

Transmigrated into a Grandpa, Embracing the Laid-Back Life

Chapter 297: Repairing the Ground Beneath One's Feet

[1,457 words]

The door of the Formation Hub Steward's room slowly closed behind him with a dull thud, completely sealing off the warmth and the lingering scent of tea inside.

Su Ming stood under the corridor. The biting wind unique to the Northern Border, mixed with snow pellets, lashed against his face.

The cold sweat he had broken out inside the room moments ago now clung to his back, icy and piercing, as the wind hit him.

He looked down at his own hands.

In his palm, the fragment of dark golden insect carapace was still there.

Wu Miao hadn't shown the slightest intention of taking it away just now, not even deeming it worth a second glance.

Su Ming's fingers slowly tightened. The sharp, serrated edge of the fragment pierced the skin of his palm, oozing a trace of bright red blood, but he seemed to feel no pain.

"Master."

In his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's figure materialized. He sat cross-legged, his usual teasing expression gone. He just looked at the wind and snow outside and sighed softly.

"This is reality, disciple."

Lin Yu's voice sounded somewhat distant. "From their position, they see the big picture, the century-long plans, the allocation of resources. As for the lives of the 'ants' beneath their feet, as long as it doesn't affect the overall situation, it's just an expendable number, a negligible loss."

"Low status, little voice. It's been true throughout the ages."

Su Ming opened his hand, letting the insect carapace fragment fall into the accumulated snow.

He raised his head, looking toward the majestic Formation Tower standing tall in the distance.

The light at the top of the Formation Tower remained brilliant, enveloping the entire Iron Wall Pass under a pale golden shield. And in the shadows untouched by that light, countless low-level cultivators like Zhao Tiji and Chen Chuan were fighting bloody battles to protect this very radiance.

They believed this pass was impregnable.

They believed the higher-ups behind them were strategizing from within the tent.

But they didn't know that beneath this seemingly grand fortress, a greedy river was silently hollowing out the very ground they stood on.

"Century-long plans..." A bitter curve tugged at the corner of Su Ming's mouth. "But people like us don't even know if we'll survive the night."

A profound sense of powerlessness surged in his heart.

He thought that with his skills, with that advanced data, he could change something.

But reality was like a cold, hard wall, smashing him until his head bled.

Before this colossal war machine, he, Su Ming, was still just a screw that could be replaced at any moment.

"Let's go back."

Lin Yu patted Su Ming's shoulder. Though it was a touch on the soul level, it gave Su Ming a sense of long-lost warmth. "Since they don't believe us, then we have to figure it out ourselves. If the sky falls, the tall ones will hold it up, but if the ground gives way, we need to find a solid plank for ourselves first."

Su Ming took a deep breath, slowly exhaling the stifling, turbid air pent up in his chest.

The confusion in his eyes gradually cleared, finally settling into a kind of almost ruthless calm.

"Master is right."

Su Ming tightened the leather armor on his body and strode into the wind and snow. "My duty is to repair formations. Since they won't fix the foundation, then I'll fix the patch of ground beneath my own feet."

...

By the time he returned to the Sector C camp, dusk was approaching.

Outside the barracks of the third squad, Zhao Tiji was with several brothers, cleaning their weapons.

The giant, half-man-high formation clamp was polished to a shine, the several new notches on it shockingly visible.

Seeing Su Ming return, Zhao Tiji grinned broadly, revealing a mouthful of white teeth. The scar running across his face twisted with the smile, appearing somewhat fierce yet inexplicably familiar.

"Brother Su, you're back?"

Zhao Tiji planted the formation clamp on the ground with a solid *thud*. "What did the Steward's office say? Did we repair the formation so well this time that the higher-ups are giving us a reward?"

Several other veterans nearby also gathered, their eyes shining with hopeful light.

"Can they issue some spirit stones? Even a few extra bottles of Reviving Spring Pills would be good. Old Liu's leg injury has been dragging on for half a month."

"If they could give an Internal Affairs Hall chit, letting me exchange for a new sword, that'd be great. This broken piece of scrap iron is almost completely dulled."

