

Reincarnated as an Energy with a System

Chapter 161: Rules

The participants were a little confused at the explanation for the foundation establishment beasts.

A few of them raised their hands to ask and the host picked one. "I am a little confused, say I kill a 2nd foundation establishment realm beast, how many points do we get? 55 or 60?" he asked.

The host smiled and answered, "as I said, the foundation establishment realm starts at 50, so the 1st foundation establishment realm beast will give you 50 points. 2nd will give you 55, 3rd will give you 60, all the way up to 9th realm which will give you 90 points, but you guys don't have to worry about them, since those don't exist in there."

The participants made a small noise of understanding.

"Now, let's move on to how the competition itself will take place. Once you enter the portal to the secret realm, you will all be teleported to a different place at random. No one can tell where you will end up."

"You will then begin to look for points with the talisman on your chest. Remember, you will not get points if the talisman is not on your chest."

"Every day, at exactly noon, you will once again be teleported randomly to another location in the secret realm, while the traversable land will be cut in half."

"So in 4 days, the land will be one-eighth of what you started with."

"To win in this competition, you will need to be in the top 128 people with the most number of points by the end of the 4 days."

"Now, moving onto rewards," the host said.

Suddenly, all the participants' bodies got straighter as they got more attentive at the rewards part.

"The reward for this competition is... you get to keep part of the corpses and ingredients you acquire in the secret realm," the host said.

'Huh?' was the sound that unanimously rang through the entire group. Ning was a little confused too. 'We will get to keep what we acquire?' he didn't expect the competition holders to be so... benevolent.

"Let me explain," the host said as he quieted down the crowd.

"Not everyone will get a reward, only those who do well will succeed in getting better rewards too."

"The talisman you all hold will record two types of points. One is the total points you acquire or lose through either killing or dying at the hands of either the monsters or the other participants. This is what will choose the rank you are on."

"The other points will be purely the ingredients and corpses you acquire by yourself."

"Depending on the percentile of the rank you are on, you will be forced to hand over a minimum of 50% of all everything you collect."

"If you are on the 1st percentile, you will have to give 50% of everything you get, and if you happen to end up on the 100th percentile, you will have to hand over 100% of everything you collect."

"What you will have to hand over will be based on points of the items. However, there is also a variety between those that come in the top 128 and those that don't."

"Only those that come in the top 128 can choose what they want to keep and what they want to give. Everyone else will have to hand over their ingredients for use to chose. I hope you guys understood that," the host said.

The people started murmuring. Most of them understood and were quite surprised at the shamelessness of the tournament holder. Others that didn't understand asked their friends.

Ning thought for a bit and quickly understood what was happening.

'So no matter what I have to get onto the top 128 right?' he thought.

Soon, staff of the tournament holders started walking out and handed every single one of them a few storage bags and a single talisman that they forcefully stuck onto their chests.

Ning got pasted one on himself too.

He looked at the talisman and was mesmerized by the intricate runes on it.

Once everyone got their hands of the storage bags and talismans, the host spoke once more.

"Alright, listen up. There are a few rules that you will have to follow if you want to stay in the tournament."

"First of all, the storage bags are linked to the talisman you have. So if you don't keep the ingredients and corpses in the storage bags, you will flop."

"Secondly, you are not allowed to steal other people's storage bags. If you are found to have stolen it, you will face direct disqualification, and all of the materials you got will be confiscated."

"Even if every one of you is sent out, the secret realm won't close until all of the 4 days are over. So do try to survive until then."

"Teaming up, stealing what others got before they could store it, backstabbing, or whatever other things you can think of that doesn't break the rules is fully allowed."

The host then looked at the sun in the sky and realized that it was time.

"We will now start the tournament. I will call out your island's names. 15 people from that island please walk forward and enter the portal."

"Yellow Bush Island"

A group of people walked out of the thousands and walked towards the portal. The moment they reached the portal, a suction of sort suddenly pulled them in and they all disappeared.

"High Sky island"

Another group walked in and disappeared.

"Hero Island"

People wearing mostly orange clothes walked up and entered the portal in front of everyone. Ning recognized one of the people in there and smiled.

A bunch of other names was called before their name came up.

"Deepskull island"

Ning and the 14 other people walked out of the crowd and went onto the stage. Even as he walked forward Ning couldn't feel anything until he reached near the portal.

Then, suddenly one of the people at the front disappeared. Followed by another, and another and another. Until finally, he too was sucked into the portal and disappeared.

Chapter 162: First Day

Ning suddenly fell onto the ground, but he quickly rolled and got up. He looked around the place and couldn't help but ask himself, "Is this the secret realm?"

From what he was told, he assumed it was a jungle most of the time, but where he had appeared was actually grassland. As for the trees, he was told, they seemed to be a bit further in the distance.

"Huh, so it's not all forests huh? Well, I'm glad there are some scenic changes from time to time. I don't think I would like it if it were all just forests," he thought.

He then started walking through the grasses. Along the way, he tried spreading out his divine sense to see if something was on the way. Although it was about 15 meters in radius, that was plenty for him.

He happened to see a little squirrel-like beast run past him, hidden in the grass. If not for his divine sense, he would've likely missed it.

"You're quite sneaky, aren't you?" he said and immediately stopped it. They made the squirrel float into the air and out of the grasses.

"Ugh, what's with those teeth? You must be Bucktoothed Squirrel. Your bites are quite nasty if I remember correctly," he said when he saw that the squirrel had 2 abnormally long front teeth.

"Hmm... let me guess, 2nd realm of Qi Condensation?" he asked himself and then analyzed the beast's cultivation base.

"Haha, I'm finally starting to get it right." Ning was quite happy to learn that he no longer needed the skill to check cultivation bases. He was starting to be able to do so himself.

The squirrel struggled in the air, trying to move, but Ning's telekinesis was too strong. "Ah, right. I need to kill you to get points," Ning said and simply flicked its forehead to give it a quick death.

He put the corpse of the beast into the special storage bag and checked the talisman on his chest. As he had hoped, it noted down that he had 2 points now.

"Alright let's try to get more. There must be quite a few materials and beasts in the forest," he thought and walked towards the forest in the distance.

The grassland unfortunately didn't hold many beasts or plants that could be used as ingredients.

"Thankfully I at least know what the ingredients look like. That might be hard for most of the people taking part in the competition," Ning thought.

While he didn't know where he could find many of the ingredients or even the least amount of knowledge about their origin, thanks to the medical knowledge he had bought, he had a perfect idea about their appearance.

"Well, all I can hope is that the competition holders know those ingredients as well, otherwise half of what I get might be considered useless to those people," Ning said. He did after all have more knowledge regarding these things than nearly everyone on the planet.

Soon he arrived at the front of the jungle. By now, he had managed to kill a few more beasts, with the strongest one being only at the 4th stage of Qi Condensation.

While it was okay by comparison to the forest in Starsight city, when compared to his strength, they were very weak.

He had also managed to find a few ingredients along the way. He could've probably found some more if he had searched for a little longer, but he decided not to.

He looked at the talisman and saw that he had 52 points until now. He hadn't kept track of the points after the first 2 beasts, so he wondered how he got so much.

"The storage bag only has 8 beasts and 6 ingredients. Meaning, one or more of the ingredients must have really high points" he thought.

He quickly let go of all his thoughts and walked into the forest.

Out in the Arena, there were thousands of people including both inside and outside who were watching the screens that came up high in the air.

Gion, Yelca, and the rest were looking at the hundreds of screens that were floating side by side. There were no sounds and the image seemed to be tied to the location so one couldn't follow a disciple around.

Thankfully, the images were from hotspots in the Secret Realm where most great stuff was at, so one could find different participants on the screen all the time.

"Hey, can you guys see any of our disciples?" Gion asked.

"Sect Master, disciple Kael is right there on that screen. 23 down, 16 to the right," an elder said.

"Oh, oh, I see. What is he doing? Fighting a beast?" Gion tried to look but the disciple was at the edge of the screen and he couldn't see what was beyond it.

"There is another one on that screen on the lower left. Seems to be one of sect leader Yelca's disciples," another elder said.

"Hoo, let me see. Ah yes, Gumi. I have quite great aspirations for him," the sect leader said. He then thought of something and asked, "Have anyone of you seen doctor Ning yet?"

Everyone turned their attention to the screen but none could find him. Even with hundreds of screens, the competition holders couldn't see the entire secret realm at all.

"Sigh, he is the strongest participant we have. He even broke through to the Foundation Establishment realm a few months ago. I would love to see him in action," Yelca said.

Everyone nodded with their sentiment.

Suddenly, the Secret realm's portal started fluctuating and before anyone could react, someone was thrown out.

"Eh? It's only been an hour, and someone is already disqualified. Poor guy didn't even get last a day," Gion said.

The participant who was just thrown out happened to be from the group in front of Gion and Yelca, so when he returned to the group, they happened to hear what he said.

"I'm sorry Elders, but the beast was too strong for me."

Hearing an 8th Qi Condensation Realm participant saying this, the two sect leaders got a bad premonition about the future.

Chapter 163: Emerald Mango

Ning looked at the deer-like beast in front of him and got very nervous. He wasn't nervous because it might attack him, but because it might run away at the slightest disturbance.

The deer was very much heavier than him so he couldn't use Telekinesis on it to try and stop it.

The deer was around the 8th realm of Qi Condensation, and while he could easily kill it, he didn't want to run through the jungle following it.

So, he trod slowly, making sure to not step on anything dry or could make sounds. As soon as he got close enough, he turned his palm into a fist and punched the air.

Suddenly, blue energy appeared from his arm that took the shape of a fist and rushed towards the deer. Before the deer could even do anything, Ning managed to incapacitate it.

Seeing the deer down, he immediately ran towards it and killed it with a normal punch. He then put the corpse inside the storage bag and sighed in relief.

The first few beasts he came across in the jungle that was weaker than him but heavier, usually just ran away because of his aura. He killed every single one of them after running after them for a bit, but that was starting to get annoying.

"I need to learn how to contain my aura," he thought. His cultivation base was too strong now and he needed to be able to contain it in.

It wasn't only for the sake of these beasts or the competition, he needed to be able to do this so that he could mix in with the mortals or lower level cultivators if he ever wanted to have a slow life, or if he ever wanted to act like a pig to eat the tiger.

"Can I do it?" Ning wondered. From what he knew, the aura on one's body appeared when the Qi continuously circulated throughout the body and some of it escaped from it.

"So, if I want to hide my aura I either need to have the Qi not escape my meridian or... not have the Qi in the meridian at all," he thought.

Previously, he wouldn't think this was possible. If the Qi the always stayed in the meridians were to be thrown away, he would have to cultivate overnight to gain the Qi back.

However, now that he was a Foundation Establishment realm cultivator, he could store the Qi in the Sea of Qi. That was where all of the Qi in his meridians originated from, to begin with.

So what he needed to do now was cut off the supply.

He sent his divine sense into his Sea Of Qi and started controlling the Qi flowing out of it. The Qi was his, so he could control it.

But the Sea of Qi had its own plan it seemed. As Ning tried to control the Qi, the Sea of Qi kept trying to force some more Qi through.

Ning tried for a while but couldn't entirely stop the flow of Qi. In the end, he gave up and got satisfied with what he had.

While the aura was still there, thanks to the lack of Qi, it felt more like he was around the 5th realm of Qi Condensation at best.

"I can work with this," he thought. He used part of his attention to keeping the Qi at bay and walked forward.

Now that his aura wasn't as terrifying as before, beasts were more attracted towards him thinking he was their prey.

Ning cracked a smile every time one of them tried to sneak attack him.

"You can't sneak when I have my divine sense, you fools," he thought to himself and immediately turned around to kill whatever was behind him. Taken by surprise, they were usually stunned like a deer in the headlights.

" This is getting too easy," Ning thought as he looked at the corpse of the hyena-like creature in front of him. He quickly put it into his storage bag and walked on.

He found a few more ingredients along the way and killed some beasts as well.

He was walking forward when he suddenly noticed an opening that didn't have any trees. "Am I out of the forest?" he thought and walked forward.

When he reached the open area, he realized that it was actually just a small place in the middle of the forest that didn't have any trees.

That was probably because of what was in the middle of the open area. "Holy Sh*t," Ning couldn't help but curse when he saw the gigantic tree in front of him.

The tree was around 4 meters in diameter and nearly 50 meters high. The trunk separated into dozens of thick branches that separated into more. All in all, the tree had about 30 meters in radius at the maximum span of its horizontal length.

That wasn't the only thing great about the tree in front of him. There were multiple snakes wrapped around the branches of the trees, each at least 5th realm of Qi Condensation in cultivation.

"Hmm... can I fight them all without getting overwhelmed? They probably— no, most likely have venom too," Ning thought.

He started looking through the snakes and quickly started recognizing them.

"Geez, 90% of them are venomous, and those are just the ones I can see from here," he thought.

He looked near every single snake and could see a green fruit hanging near it. He paid closer attention and suddenly his eyes went wide. " Emerald Mango!" he shouted.

That was the name of one of the most hard-to-find ingredients of all. It had many usages in healing pastes and other forms of medicine but was very rare, so no one used it.

Now, here it was and he could get a lot of it as well. However, he would have to fight through the hoards of snakes to get to it.

"Whatever," he thought and was about to move forward when suddenly, he heard footsteps nearby.

Chapter 164: Cerulean Hornsnake

"People?" Ning said in surprise. It had been nearly 3 hours since he entered the secret realm. While he knew that the secret realm was large, he hadn't expected it to not find a single participant at all the entire time.

However, finally, he was hearing some footsteps that definitely belonged to humans.

Ning looked to his left and saw a person walking out of the forest. It was an 8th Qi Condensation realm man wearing a blue robe, slightly darker in color than the one Ning was wearing.

"Eh, I finally got to see someone," the man said. He looked at Ning up and down and frowned.

"Why are you so weak brother? What are your elders thinking, sending such a weak disciple to the secret realm?" the man complained.

Ning was a little amused at the man assuming that he was weak due to his aura. 'Well, at least it's working,' Ning thought.

"Brother, you might want to leave the secret realm soon, it's dangerous," the man said.

Ning smiled and said, "Thank you for the concerns, but the secret realm will eject me automatically if I were to come across some mortal threat."

"Sigh, that's true, but you should leave when you have enough points to satisfy your elders," the man said.

Suddenly, Ning ran forward with a fist targeted at the man.

"Wha— What?" the man was surprised at the sudden attack and quickly took out his sword and attacked Ning.

Ning casually parried the sword with the side of his left arm and punched near the man's skull.

"Ahh," the man screamed and closed his eyes at the punch. Suddenly, fresh blood started flowing from the side of his skull.

The man slowly opened his eyes to see the blood flowing down his left arm, but there was no pain at all.

"You should be more careful. It's better if you leave this place," Ning said and walked away from the man. The man slowly turned his head to the left and just managed to see Ning put a large snake corpse into his storage bag.

"I can see that you were concerned for me and I appreciate that. But," Ning said while pointing at the tree, "You should be more concerned for yourself."

The man looked at the tree he had been ignoring this whole time and saw giant snakes wrapped around the tree who were starting to make their way down to the ground after seeing their own kind die.

The man's soul nearly left his body when he saw that.

"Oi, leave," Ning shouted at him and the man came back to himself. He hurriedly turned around and started to run away and stopped.

"Brother, why aren't you running?" he asked when he saw that Ning was still there.

"Hah, Why would I run when there are so many delicious points slithering in front of me."

Ning watched the man run away and focused on the battle that was going to start. "Ugh, I wanted to use the spear at least once, but I can't use that against so many enemies. I guess it's the sword again," he thought and took out the Low-Grade Sword Artifact.

He got into his stance and waited for the closest snake to come nearer. When it was, he started.

He immediately disappeared from his spot and appeared behind the snake. A thin line of blood appeared on the snake's neck as its head slid off its body and it died.

That was 1.

He immediately kicked his movement technique into action and disappeared once more and arrived in front of another snake.

Before the snake could even react, he sliced it through the head and the snake separated into two parts halfway through its body.

That was 2.

His divine sense was in full gear, so he saw a snake sneak behind him and lunge at him. The snake was smaller than him, so Ning didn't even look behind when the snake was stuck in midair.

He simply turned around and gave it a good kick, blasting its head into hundreds of pieces.

That was 3.

There were hundreds of snakes, and Ning couldn't possibly keep count of how many he was going to kill. He was currently focused on two different things.

The first was making sure he didn't get sneak attacked as that could be bad.

The second was trying to find the most venomous ones first so that he could kill them and be in less danger.

Just as he was thinking that he saw a sapphire skinned snake about 10 meters in length with two tiny horn-like protrusions coming out of its skin.

"A Cerulean Hornsnake," Ning said in surprise. That was one of the most venomous snakes he knew of. A single bite of those snakes had enough venom to kill 20,000 mortals at once.

"That's the one I need to kill first," he thought. He continued killing the ones that came up to him but didn't really care much in the ways of danger.

But the Cerulean Hornsnake was slithering towards him and then Ning realized that he was in much greater danger than he thought he was in.

The snake was in the 1st realm of Foundation Establishment.

'F*ck, it's clearly one of the rare beasts the host told us about,' Ning thought. He tried to run further away from the snake while continuously killing more and more snakes.

But it was getting harder. He now needed to split his attention into 3 parts and that was getting troublesome. He was starting to make mistakes.

BITE

"Ow," suddenly, he looked down and saw a snake bite his leg. His leg muscle was very strong, but this snake's bite was also strong enough to puncher it just enough to send the venoms into his bloodstream.

Ning quickly remembered what the snake was a killed it with a single swipe of his sword. But within seconds, the numbness from the venom started spreading in the leg, and he could no longer use his left leg.

More dangerously, the venom was moving up and up to his body, and would slowly reach his waist area. At that point, he would be in serious danger.

Chapter 165: Antidote On The Go

"That was a lemon viper."

"Its venom travels from the origin of the bite until all the body is numb."

"My heart and other organs will stop way before my whole body goes numb."

"With the venom's travel speed, I have approximately 2 minutes before the venom reached my heart."

"The antidote requires ingredients that I don't have, unfortunately."

"Fortunately," Ning looked towards the tree and said, "there is something much better."

Ning was grateful to his past self for having the forethought of learning a new movement technique. If he had kept on using what he had, the Twin step movement technique would've failed right now thanks to his unmoving foot.

Ning's sword turned black suddenly, and he unleashed an attack that cut all the snakes in the current vicinity. Suddenly, he flew.

All the snakes were down on the ground, so it was the perfect time to fly. He propelled himself into the air and flew to one of the fruits up in the air and grabbed it.

He quickly started bringing out the rest of the ingredients and started preparing the medicine. He didn't have time to properly make the medicine, so he started chomping down on the ingredients.

He took out all the ingredients and bit into it but didn't swallow it. Once his mouth was full with the ingredients then finally did he started to chew them all.

The snakes had already made their way up to him, and surprisingly, some of the higher ones even knew how to fly.

'This is going to be annoying,' he thought. He wasn't used to flying, let alone fighting while doing so, and he couldn't fight properly on the ground until his leg was cured.

So he could only grumble and do what he could to stay alive. Qi attacks started flying everywhere injuring a lot of the snakes. But the remaining ones were more intelligent and thus knew when to dodge it.

'Sh*t. They let the dumber ones come first to check the waters, and now that they've seen that I am a free target, they are ganging up on me,' Ning thought.

Ning needed to do better. He chewed the ingredients as fast as he could to mix them, but it was still going to take some time.

He propelled himself forward once more and went towards some of the weaker snakes and cut them up. He then turned to the side and used a Qi slash to catch a snake off guard. The snake didn't expect him to attack so fast and died.

A black snake jumped onto his right leg. Ning tried to rush forward but couldn't do it in time as he hesitated due to the Cerulean Hornsnake being right where he was about to go.

The snake wrapped around his leg and bit it. Ning was scared that he was going to have to give up on another leg, but thankfully, he didn't.

The snake's fangs broke into two when it tried to bite him. This snake wasn't as strong as the last one and couldn't pierce his leg.

Ning accurately slid his sword between his leg and the snake and swung it outward, cutting the snake into multiple pieces along the way.

Ning didn't lose his focus. He immediately looked around the battlefield. A lot of snakes were already dead, but the strong ones were still there.

Especially the Cerulean Hornsnake. It seemed to be waiting for him to get tired or injured before it could swiftly take care of him.

Ning wasn't going to let that happen. He took a deep gulp and swallowed the medicine that had formed in his mouth by now.

A cool sense washed down his esophagus as it reached his stomach. Once there, he could sense the medicine being sent to each and every corner of his body.

Even as the snakes moved towards him, the sense on his left leg was starting to come back and he was starting to get his feeling back into his leg.

"That's much better," he thought as he finally used the Twin Step Movement technique to dash forward and cut a snake with his sword.

The snake however survived but with a deep gash on its body. "I guess you guys aren't going to be so easy to hurt now, are you?"

In an abrupt fashion, Ning stored his sword back into his storage bag. "Now that there aren't that many of you, I can finally use it," he said as he took out a spear with a silver blade and a blue body.

The spear had a much deeper blue than Ning's clothes or the Cerulean Hornsnake. Ning swung it around a few and got used to its weight.

"Wow, this really is an amazing spear," he thought and start spinning it around from left to right. As he spun more and more, the power in his spear started increasing as well.

He made a simple slash and the snake which just had a long gash in its body got cut into two.

"Damn, it feels good to have a spear with a long blade. Cutting is so much easier with this," he said. "Is the blade itself better than the other sword?" he wondered.

He saw a snake sneak around his back and try to lunge at him. Without even turning towards it, he immediately swung behind him and cut the snake in half.

The snake was weaker than the other one, but he wasn't sure he could completely cut it in half in a single blow without any techniques with the sword.

Ning continued swinging his spear around and made his way across the entire battlefield, killing one snake after another. Thanks to their low amount, he could keep on revolving the spear around, stacking more and more power on the spear.

Finally, he cut the last of the snakes on the battlefield as its body split in two. Then, he turned towards the Cerulean Hornsnake.

It was time for the two of them to fight.

Chapter 166: Final Blow

Ning was bloody, but none of it were his own blood. Thanks to his higher cultivation base, he had been able to successfully kill off the rest of the snakes, while the one that was truly strong stayed behind in caution.

'It would've been bad if it really did decide to join them,' Ning thought.

He kept on swinging the spear around, steadily increasing the power in it. The Cerulean Hornsnake slid across the body of its former friends as it prepared to attack Ning.

Ning suddenly pushed himself off of the ground and dashed towards the snake. Seeing that he was finally coming after it, the snake also lunged towards him.

At the last moment, Ning slid below the jumping snake and pierced its stomach as he went forward. However, all he could do was create sparks when the spear hit the snake's scales.

'Damn, I knew it was tough, but I didn't expect it to be so much,' he thought.

He slowly started moving his legs around, doing different maneuvers that made it look like he was dancing. The snake immediately turned around to attack, but it got a little slow all of a sudden.

Ning thought he got the snake and jumped forward, but as soon as he stopped his hypnotizing dance, the snake was back to its normal self and attacked him as well.

The fangs managed to block the spear without showing the slightest hint of breaking or even chipping. 'Damn this snake is so strong, and it keeps making me stop using the Revolution Spear technique. I need to either stay away from it for a while or change my approach,' he thought.

So he decided to go a different route. 'Can I even get bit? This body will die if that ever happens. Although, maybe I will be sent out.'

'But I wasn't when that other snake bit me. Did that not count as fatal damage?' Ning thought. He didn't know the criteria for getting sent out of the secret realm, so he had to be careful.

Suddenly, Ning punched with his left hand, sending out fist-shaped energy towards the snake. While that was happening, he immediately went behind the snake and use the One True Spear strike.

He launched forward with his spear and sneak attacked it. But the snake suddenly twisted its tail to slap him mid-flight and threw him towards the jungle.

"Ow, what the hell? How did it know I was— Ah f*ck. I should have known," Ning wanted to slap himself for not thinking it through but the snake's slap had done enough damage.

Thankfully, the snake also took a little damage from the fist as it didn't have any other way to dodge and attack him at the same time.

'Damn, it weighed its choices and decided that hitting me was a better choice than dodging. What a terrifying intelligence,' Ning thought.

He once again rushed forward for a direct fight. The snake also slid forward and started fighting the spear of its tail.

TANG TANG TANG TANG

Multiple sounds rang throughout the forests as their spear and tail hit each other. The snake was strong but it didn't realize that by fighting directly, it was allowing Ning to gather power onto his spear.

Ning took the chance to continuously gather more and more power as finally in one of the clashes, he managed to pierce the skin and cut deep into the snake's body.

'Oh, it's only the skin that is strong, not the muscles or bones,' Ning thought. He had previously already checked the snake's abilities but had seen nothing worthy of worry.

The only thing he needed to care about in this fight was the strong cultivation base and the beyond terrifying venom of the snake.

The snake pulled back its tail and instead tried to bite Ning. Ning immediately used his spear to pierce the snake's head but the fangs were too strong to hurt and so they clashed together and got into a power struggle.

Ning was thinking of pulling back his spear and continuing to keep his spear's energy it had gathered due to spinning, but suddenly, something he hadn't prepared for happened.

The snake, instead of continuing the power struggle, just opened its mouth further wide until its fangs were pointed towards Ning and sprayed its Venom at him.

Ning was scared out of his mind for a split second, but immediately gained control of his mind and did what the snake absolutely was not expecting him to.

He stopped the venom mid-air. The snake was a little surprised seeing the Greenish yellow venom in mid-air and even a little afraid.

Ning didn't want to keep the venom in the air for long as the fumes from the venom might end up being dangerous as well. That was when he noticed the snake acting a little different than usual.

'Could it be?' he thought and immediately sent venom flying back towards it. The snake tried to dodge it, and it did, but the venom once again stopped midair and changed its direction to fall onto the back of the snake.

The snake started struggling amongst the other snake's bodies to get rid of the venom, but it was too late. As soon as the venom had touched its skin, the part of that skin was shed off.

The muscles however didn't have much damage to them. While the snake was resistant to its own venom on the inside, it seemed the venom was bad for it on the outside.

Once the skin was gone and the muscles were visible, Ning knew the snake was as good as dead now. He immediately took out his sword and started controlling it with his Qi and telekinesis to fight the snake, while he started looking for ways to attack the snake.

The snake tried to dodge and run away, but Ning would always be there to attack. After fighting for a few minutes, Ning finally got his chance.

Just as the snake was distracted thanks to his sword, He launched the One True spear strike and pierced directed into the snake's body, and struck its heart.

Chapter 167: Another Grassland

The snake hissed for a moment and fell to the ground dead. Ning pulled out the spear and blood gushed out of the wound.

"Damn, that took way more out of me than I would've expected," he thought. He had never expected that fighting a 1st Foundation Establishment realm monster would be that difficult to win against.

"I need better techniques. The ones I currently have don't suit my cultivation base," he thought. While the One True Sword Strike and the Revolving Spear art were good techniques, they had a lot of things holding them back.

Ning had gotten them for very cheap, whether it be with Energy or with Gold Cons. So now that he was at a level that he was, he couldn't afford to fight with these cheap techniques.

"Sigh, I guess I have to wait until the system comes back. When exactly is it coming back? I've lost count of the days," he thought.

He started putting all the snakes into his storage bag. There were over a hundred of them and it took him some time.

He then proceeded to pick up all the fruits from the tree. The Emerald Mangoes should be able to earn him a lot of points.

Once he was done with it all, he checked the talisman for the points and he smiled.

"I... I have no words."

"Truly Magnificent. That— That's a strong participant for sure."

"Did you see how he used both a sword and a spear at the end?"

"Damn, I wish I knew how strong those snakes were. At least 5th Qi condensation realm right?"

"A few of them should be very weak. 1st or 2nd realm actually. Did you see how easily he kicked and they died?"

"Well some of them could fly, so they must be around 6th realm in general."

"I think the blue one was in the 8th realm at the very least, If not the 9th realm."

"What island is that disciple from? They must be truly proud of him."

Due to the fact that there were so many snakes in a single spot, the audience seemed to have gotten the wrong impression that the reason it was a hotspot was the quantity of the beasts and not the quality of them.

Dion, Yelca, and the rest of them were watching the screen in the air with massively wide eyes. They knew how strong Ning was, so when they saw him struggling, they knew that the beasts were strong.

"Woah, Doctor Ning should have stopped being a doctor and just joined a sect as a normal disciple. He would've been a direct disciple by now," Dion said.

"I wonder why he decided to become a doctor when he had so much talent," Yelca wondered.

"Well, either way, he is great. Although... where is he now? He is gone from the screen," Gion said.

The group looked back at the screen but Ning was gone and they couldn't find him anymore. So they focused their attention back on the screen at a different person whose current state interested the rest of the group.

Ning walked out of the forest and into a small grassland that lead to another forest. However, this grassland had really tall grasses and giant rocks in the middle as well as a few trees scattered everywhere.

The sun was down and the visibility was low, but as a cultivator of both Body and Qi, Ning had no need to worry about vision.

He walked into the grassland with a few different things on his mind.

For one, he was confused as to how there was a sun in a realm that was supposed to just be a separate dimension. That did not make sense to him unless to him.

Also, he couldn't figure out why no matter how much he walked, he didn't see the edge of this secret realm.

"Is this really a secret realm that is just a small hidden dimension? Would it not make sense that it's just a different land on Kumia just connected through the portal?"Ning wondered.

"No, but that is wrong as well. The sun is exactly where it should be on the Hub island. If it were anywhere else the angle and direction would be different, as well as the placement. So we should be exactly where we were in the arena, but yet somehow... not?" Ning couldn't understand what was going on.

He thought for a bit more, but his knowledge of secret realms and dimensions and universes was very minute, so he decided to give up on making sense of his situation.

Instead, he just focused on finding the beasts and ingredients as per usual.

Ning saw a flower next to the giant rock using his divine sense. He could also see a bunch of 2nd Qi condensation realm worms hidden on the ground.

He knew exactly what type of worms they were so he stepped onto their ground without hesitation. The worms immediately walked out of the dirt thinking he was prey due to his low cultivation aura.

As such, they fell into his trap. Ning didn't need any weapons for these lowly worms and easily finished them off by just stomping on them.

He kept their corpse in his storage bag and picked up the flower as well. Once he was done there, he decided to move again.

"Oh," he thought as he turned around his head. Out in the distance, he could see two people, a boy, and a girl, both wearing different colored robes following a wild horse with a bloody back.

The horse was in fear and desperation as well as blind rage due to being injured. It suddenly saw Ning and ran towards him.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Ning still had his aura hidden for the most part so the Horse might have seen him as an easy target.

However, before the horse could even reach him, Ning took out his sword swiftly and sent out a small slash at the horse's head and it immediately died, while its body, still with its momentum, slid on the grass until it came near Ning's feet and stopped.

Chapter 168: Rude

Ning kicked the horse while keeping away the sword and checked if the horse was really dead. It was beyond a shadow of a doubt, dead.

He checked the horse and realized that it was a Nether Spirit horse. These horses were known for their strong body and affinity to cold and dark places.

It must've remained in the cold forest all the time, but the two people must've found it and attacked it until it was here.

"Well, not like it could've survived that much longer with its 5th Qi Condensation realm cultivation base," Ning thought.

The two people reached Ning and stopped in front of him. The boy and girl were both older than Ning in age but their cultivation base was nowhere close.

"I'm sorry I killed your beast; it was trying to attack me and I couldn't see any other way out of it. You may take its body if you want to," Ning said.

The lady suddenly snickered while the man started laughing out loudly. "You don't have to lie brother. We saw the horse fall to the ground on its own. It died due to the wounds we inflicted on it. You don't have to try and take advantage of the situation to make yourself sound better," the man said.

'What?' Ning got a little confused. 'Did they not see me attack the horse?' he thought. Now that he thought about it, the horse did block their vision. So they didn't see him take out a sword and keep it back in.

"Yes, young man. Are you trying to impress me right now? You should at least make sure that you are strong if you want to lie like that," the girl said.

Ning was done with them. "Whatever, just take your horse and leave. I don't want to deal with you two anymore," he said and started to leave.

"Ah, so rude," the girl said.

"Hey, you wait. Apologize to us," the man decided.

Ning stopped in his tracks and looked back, "Do what?"

"Apologize to us. You were rude right there," the woman demanded.

Ning felt the situation a little amusing. These people who were barely in the 7th realm of Qi Condensation wanted him to apologize.

"Very well. I am sorry," Ning apologized with a bow.

"That's more like it. Now you may leave," the man said.

"Sure, but before that. It seems that you don't want to horse so let me take it," Ning said and swiftly stored the horse before either of them could even react. He immediately turned around and started leaving.

"What the hell? Where do you think you're going?" The woman shouted prompting the man to react.

"You dare!" the man couldn't believe what had just happened and shouted. He took out a sword and slashed at Ning.

Ning had his divine sense active, so he just stepped to the side and caught the blade from the top before it even reached the ground.

He pulled it out of the man's hand and without hesitation swung back. Before the sword could even reach the man, however, the talisman on his chest lit up and blocked the attack. However, at the same time, the man disappeared as well.

"Oh, so that's what happens when you are about to receive fatal damage, huh," Ning spoke out loud.

The lady dropped to the ground seeing the man get taken care of so easily. Ning finally stopped stifling his Qi flow and his cultivation aura came back to normal.

As the lady sensed the aura increase, she knew she was in deep trouble. She and the man had accidentally found trouble with one of the strongest people in the competition.

"P-p-please forgive me. I—I didn't know you were..." she tried to speak but the fear and despair wouldn't let her.

"Sure, I'll forgive you. I killed the man, but you are a lady, so you can go," Ning said with a gentle smile. The lady smiled and started thanking him, but then Ning's face changed.

"Wait a second. Isn't that a little sexist of me? Attacking a man, but letting a woman go. If it were anywhere else, it would even be considered rude, wouldn't it?"

"And you just showed how much you disliked it when people were rude," Ning said as his smile came back on his face, except this time it didn't give hope to the lady. Instead, it gave horror.

"Besides, you might think I'm trying to impress you by letting you go. You don't like that either right?" Ning's smile was ever so big.

The woman started shaking and immediately stood up to run away. Ning just watched her leave. He looked at the sword in his hand while shaking his head and grabbed the sword like a javelin.

He then aimed directly at the lady and threw the sword at her with the full strength of his body cultivation. The sword flew through the air just like an arrow let go from a bow.

It accurately landed on the woman's running back, but before it could even touch her, a protected barrier appeared from her talisman and she disappeared.

Ning thought about the current situation and just shook his head.

He wanted to go pick up the sword but it wasn't worth it. The sword wasn't even a spirit artifact, so he just left it there.

He looked at the sky, It was already past evening, and was night now. So, he decided to stop hunting and searching for the ingredients for now.

After fighting all day, his Qi reserve was low. He was also close to a breakthrough so, he wanted to get there as soon as possible.

So, he took out a spirit stone and sat on top of the giant rock next to him in a mediating position. He slowly breathed and started sucking in the Qi from the spirit stones and condensed it into his Sea of Qi.

He was a few days away from breaking through and thus cultivated throughout the night.

Chapter 169: Shambles

Sun rose up in the sky and Ning opened his eyes as well. At some point through the Ning, the spirit stone had been emptied and he had to take out a second one to cultivate with.

However, by the morning even that was gone. Thanks to cultivating all night, he was as fresh as ever and ready to go.

He stood up from the rock, full of energy, and walked towards the other forest. Along the way, he found many monsters and found quite a few ingredients as well.

"I wonder if the people outside left the arena at night or stayed throughout the night," Ning wondered. Ning could understand the cultivators staying, but the mortals that came to watch stuff must've definitely left at night.

He continued walking and soon reached the forest. The forest wasn't any different from the other one and Ning continued to exploit his hidden aura for more points.

Beasts continued to target him for his weak aura, and he continued killing them. As such, quite a few hours passed.

Ning was in the middle of the jungle and another beast with an aura that said it was in the 6th Qi Condensation realm tried to sneak attack him.

It was a monkey with four arms and it sneakily climbed through the trees, slowly coming behind him to attack. As soon as it reached close to him.

It punched his back as hard as it could. Ning swiftly turned around to catch its incoming arm. But even as he did, the talisman on his chest started glowing and soon a barrier appeared around him.

"Huh? No, it's not fatal. What are you doing?" Ning shouted but he couldn't do anything to stop it. "Noooo....." Even as he shouted, he disappeared.

When he finally reappeared, he looked around where he was, expecting to see a hoard of people looking at him near the portal on the stage.

But instead, he found himself near a stream of water, in the middle of a grassland.

"What?" he asked himself in confusion. "Wasn't I disqualified?" he thought as he looked around and then up.

The sun was in the sky, directly on top of him.

"Oh, it's noon. F*ck. Can't they make the effect of teleportation and leaving the secret realm different? F*cking scared me for nothing," he thought and stood up.

He looked around to see the best route to take now when he noticed something. Far away in the sky, he could see a slightly purple layer of barrier spanning everywhere he could see.

'Is that... what they are using to stop us from moving any further?' Ning wondered. He turned around looking at the other sides and realized that the barrier on that side was at the same distance from him.

It was very far away, but he could tell the distance. He turned to the two remaining sides and realized that he had been teleported to the middle of the secret realm.

"Damn, where was I before? This is clearly the middle portion. I hope there aren't any strong monsters out there," Ning thought.

All of a sudden, something entered the range of his divine sense. Ning looked at it and saw that it was a crocodile beast.

It was a 7th Qi Condensation realm beast and was slowly swimming through the water, trying to stay hidden as it closed in on Ning.

Ning didn't even bother trying to wait for the crocodile to reach him and just jumped at it. The crocodile was surprised and opened its mouth to bite at Ning, but Ning just stepped on the lower mouth and grabbed the upper mouth with his hand.

He then pulled it away and ripped the crocodile in half. He stored the corpse and walked out of the water.

Just as he did, 3 different people walked out of the jungle at the same time. However, they weren't together and came out of different sides of the jungle.

"Holy... so many people. I guess since the land is halved, you idiots would start popping up soon," a man as he walked out.

He was wearing a green robe, in contrast to the other two who were wearing a red robe and a light blue robe.

"Hoh, an idiot calling someone else an idiot? That's rare to see," the man with the light blue robe said.

Ning looked at the three and saw that they all had the 8th Qi Condensation realm. That was an incredibly rare occurrence. In contrast, Ning currently looked like he had 6th Qi Condensation realm.

The third guy in red wasn't speaking at all and kept looking at the other two with caution. Ning was no threat to him so he didn't even bother looking at him.

Ning was slightly surprised at the third guy's appearance but thought it was just a coincidence and focused on the two loud ones.

"You guys must've gathered quite a few points right? Why don't you give half of it to me?" the guy in green said.

"Sure, why don't you give some to me as well? I would appreciate it a lot," the guy in light blue said.

They both looked to their side towards the third person, but he wasn't speaking at all. So they stopped bothering with him but kept a cautious eye on him.

"Why don't I get rid of this guy and we can continue this afterward?" the guy in green said pointing to Ning.

"And get half his points? Keep dreaming. I will be the one killing him." The guy in light blue didn't wait for any more words and directly jumped towards Ning.

The guy in green also jumped towards Ning to deliver the final blow as that would be what gave the people their points.

Ning took out his spear and put it up horizontally to stop the swords. One hit the blade and another the hilt, yet even when together, neither of them could budge the spear.

"You guys talk really big, but do you have the ability to back it up?" Ning said as he looked towards both of them and a malicious smile appeared on his face.

Chapter 170: Hijaka

Ning's smile brought small traces of doubt and fear in the two men's eyes.

They immediately backed up and looked at each other before looking back towards Ning. They got cautious. "You are quite crafty aren't you? Hiding your ability to strike at the right time," the man with the green robe said.

"It seems like he is quite strong. why don't we work together to defeat him first before we fight amongst ourselves," the man in the light blue robe asked?

"Sure," the man in green said. He then turned to the third guy to ask, "What about y— What the?" he was surprised when he saw the man in red on the ground.

'Was he attacked somehow? How did he get there?' he was just thinking that when he heard a voice right next to him.

"Are you sure you can ignore me?" Ning said right next to the man's face. At some point, he had appeared right next to the man in green.

The man in blue suddenly swung his sword and set out a slash made up of water towards Ning. The slash was very sharp and it accurately hit Ning.

"Oh, I could feel that one. Nice job," he said as wiped away the water from his face. The man in blue was stunned. One of the best-known attacks of his sect was useless against the man.

'He is strong,' he thought. He immediately turned around decided to run. There was no way he was winning this fight and decided to use the man in green as a sacrifice to save himself.

"Nope, you don't get to go anywhere," Ning suddenly stopped the man with telekinesis. He was just a bit lighter when compared to Ning, so he was able to stop him.

If it had not worked, Ning would've used his Qi, but that was the last resort. It usually took a lot more Qi and focus when trying to someone or thing with its own will.

Thankfully, the Telekinesis only needed his mental energy, which he had plenty by now. He pulled the man back towards him with his Telekinesis and simply pointed his spear towards him.

The man's mobility was fully stopped by Ning. No matter how much he struggled, he couldn't move at all. Even as he reached Ning, he was barely able to turn his head, only to see a sharp blade of a spear pointed right at his face.

Before the blade could touch him, however, yellow energy appeared out of his talisman and he disappeared.

"That's one," Ning said.

He turned to look at the man in green who was was terrified out of his mind. "Sigh, you guys can't even put up a brave front. Why do you act like hot stuff and then suddenly can't even put up a fight at the next moment? Come on, attack me," Ning said.

The man couldn't believe what was happening. He couldn't even lift his sword out of fear.

Ning saw that and didn't want to have anything more to do with him. He showed him mercy and directly sent him back outside of the secret realm.

He then turned back to the last person, the man with the red robes. From the very start, this man had shown no aggression.

When the fight had started, however, he had fallen to the ground, with no movement.

"What's wrong with you? Why do you have your head down?" Ning asked.

The man didn't move or do anything. Instead, he simply asked a simple question.

"Is your name Ning?"

Ning was a little surprised. He looked at the man's red robe and could guarantee that it was not part of the Red Tiger sect. The colors just didn't match.

'Could it be that the sect leaders made a secret agreement with another island for better chances in the tournament?' Ning wondered.

"Yes, that is me," Ning said. "Who are you?"

The man finally looked up at Ning with a face of awe. "My name is Hijaka. I am the son of Usalini," the man said to Ning.

Ning was confused for a second, but hearing the names, a strange feeling appeared in his mind that he wanted to believe but didn't want to be disappointed.

"The nephew of the chief and the grandson of the former chief, Hyesi. It is an honor to meet you Inikaka," Hijaka immediately got into a kneeling position once more and started bowing to him.

Ning was shocked. Even though at some level he had expected this after seeing the man's incredibly dark skin for the first time, he was still very shocked.

"You— You are a Klavian? You are Hyesi's grandson?" Ning asked in surprise.

"Yes, Inikaka," Hijaka said

"Haha..." Ning had a blank look but a smile appeared as his face attained a proud look. "That kid got married huh? Feels like yesterday that he was bullied for being so weak, and look at him now... what did you say? Former chief? He became a chief too huh?"

Hijaka looked at Ning with both reverence and awe.

Ning's face suddenly lost all happiness and got solemn all of a sudden.

"Tell me, and be honest. Is he... still alive?" Ning asked. He closed his eyes not able to listen to the possible answer that might come out of the mouth of the person in front of him.

"He is alive and well, Inikaka. He is back in our ancestral lands and is living his life without any worry," Hijaka said.

"Ha... haha... hahaha, so he is alive huh. He is alive. Who else is alive? Tell me," Ning asked.

"Umm... nearly everyone is. Thanks to the cultivation techniques and knowledge you left behind, aside from the elderly who couldn't cultivate long enough to gain increased life span, everyone else has managed to successfully live till now," Hijaka said.

Ning grew silent, and out of nowhere a single tear fell down his left cheek.

"Inikaka?" Hijaka got worried.

"Thank god. Thank god they're alive and well. Thank god I will get to meet them again," Ning screamed to the sky as he started fully crying with tears streaming down his face like a broken dam.

Chapter 171: A Changed Klavis

Ning had stopped crying by now. Hijaka didn't stay anything and just stayed by Ning.

"How did you know who I was? It's been 165 years right?" Ning asked.

"Haha, your images are everywhere in the ancestral land. Every time I go there, grandfather makes me look at the statues and posters for hours on end," