

AS A FATHER, I JUST WANT TO WATCH YOU ACHIEVE IMMORTALITY

Chapter 4: Immortal Artisan Upgrade, Bad News Arrives

The wood was offcuts he had brought back from the wood carving shop, just a small piece that no one paid much attention to when he took it home.

The carving knife was what he had prepared when he had yearned to take up wood carving on his own years ago, custom-made by the smith at the ironmonger's in the west of the city. It wasn't cheap for a set, and now, at last, it was proving useful.

The [Immortal Artisan] Dao Fruit pulsed and jumped, stirring a god-like sense of assistance that welled up within him.

Since it was a test of his skill, Li Che did not opt to use ink lines for outlining but went straight to carving. With the help of the Dao Fruit, he felt an intimate understanding of the "Six-Eyed Bodhisattva Statue" engraving, as if it were imprinted in his heart.

Just like with Master Chen, it was as if he had carved hundreds, if not thousands, of Six-Eyed Bodhisattva wood carvings, and practice makes perfect.

He had his own control over every aspect of carving the wood, from the outer to the inner spatial forms, to the force exerted with each cut.

However, since it was his first hands-on experience, there was still some rawness, but this rawness between his fingers, the carving knife, and the wood, was gradually smoothed out as the carving progressed and his skill improved.

The knife work gradually became more graceful, even developing a unique charm—an indication of mature skill.

Mature carving skills require a continuous accumulation of experience.

But it seemed as if through the [Immortal Artisan] Dao Fruit, Li Che was able to "touch" the Six-Eyed Bodhisattva and, like a sponge, slowly absorb Master Chen's years of carving experience.

The sound of the sharp knife friction against the wood was rustling and bustling.

The oil lamp cracked and popped as shavings and scraps fell like rain, and in Li Che's palm, a palm-sized, sharp-angled "Six-Eyed Bodhisattva Statue" began to take shape.

Although unpolished, with very rough edges and lines, the form had already emerged with the skill of divine craftsmanship!

Nearby, Zhang Ya, after having coaxed Xi Xi to sleep, gazed at Li Che, who had carved a rough outline of the statue in just a short period, and her heart immediately filled with surprise.

Watching Li Che earnestly absorbed in his carving, Zhang Ya didn't dare interrupt, silently suppressing her curiosity.

Deciding not to sleep, she sat by the bed, quietly watching under the oil lamp as Li Che focused on his carving.

The more she watched, her eyes grew slightly misty, her lips pursed, and a smile blossomed joyfully.

She thought her husband might have long given up on wood carving, but unexpectedly...

Her husband had never given up and had been diligently learning, and now... he had prepared a surprise for her in secret!

"Just don't know if my husband could become a wood carver at the wood carving shop, or even an apprentice... Then he wouldn't need to carry heavy wood and carvings every day with such hard work," she mused. ♦

Zhang Ya's wish was modest and simple; she only hoped her husband could earn the money to support the family more easily.

Engrossed in his carving, Li Che soon came back to his senses, as the Six-Eyed Bodhisattva Statue was completed and required no more cuts, although it was not polished and hence not a finished product.

But within his heart, Li Che was filled with great joy.

Suddenly, as if sensing something, his spirit stirred.

[Dao Fruit: Immortal Artisan (lv1, 10%)]

Eh?!

Li Che's eyes brightened as he noticed the suffix of the Dao Fruit[Immortal Artisan], which seemed like an experience point indicator, had increased slightly.

"By carving a piece of wood carving, can I improve experience? Like a proficiency level?"

"Or is it that I touched the 'Six-Eyed Bodhisattva' wood carving, learned the technique of the Six-Eyed Bodhisattva statue, and succeeded in carving, thus gaining a 10% increase?"

This Dao Fruit... can actually be understood as just having formed and being immature.

Only by nurturing it slowly can he unlock the true power of the Dao Fruit.

Li Che pondered to himself.

Regrettably, he did not bring back more wood, so he couldn't try it out immediately.

He had to quell the curiosity within and stood up, stretching himself, only to see his wife Zhang Ya leaning against the headboard, dozing off.

Li Che knew his wife was waiting for him to join her in sleep and felt a warmth in his heart.

In this cold weather, he quickly blew out the oil lamp and, pulling his startled wife with him, dove into the warm blankets.

Outside, the snow was falling heavily.

Landing on the thick accumulation on the roof, it made a gentle sound.

Conducive to a very sound sleep.

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The next day, Li Che went to work at Xu Ji's Wood Carving Shop as he always did.

"Master Chen, can I take this scrap home to practice with?"

During a break, Li Che approached Master Chen and, seeing the offcuts from the carved "Flowering Curved Willow", he couldn't help but ask.

Master Chen, with sawdust in his beard, glanced at Li Che: "You plan to learn wood carving? You do have a keen eye for it, and it's good material, pity you're a bit old for it. But, it's nice that you have the interest, you can take as much scrap from my carvings as you want."

Li Che had been helping Master Chen for some years, so naturally the master was much more lenient towards him.

Li Che, filled with joy, hastily expressed his gratitude and then began to select waste material he could use for practice.

Master Chen glanced at him, smiled silently, shook his head, and continued to immerse himself in carving the "Nine Sons Embracing the Lotus".

Li Che gathered the selected waste materials, wrapped them in cloth, and placed them at his workstation before running off to the yard, under the pretense of adjusting and moving the wood carvings, to touch them.

The "Immortal Artisan" Dao Fruit vibrated slightly. This time, the piece he touched was a wood carving named "Spring Fills the Universe," which required extremely intricate craftsmanship and patience to carve lifelike leaves, depicting the essence of spring.

After touching it, a familiar sensation surged in his heart.

It was as if he saw a female Wood Carver holding a carving knife, engraving the vast universe with her fingers and the palm of her hand as the spirit of spring bloomed from the wood.

A stream of information on the techniques and skills related to the "Spring Fills the Universe" wood carving flooded his mind.

Li Che was delighted. Just like with touching the "Six-Eyed Bodhisattva" statue, he had learned another style of wood carving.

However, when he touched other wood carvings, the Dao Fruit no longer reacted, indicating there was a daily limit to what he could learn.

In the following days, Li Che focused on studying the "Immortal Artisan" Dao Fruit.

The Immortal Artisan with a divine touch, unparalleled in craftsmanship!

By touching a statue, he could learn the wood carving techniques, and for every statue carved, he would gain 10% experience. However, each statue only provided experience once. This meant that Li Che would need to learn and carve ten different wood carvings to level up the Immortal Craft Dao Fruit to Lv2...

Understanding the use of the Dao Fruit, Li Che felt greatly optimistic about his future!

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Days passed by, day after day.

A month quickly went by.

Xi Xi had her full moon celebration, her lively eyes blinking as she waved her chubby little hands in her swaddle, curiously observing the world.

Li Che played with Xi Xi using a rattle-drum he made himself, causing the little girl to laugh heartily with glee.

Xi Xi loved to smile, her dimples showing when she did, just like her mother.

Zhang Ya sat nearby, mending old clothes, watching the father and daughter interact with tenderness and satisfaction in her eyes.

"Husband, have you spoken to the Third Shopkeeper at the wood carving shop about wanting to become a Wood Carver?"

Zhang Ya inquired curiously.

Over the past month, every night Li Che had been carving wood carvings of various kinds, which amazed Zhang Ya and made her aware of how exquisite her husband's craftsmanship was.

Under her blind adoration, she even felt that her husband was much better than the apprentices at the wood carving shop, and even more so, no less skilled than the masters themselves.

"The Third Shopkeeper said... that we need to follow the rules. He wants me to undergo a wood carving assessment with the other students who have paid to learn, and only after passing can I join the shop and become a Wood Carver,"

Li Che said while playfully engaging Xi Xi, making her reach out her little hand to grab the rattle-drum, and he responded to Zhang Ya's question.

Zhang Ya nodded and said firmly with pursed lips, "I'm certain you can do it, husband!"

Li Che smiled, confident and spirited, with a glint of self-assurance in his eyes.

With a thought,

[Dao Fruit: Immortal Artisan (lv2, 8%)]

After a month of incessantly touching various wood carvings and working overtime at night to carve, he had finally leveled the Dao Fruit up to lv2.

At level 2, the Immortal Craft Dao Fruit enhanced Li Che's ability from the aspect of conveying meaning; the wood carvings he sculpted could embody his own strong essences.

Moreover, Li Che's dexterity had become incredibly impressive—his fingers were extremely nimble. It wasn't just woodworking; he was confident he could easily set up even the trickiest mechanized contraptions.

After playing with Xi Xi for a while, Li Che went out to prepare for work.

The snow had lessened a lot, signaling the end of a harsh winter.

Yet the air was still cold and biting.

As he stepped out of the cottage, a familiar figure appeared in the distance, holding a smoking pipe, frowning, dressed in a worn Confucian robe layered with a coat, hurrying over.

"Uncle,"

Li Che called out.

His uncle, influenced by a preference for sons over daughters, had not visited Xi Xi in a month since learning she was a girl, although the Great Aunt had come once, bringing some eggs for Zhang Ya to nourish her body.

"Che'er, are you about to go to work? That's just as well," the Old Scholar uncle said, his brows still furrowed.

Li Che nodded and then saw the Old Scholar hesitate for a moment before speaking, "Che'er, have you heard?"

"That Grandma Lei who helped deliver Xiao Ya..."

"Killed several children..."

"It's said... all the ones she killed were children she'd delivered!"