

TRANSMIGRATED INTO A GRANDPA, EMBRACING THE LAID-BACK LIFE

Chapter 298: Reforging the Broken Sword

Three days later.

At the Iron Wall Pass's material allocation office.

Su Ming stood before the counter, holding the chit approved by Zhao Tiji.

The manager behind the counter was a fat man, idly flipping through an account book.

"Third squad of the Formation Maintenance Battalion? Want to claim five hundred jin of 'scrap Star Pattern Steel residue'? And two hundred jin of 'Red Fire Copper waste'?"

The fat man looked up, staring at Su Ming as if looking at a fool. "What do you want this garbage for? This stuff isn't even worth the fire to remelt it."

A simple, honest smile spread across Su Ming's face as he subtly slid a packet of "Heart-Clearing Incense Cake" from his sleeve over to the man.

"This senior brother, the brothers in our squad are poor. Their magical implements are broken, but they have no money to repair them. They just want to use these scraps to practice, see if they can melt a bit of iron to patch up the cracks."

The fat man pinched the packet of incense cake, smelled the refreshingly clear and fragrant aroma, and his expression immediately softened.

"Alright, alright. It's just garbage destined for landfill anyway. Since you're willing to be the haulers, take it all away."

The fat man made a grand flourish with his brush, stamping the chit. "But let's be clear upfront. If you blow up your furnace, don't blame the quality of the stuff the Material Office gave you."

"Naturally, naturally."

Su Ming thanked him profusely, took the chit, turned, and beckoned to Old Liu and the other brothers waiting outside to come in and move the stuff.

Watching the cartloads of waste material considered garbage being hauled away, a glint of sharp light flashed in Su Ming's eyes.

In others' eyes, this was trash.

But in the hands of him, proficient in the "Water Refining Method" and "microscopic structure reorganization," this was the wall that would save their lives.

"Brother Su, can we really use all this scrap iron?" Old Liu asked skeptically while pushing a cart.

"Don't worry, Brother Liu."

Su Ming patted the rusty lumps of iron on the cart. "As long as it's used in the right place, even mud can patch a wall."

...

The dusk in Bing Battalion always carried the scent of rust that couldn't be washed away.

Su Ming pushed a wheelbarrow filled with scrap Star Pattern Steel residue. The wheels crunched over the frozen earth, creaking and groaning.

As he passed the large greenstone on the west side of the barracks that served as a windbreak, his steps paused.

Chen Chuan was sitting there.

This wandering cultivator who had stabbed his sword through the belly of an Iron-Feathered Eagle on the night of the beast tide was currently sitting with

his head bowed. In his hand was a rough whetstone, which he was rubbing, stroke after stroke, against the long sword laid across his knees.

The motion was slow, not like sharpening a sword, but more like wiping down the body of a dying old friend.

Su Ming parked the wheelbarrow to the side, his gaze falling on that sword.

It was a good sword. Refined iron mixed with Red Copper. In the mortal world, it would be considered a divine weapon. But in the cultivation world, it was just a common piece.

Right now, a glaring crack, spreading like a spiderweb, ran across the lower-middle section of the blade, almost penetrating the entire sword spine.

That was clawed out by the Iron-Feathered Eagle's death throes.

"It's broken."

Chen Chuan didn't look up, his voice hoarse as if filled with gravel.

He stopped the whetstone in his hand, his thumb gently rubbing over that crack. His fingertip was cut by the sharp metal edge, a trace of blood seeping out, but he seemed utterly unaware.

"It's been with me for twelve years."

Chen Chuan looked up. Those eyes, usually half-squinted, were now full of red veins. "From Qi Refinement third layer until now. Two hundred and seven demon beasts slain. I was thinking... just three thousand more military merit points, and I could trade for a Foundation Establishment Pill to gamble on a breakthrough..."

He gave a self-mocking twist of his lips, threw the half-ruined long sword onto the stone with a crisp *clang*.

"Now the sword is ruined. A sword cultivator without a sword, in the next beast tide... won't even count as cannon fodder."

Three thousand military merit points.

