half rotten temple doors, and walked inside.

There were originally murals on the walls, but they had already been eroded by wind and rain until they were extremely spotted and striped. After Yang Chen entered the temple, despite the image of the god on the spirit tablet long since turning illegible, only leaving lumps of clay behind, he still first paid his respects to the spirit tablet. The mountain god may be minor, the temple may be ruined, but that was still a celestial official.

After paying his respects, Yang Chen turned to the area behind the spirit tablet and an old locust tree, pacing the distance to verify the location, and began to dig. After digging close to two meters deep, he came across a solid object.

Yang Chen exulted, digging bit by bit along the edges of that object, exposing a square metal chest. The chest had been buried in the ground for years, but didn't show any signs of corrosion, only darkly unremarkable.

Lifting up the chest, it weighed at least fifty kilograms. If not for Yang Chen recently building his strength and having a robust physique since childhood, he really couldn't have lifted it.

This chest was something old master Yang, Yang Xi's grandfather, had left behind in his youth in case his family encountered some disaster in the future, they could use it as capital to rebuild. Only, now this capital was in Yang Chen's hands.

Next, Yang Chen would take this capital back to bring his parents away from the Yang village. Back when Yang Xi had framed Yang Chen, he had even used Yang Chen's parents as hostages, leaving Yang Chen no option but to

pinch his nose and accept it. In this life, Yang Chen didn't plan on giving Yang Xi that chance.

At this time, old master Yang probably hadn't told Yang Xi about this yet, to Yang Chen's advantage. First filling in the earth he had dug up, then transplanting a small tree over here, Yang Chen carried the chest to a grove next to the road where he found a place to bury it again. Making sure there were no clues anywhere, Yang Chen followed the road back towards home.

Rushing on the way, Yang Chen's speed wasn't any slower than those companions walking. When they returned to the village, Yang Chen also just caught up.

One month of efficient tempering made Yang Chen seem a bit tougher than when he left. Despite being just sixteen, he could compare to adults.

The news that old master Yang's grandchildren, Yang Xi and Yang Lan, had been chosen by the Greatest Heaven Sect caused great waves in the village. Almost the entire county was shocked, and even the county magistrate dropped by to congratulate. For a while, Yang village was bustling as if holding a majestic festival.

Amidst the bustling scene of old master Yang's whole family, the sad departure of the washout Yang Chen seemed entirely unremarkable.

Yang Chen's family was just named Yang, they didn't have any blood relationship with the old master. The family of three rented a carriage in the county capital, not bringing much stuff, and very quickly left the range of the county.

Yang Chen dismissed the cart near the next county capital, then rented another cart in the new town, switching at roughly six places on the way to the second location. Finally Yang Chen bought a cart, and after more than a day on the road, the family hurried to near where Yang Chen had buried the chest.

Resting for a few hours at a suitable place, another box quietly appeared in the Yang family's luggage, and furthermore placed within another chest, visible to nobody.

Soon after, changing directions, they travelled for roughly two months, hurrying over to where Yang Chen wanted to settle his parents. Fortunately they travelled on official roads the whole time, and since the family didn't

seem rich, they weren't beset by any robbers, safely reaching their destination. With all these arrangements, it would be impossible for anyone to find Yang Chen's parents again later.

In fact, this road had already taken them out of the state of Chen where the Yang family came from, and entered the borders of the state of Zhao. For two old docile farmers like Yang Chen's parents, leaving the state of Chen was practically impossible. But Yang Chen seemed to have planned as if he could see the future, and they arrived smoothly without any danger on the road.

Old master Yang's capital really was substantial. Besides more than six hundred tael of gold, and more than one hundred tael of silver, the rest was unexpectedly all lower quality spiritual stones. The several tens of catty of spiritual rocks was equivalent to several tens of thousands of tael of gold.

Yang Chen wasn't the least modest, buying houses, land and servants in a somewhat remote but verdant location, getting his parents a large manor, several hundred fields of arable land, dozens of servants, and more than a hundred tenant farmer families. The two farmers who had never before enjoyed one easy day, suddenly went to the kind of lordly people they had admired all their lives, who others had to greet as sir and madam, they really didn't dare believe it.

This was a remote place, and besides the farmers living here, it was rare to see other people. Even war wouldn't influence this place. This was a place Yang Chen had carefully chosen, and he had naturally thought it over completely.

With everything arranged to his satisfaction, Yang Chen was in no hurry to leave, but rather accompanied his parents for half a year. In this half year, Yang Chen had been increasingly diligent in his training, further adding the excellent food, he seemed sturdier and a size larger. His whole body tight with muscles, he didn't look like he was just sixteen.

With one season's harvest, life at the manor had also stepped onto the right track. Yang Chen said goodbye to his parents, and left this new home. It had already been nine months since his rebirth.