Looking at these familiar faces, the words on Su Ming's lips were swallowed back.

Tell them there's an insect tide underground?

Tell them the higher-ups don't care at all?

Besides causing panic, besides making them distracted and getting themselves killed in battle, it served no purpose.

A strained smile appeared on Su Ming's face, the standard professional fake smile he had honed in the Repair Hall.

"Steward Wu praised us for doing a good job." Su Ming patted the storage pouch at his waist. "Although he didn't issue spirit stones directly, he approved a batch of requisition

orders for formation materials. With this batch of materials, I'm confident I can increase the defensive formation strength in our sector by another twenty percent."

"Great!" Zhao Tiji slapped Su Ming's shoulder with such force he nearly knocked him over. "I knew you had it in you, kid! Following Brother Su, our lives just got a whole lot tougher!"

The group let out a cheer and scattered to attend to their tasks.

Su Ming watched Zhao Tiji's broad back, his eyes flickering slightly.

"Master, help me run some calculations."

As Su Ming walked toward his own Stone House Number Seven, he silently recited in his mind. "If I want to 'reinforce' the secondary foundation beneath Sector C without alerting the Formation Hub's monitoring, how much material would I need? What method should I use?"

Lin Yu's voice immediately sounded, carrying a trace of excitement. "That's more like it! That's my good disciple. As long as your determination doesn't waver, there are always more solutions than problems."

"Since that Wu Miao said your duty is to repair formations, then let's 'repair' them properly."

"Conventional reinforcement definitely won't work. Too much movement, and we don't have enough materials." Lin Yu answered swiftly. "We can use a 'honeycomb structure'."

"Below the foundation, use those discarded formation plate fragments to construct an inverted 'stress-dispersal net'. As long as those insects don't swallow the entire foundation in one go, this net can disperse the local collapse pressure onto the surrounding rock layers."

Su Ming pushed open the door to the stone house and activated a restriction seal behind him.

He poured out a large pile of damaged formation plates, broken spirit swords, and various miscellaneous materials he had previously scavenged from the black market from his storage pouch.

Under the dim light of the crystal lamp, the young man's shadow stretched long.

He picked up a spirit brush and drew a heavy circle on the underground structural diagram of Sector C.

"Not just reinforce."

Su Ming's brush tip moved across the blueprint, outlining obscure spiritual energy circuits. "I also need to bury 'vibration-inducing patterns' at these nodes."

"Oh?" Lin Yu raised an eyebrow. "What are you planning?"

"Since the Rock Marrow Demonic Earthworms like to eat rock layers rich in spiritual energy, I'll add some extra ingredients for them."

A flash of ruthlessness passed through Su Ming's eyes. "I'll mix 'Spirit-Eroding Sand' and a trace amount of 'Thunder Fire Sand' into these waste materials. If they dare to bite down here, I'll let them taste what it's like to have their teeth shattered."

This was an extremely dangerous operation.

Privately burying offensive hidden explosives beneath the border defense formation was a serious crime of sabotaging the formation foundation. The lightest punishment was the abolition of cultivation; the heaviest was execution on the spot.

But Su Ming could no longer afford to care about that.

He picked up a piece of broken Star Pattern Steel, a drop of deep blue water spiritual energy gathering at his fingertip.

The *Like Water Art* circulated. The spiritual energy, fine as silk, seeped silently into the hard steel.

Water is the softest.

But under extreme cold and high pressure, water can also transform into the hardest ice, the sharpest blade.

"Steward Wu is right. It will still take a long time for those insects to eat their way up."

Su Ming murmured softly. The Star Pattern Steel in his hand slowly changed shape under the erosion of his spiritual energy, turning into steel needles with barbs.

"But if they really do come, I want my floor to be harder than his face."

That night, the light in Stone House Number Seven, Sector C, remained lit until dawn.

And three thousand zhang deep underground, that dark golden "river" was emitting a series of teeth-grinding friction sounds, like a pack of hungry beasts sharpening their fangs in the darkness, inching closer, inch by inch, toward the luminous land above, brimming with enticing spiritual energy.

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