But for a low-level wandering cultivator like Chen Chuan, that was a life. Or rather, the final threshold on the path to the great dao.

Su Ming looked at that sword in silence.

In his "observation micro state" vision, he could clearly see that the originally dense crystal lattice inside the sword blade was now full of minute voids. The spiritual energy transmission channels were broken into seven or eight segments.

This sword was already dead.

"People can be saved, swords are hard to repair." Lin Yu's voice sounded lazily in the Consciousness Sea. "However, this is also an opportunity. This Chen Chuan is a ruthless man. You saw that night, he dares to trade his life for a chance. This kind of person, if he can survive, is more useful than those colleagues of yours who only know how to draw formation diagrams."

Su Ming bent down and picked up a fist-sized, pitch-black lump of slag from the pile of waste material considered garbage.

"Brother Chen."

Su Ming spoke, his tone calm. "If you trust me, I'll repair this sword for you."

Chen Chuan jerked his head up, staring fixedly at Su Ming. "Repair? The sword spine is cracked. Unless it's remelted and reforged, it's just a showpiece. Do you have connections at a smithy?"

"No connections." Su Ming shook his head, reached out, and grasped the hilt of the broken sword. It felt cold and heavy in his hand. "But I have skill. Tonight, at Zi hour, come to stone hut number seven to get your sword."

Having said that, without waiting for Chen Chuan's response, he tossed the broken sword into the pile of scrap in the wheelbarrow, pushed the cart, turned, and walked into the deepening night.

Chen Chuan watched Su Ming's retreating back, his lips moving slightly. In the end, he said nothing. But in those originally dull, gray eyes, a faint, ghostly flame had rekindled.

...

Midnight, at the Iron Wall Pass artifact forging camp.

This was the place in the entire pass where the earth fire was most vigorous. Even in the dead of night, massive ventilation shafts still spewed dark red flames and billowing waves of heat.

Su Ming didn't rent one of those expensive, proper forging chambers. Instead, using his Formation Maintenance Battalion waist token, he slipped into the "Slag Pit" specifically used for processing discarded magical implements.

This place was located at the tail end of the earth fire vein. The fire poison was heavy, the temperature extremely unstable. Proper artificers wouldn't deign to come here.

Su Ming found a corner and cleared a clean stone platform.

He sat cross-legged. Before him lay the broken sword and a small pinch of dark golden powder extracted from the waste material—Earth Gold Dust.

This was the treasure he had painstakingly picked out from that pile of "garbage." Earth Gold Dust wasn't top-grade material, but its strength lay in its extreme toughness, making it perfect for mending cracks.

"Let's begin."

Su Ming took a deep breath and formed hand seals with both hands.

He didn't directly channel earth fire to burn the sword. Instead, he activated the *Like Water Art*.

Dark blue water spiritual energy flowed from his fingertips, transforming into a gentle sphere of water that enveloped the broken sword. Immediately after, he channeled a wisp of fire miasma from the earth vein, carefully injecting it into the water sphere.

Water and fire clashed, emitting a **sizzling** sound. White steam rose.

This was a variant of Su Ming's unique "Water Refining Method"—using water as the furnace and fire as the hammer.

Wrapped in the high-temperature, high-pressure water vapor, the metal on the surface of the broken sword began to soften. Those minute cracks opened like mouths.

Su Ming's eyes sharpened. His divine sense became like a needle, guiding that pinch of "Earth Gold Dust," precisely filling every single crack.

"Not just repair."

Lin Yu instructed within the Consciousness Sea. "This sword's original material was too rigid. Rigid things break easily. Since you're repairing it, add a touch of 'flexibility.' Use that 'fluid heat dissipation' idea of yours."

Su Ming understood.

His divine sense probed into the core of the sword spine, the backbone of the sword.

Conventional artifact forging emphasized that the sword spine must be hard to support chopping and slashing. But Su Ming went against convention. He controlled the water spiritual energy, tracing a series of spiral patterns within the narrow space inside the sword spine.

That was his self-created "Gentle Water Sword Pattern," imitating the flow of underground rivers.

This pattern wasn't physical. Instead, by altering the arrangement of the metal's internal crystal lattice, it formed a microscopic structure similar to a spring.

When the sword body endured great force, this sword pattern would dissipate the force layer by layer like water ripples, transforming the fierce impact into vibrations dispersed into the air.

Sweat trickled down Su Ming's temple, dripping onto the scorching stone slab and instantly evaporating.

His face was somewhat pale. This kind of microscopic-level carving consumed his divine sense enormously. Each stroke of the pattern was like dancing on a knife's edge.

"Steady, the final step."

Su Ming gritted his teeth, sealing a wisp of his own pure water spiritual energy into the sword spine as the primer to activate the "Gentle Water Sword Pattern."

"Condense!"

With a low shout, the water sphere enveloping the broken sword suddenly contracted, then violently exploded into a mist of water vapor.

Hum—

A clear, melodious sword hum echoed within the Slag Pit, faintly carrying a low, dragon-roar-like vibration.

Su Ming reached out and grabbed. The long sword fell into his hand.

The originally crack-covered blade was now smooth as new. Only a thin, dark golden line, like a lurking swimming dragon, remained along the sword spine. The blade edge was no longer that glaring snow-brightness, but instead gleamed with a faint, dark blue luster, restrained and profound.

"It's done."

Su Ming let out a long sigh of relief, his entire body almost collapsing against the stone wall in exhaustion.

This sword, although its grade hadn't increased, had been completely reborn in terms of toughness and spiritual energy conduction.

Chapter 299: You call this garbage?

The victory celebration wine at Bing Battalion hadn't even finished being drunk when trouble came knocking.

Su Ming hadn't even had time to take a sip of hot tea when the tent flap was viciously kicked open by a foot clad in deerskin boots.

Three young men dressed in dark red short jackets walked in.

The leader was a tall fellow, carrying a heavy animal skin bag in his hand.

These were apprentices from the Vessel Hall.

At Iron Wall Pass, the Vessel Hall was in charge of the repair and distribution of all magical implements, their status always a notch higher than these wandering cultivators.

Zhao Tiji was gnawing on a lamb chop, his brows furrowing at the sight. He slapped the bone in his hand onto the table. "From the Vessel Hall? If you have business, state it. What's the rule about kicking doors?"

The tall apprentice glanced at Zhao Tiji, ignoring this blood-stained brute. His gaze swept around the tent, finally settling on Su Ming, who was wiping his fingers in the corner.

"You're that Su Ming?"

The tall fellow threw the animal skin bag in his hand onto the table in front of Su Ming.

With a clatter.

The mouth of the bag opened, and a pile of colorful, incomplete fragments spilled out, nearly knocking over the teacup by Su Ming's hand.

Su Ming reached out to steady the teacup, lifting his eyelids, his gaze calm. "What guidance do you have, Senior Brothers?"

"Guidance isn't the word." The tall apprentice crossed his arms, chin slightly raised. "We heard from Steward Zheng that you showed off some 'water grinding skill' at the Ancient Formation Repair Workshop, making us look utterly worthless. Saying we're not even as good as an outer sect self-taught formation cultivator."

He pointed at the pile of fragments on the table. "Since you're so capable, we'd like you to take a look. This is a set of 'Yin-Yang Mother-Child Formation Plates,' sent back from the front lines, severely damaged. We few dullards can't fix it. Since Junior Brother Su's methods are so brilliant, why not give us a live demonstration right here?"

Su Ming swept a glance over the fragments on the table.

This wasn't severe damage.

This was clearly dismantled into pieces, then deliberately mixing fragments from several formation plates of different attributes.

The break surfaces were fresh, some places even still had traces of being snapped by hand.

This was looking for trouble.

The air in the tent instantly solidified.

Zhao Tiji shot to his feet, his large palm like a cattail leaf fan pressing down on the giant hammer at his waist. Chen Chuan also placed his hand on his sword hilt.

"Looking for a fight?" Zhao Tiji gave a fierce grin. "Take a good look at whose territory this is."

Su Ming extended a finger, gently nudging the pile of fragments.

In his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's voice rang out with a hint of mockery. "Well now, disciple, this is a 'Yin-Yang Mother-Child Formation.' Even though they've messed it up, the core circuits are still there. If this thing gets fixed, it can be traded for quite a few good things."

"Zheng Tieshou has been trying to recruit me these past few days. These guys probably can't swallow their pride," Su Ming replied mentally.

"Can't swallow their pride? Good," Lin Yu chuckled. "Then let's make them even more furious."

A slight curve lifted the corner of Su Ming's mouth.

He stood up, ignoring the three aggressive apprentices, and instead picked up a fragment, holding it up to examine it.

"This formation plate is indeed 'trash' enough," Su Ming said lightly.

The tall apprentice sneered. "If you can't fix it, just say so. Don't make excuses. If you admit defeat, go kneel before Steward Zheng, admit you were just a blind cat stumbling upon a dead mouse, and stop loitering around the Vessel Hall entrance from now on."

"I mean, the original design was too trash."

Su Ming put down the fragment, extending both hands flat.

"Watch closely."

Before his words even finished, the spiritual energy within the Qihai of Su Ming's Dantian suddenly surged.

From the tips of his ten fingers, ten dark blue threads of spiritual energy instantly streamed out. These threads, as if alive, nimbly drilled into that chaotic pile of fragments.

Rise!

Su Ming's hands lifted slightly.

The hundreds of tiny broken pieces on the table actually all floated up simultaneously, slowly rotating in mid-air.

The tall apprentice's pupils contracted sharply, the sneer on his face freezing.

What kind of spiritual energy control technique was this?

Before he could even react, Su Ming's fingers began to move.

Fast.

So fast only afterimages remained.

Su Ming was like someone playing an invisible ancient zither, his ten fingers flying, so fast it dazzled the eyes.

Those floating fragments, guided by the spiritual energy threads, rapidly sought their own positions.

Click.

The first fragment returned to place.

Followed by the second, the third...

Dense metallic clinking sounds linked together, crisp and pleasant, like large and small pearls falling onto a jade plate.

"This piece isn't needed."

Su Ming flicked a finger. A red fragment that looked perfectly intact was flicked away by him, landing on the ground with a *ding*.

"What are you doing! That's the core flow-guiding piece of the child formation!" the tall apprentice shouted anxiously.

"That's deadweight."

Su Ming didn't even lift his head, his fingers continuing to dance. "Yin-Yang conversion, why go through a fire position relay? Using water directly as the bridge increases efficiency by at least ten percent."

As he spoke, a blue water bridge appeared out of thin air, directly connecting the originally severed Yin and Yang poles.

Hum—

As the final fragment fit perfectly into the main body, the entire formation plate emitted a low hum.

The originally dull, lusterless surface instantly lit up with two swirling halos, one black, one white. The halos, like a Taiji fish, head-to-tail, operated so smoothly it was even more fluid than a new one.

Su Ming withdrew his hands, dispersing the spiritual energy.

That "Yin-Yang Mother-Child Formation Plate," as large as a washbasin, landed steadily on the tabletop, spiritual light pulsing, without a hint of sluggishness.

Dead silence filled the tent.

The two followers gaped, their eyeballs nearly popping out. The tall apprentice looked as if he'd seen a ghost, pointing at the formation plate, his finger trembling, unable to speak for a long time.

From start to finish, it hadn't even taken half the time to finish a cup of tea.

The interference items they'd deliberately mixed in were precisely removed, the broken circuits perfectly repaired, and even... even the original design had been modified?

"This... this is impossible..." the tall apprentice muttered to himself, his face flushing to the color of pig liver.

"Nothing's impossible."

Su Ming picked up his teacup, blew on the floating tea leaves, his tone as flat as if discussing the weather. "Just used a bit more brain and a bit less useless talk than you."

"Excellent!"

A loud roar suddenly came from outside the tent flap.

The door curtain was lifted again, and Zheng Tieshou strode in. Behind him were a few old soldiers who had come to watch the commotion.

Zheng Tieshou's face was flushed red, clearly having just come from the drinking table, but his eyes were frighteningly bright.

He walked over to the table in a few steps, picked up the formation plate, turned it over and examined it twice, then channeled spiritual energy into it to test it.

"Marvelous!"

Zheng Tieshou slapped his thigh hard. "Removing the fire position flow-guiding piece, why didn't I think of that? With this modification, spiritual energy consumption is reduced by at least twenty percent!"

He suddenly turned around and kicked the tall apprentice in the backside.

"See that clearly? Huh?"

Chapter 300: Starlight in the Garbage Heap

At night, in Stone House Number Seven, Sector C.

Su Ming sat cross-legged on the meditation cushion, the bronze fragment placed on the low table before him.

The restrictive formations within the stone house were fully activated, and he had even temporarily lowered the sensitivity of the "Earth Hearing" device to avoid interference.

"How do I do this?" Su Ming looked at the fragment that seemed as if it might crumble to dust at any moment, somewhat at a loss.

"Its current state is like a piece of paper half-burned by fire, it'll shatter at the slightest touch," Lin Yu floated opposite him. "Nurture it. Use your water spiritual energy, seep it inside, 'support' those formation lines that are about to collapse and scatter."

Lin Yu gestured with his hand. "It's like... like when you played with mud as a kid, if you wanted to knead a lump of mud that was about to dry and crack back together, you had to add water. But you couldn't add too much, and you couldn't rush it. You had to moisten it bit by bit."

Su Ming nodded thoughtfully.

He took a deep breath, adjusting his breathing.

Within his Dantian's Qihai, that pool of deep blue spiritual liquid began to slowly rotate.

Su Ming extended his right hand, index and middle fingers pressed together, hovering three inches above the fragment.

"Go."

A strand of water spiritual energy, ten times finer than a strand of hair, slowly descended from his fingertip.

It didn't directly touch the fragment, but instead swirled around it, forming an extremely thin layer of blue mist.

The moment the mist made contact with the fragment's surface, the previously dead, inert bronze material actually emitted an extremely faint, almost inaudible "hum."

It was the sound of a traveler parched for a thousand years encountering the first drop of sweet dew.

"Steady!" Lin Yu barked in a low voice. "Don't give it too much!"

A layer of fine sweat instantly beaded on Su Ming's forehead.

This was more exhausting than repairing formations on the battlefield.

He had to constantly sense the structural changes within the fragment. One iota too much spiritual energy, and the fragile internal balance of the fragment would be broken. One iota too little, and he couldn't stop the dissipation of its spiritual nature.

That strand of spiritual energy was like a silkworm spinning silk, bit by bit, extremely slowly, seeping into the fragment's interior.

One quarter-hour, two quarter-hours, one full hour...

Su Ming's face began to pale, a sign of excessive mental exertion.

His fingers began to tremble slightly.

"Hold on," Lin Yu didn't let him stop. "This kind of extreme tug-of-war, though exhausting, is the best way to temper your character. Your 'Like Water Art' has always been stuck at the 'soft' stage. Actually, water isn't just soft."

"What is water then?" Su Ming gritted his teeth, the words squeezing out from between them.

"Water is tenacity."

Lin Yu's voice seemed to carry a certain rhythm. "Draw a sword to cut the water, the water still flows. The reason water isn't severed isn't because it's soft, but because it has viscosity, tension, a kind of unending 'tenacity.' You need to turn your spiritual energy into a net, a net that's soft but absolutely unbreakable."

Su Ming closed his eyes.

Within his Consciousness Sea, that strand of spiritual energy thread, which had originally been somewhat insubstantial, began to change under the control of his will.

It was no longer a simple flow of energy, but began to solidify, becoming like a transparent string of a zither.

This string probed into the invisible cracks within the fragment, not to fill them, but to connect. To "bridge" those broken lines together using spiritual energy.

The night passed.

When the morning light shone through the cracks in the stone house, Su Ming still maintained that posture.

The surface of the bronze fragment was now covered with a faint, deep blue luster. The previous feeling of brittleness, as if it might crumble at any moment, had disappeared, replaced by a warm, smooth texture.

Su Ming slowly withdrew his finger.

He didn't feel tired. Instead, he felt a warmth within his Dantian. The previously somewhat sluggish circulation of his spiritual energy was now flowing with an incredible smoothness.

"This feeling..."

Su Ming looked down at his hands, gently clenching his five fingers.

There was no spiritual energy fluctuation in the air, but he could clearly feel that the moisture in the surroundings seemed to have become an extension of his fingers.

"Is this 'tenacity'?"

Su Ming murmured to himself.

For the next seven days, aside from clocking in at the warehouse and necessary patrols, Su Ming spent all his time on this fragment.

He was like the most patient seamstress, using spiritual energy as needle and thread, slowly stitching up the wounds left by time.

This monotonous and high-intensity micro-manipulation brought his divine sense to the brink of exhaustion several times. But each time at the edge of his limit, his comprehension of the "tenacity of water" deepened by one degree.

Until late at night on the seventh day.

"Click."

An extremely crisp sound came from within the fragment.

It wasn't the sound of shattering, but more like the sound of some lock being opened.

Su Ming's eyes snapped open.

He saw the bronze fragment slowly float up, hovering in mid-air. The three previously blurry lines now glowed with a silvery-white light.

The light wasn't dazzling, but carried an indescribable depth. It was as if they were three miniature stars, slowly rotating within the stone house.

An invisible gravitational field instantly expanded.

The teacup on the table, the brush stand, even the dust on the hem of Su Ming's clothes, were all subjected to a certain pull, tilting slightly towards the direction of the fragment.

"Succeeded!"

Lin Yu slapped his thigh. "Star Attraction Lines! These are the most primitive gravitational formation lines!"

Su Ming didn't speak.

He stared fixedly at those three silver lines.

Under the illumination of that light, the "Like Water Art" within his body seemed to receive some kind of summons, operating on its own.

His spiritual energy, originally like a trickling stream, now began to spin wildly within his Dantian, forming a huge vortex.

The rotation of this vortex resonated in a wonderfully strange harmony with the rhythm of the "Star Attraction Lines."

Boom—

There was no earth-shattering roar, only a dull thud that only Su Ming could hear.

It was like a dam being gently overtopped by rising water—natural, inevitable.

Qi Refining, Eighth Layer.

The bottleneck that had troubled him for so long was, at this moment, gently yet firmly breached by that incredibly tenacious, endlessly enduring water spiritual energy.

Su Ming slowly exhaled a breath of turbid air.

That breath condensed in the air without dispersing, transforming into a white ribbon that only slowly dissipated after hitting the wall.

"This is the Eighth Layer of Qi Refining."

Su Ming clenched his fist.

If his spiritual energy before was like scattered mist, then now, his spiritual energy was like viscous mercury.

Higher density, stronger permeability, and... much harder to sever.

He extended a finger, gently tapping the floating fragment.

The previously wild gravitational field instantly became docile under the pacification of his spiritual energy.

With a thought from Su Ming, those three "Star Attraction Lines" transformed into three silver runes, deeply imprinted into his Consciousness Sea. Then, the light on the fragment dimmed, and it turned back into a piece of scrap metal.

"Congratulations, disciple."

Lin Yu looked at him with a beaming smile. "Not only did your cultivation break through, but you also got three ancient runes for free. This cleanup mission was a bloody jackpot."

The corners of Su Ming's mouth lifted slightly, revealing a somewhat sly smile.

"Master, you're right."

Su Ming carefully stored away the fragment that had now lost its spiritual nature, stood up, and stretched his somewhat stiff muscles and bones.

"With these 'Star Attraction Lines,' combined with my water spiritual energy, I can prepare a real 'big gift' for those Rock Marrow Demon Earthworms underground."

Su Ming walked to the corner, lifted the floor tile, and looked down at the "Earth Hearing" device that was still vibrating slightly.

His eyes gradually turned cold.