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On the table of an executioner a thousand *li* distant lay twenty tael of gold, and opposite the executioner, sat Yang Chen.

“You mean, you want to become an executioner, and if I help you, this is mine?” The old executioner didn’t even dare believe what his eyes saw and what his ears heard, did this world have such luck?

Executioner wasn’t any admirable job, in fact, in the current hierarchy, executioners were loathed by gods and shunned by ghosts, inferior to even beggars. Nobody would show them any respect on the street. To boot, because they killed too much, they would offend Heaven, according to legend falling to the eighteenth layer of Hell after death. The old executioner absolutely didn’t dare believe that someone would actually spend so much gold on a request like that.

“I have a bad fate, the diviner said that if I don’t kill enough people, I’ll draw death on my parents’ home, therefore I want to borrow the status of executioner to kill some people and neutralize my lot.” Yang Chen spit out some nonsense justification: “I only want to do it for half a year, I’ll leave after half a year, and you do what you should do.”

Taking his place to kill for half a year, reducing his sin of killing, and also giving him twenty tael of gold. Even when removing the bribes for the lord, it still left a considerable profit. If the old executioner didn’t take him up on it, he would be an idiot.

Falling ill, taking a leave of absence, then recommending an apprentice – the old executioner only used half a day to arrange everything. Yang Chen’s muscular build left other people without any doubts as to whether he was qualified to take on the heavy duty of an executioner.

Nobody knew why Yang Chen would want to be a mundane executioner. Only Yang Chen himself knew that there was once an armed rebellion in the heavenly court of the immortal world, something that happened a very long time before Yang Chen ascended. But Yang Chen also realized that it happened roughly after he was born, at that time the sky in the mundane world turned blood red for one day and one night, shortly after the world was in rebellion, several dynasties changing.

According to what Yang Chen knew, after the rebellion in the heavenly court, several thousand immortals, large and small, were beheaded on the Immortal Execution Stage. And as for the Immortal Execution Stage, a magic tool possessed exclusively by the heavenly court, to avert the the experts operating it from becoming a threat to the immortal world, it was always operated by a person from the mundane world. As for the candidates who

would operate the Immortal Execution Stage, they were naturally chosen from among the executioners of the mundane world.

If Yang Chen could enter the Immortal Execution Stage, then he could honestly execute immortals to practice the devil method. Killing one immortal out to be even more beneficial than killing ten thousand mortals. Since he wouldn't carry the name of a devil practitioner but could still replenish his cultivation spiritual roots, thinking about it, this was simply a duty assigned to him by Heaven, arranging for him to execute immortals.

Yang Chen quickly entered the situation, the day after everything was finished, he had a convict to behead. This was the first time Yang Chen killed on the execution ground, and it was also the first time he tried old devil Yi's method. Even if the old devil said it on death's door, there was no way to be sure if it was true. But Yang Chen would try it anyway. Executioner, there was no second choice for authoritative and fair murder.

"For every debt there is a debtor, you and I have no past grudges, nor recent hatred, this is my place of duty, executing orders, pardon me!" Yang Chen was bare chested, his head wrapped with a blood red silk cloth. Reaching out and grabbing the death sentence board stuck in the clothes of the kneeling convict, he threw it to the ground. He raised the executioner's blade in his right hand.

Along with Yang Chen's movements, the spectators inside and outside the execution grounds immediately opened their eyes wide, their breathing halting. Long since prepared strong wine was placed to the side, and Yang Chen raised the bowl, first drinking a large mouthful, then filling his mouth again and spraying it over the executioner's blade. All this done, Yang Chen looked at the convict with bright eyes, suddenly issuing a murderous spirit, as if he had suddenly turned into a different person. The executioner's blade rose high, and fell sharply.

The crowd only saw a bright flash of blade light, they didn't even dare be certain Yang Chen had already done it. But Yang Chen seemed to have returned to being that friendly youth, unexpectedly already holding a brand new silk cloth and starting to wipe the blade. Everyone stared blankly, fixedly. The convict's head was still properly on his neck, not moving at all, what was going on?

Just as everyone were bewildered, a blood trace suddenly appeared on the convict's neck. The wound quickly grew wider, becoming a red line. Soon

after, with a thump, the head fell off from the wound, exposing a bowl sized cut, hot blood spurting out like spring water, shooting into the air. The sound lasted for five or six breaths before losing its strength. At this moment, the convict's body that had been kneeling until now, fell to the ground.

There as a burst of noise, followed immediately by resounding cheering.

Yang Chen drew a deep breath, already unconsciously recalling some of the method in his mind, and immediately started to circulate it. An invisible aura burst from the corpse into Yang Chen's body, becoming a warm current, finally passing into Yang Chen's four limbs and hundred bones.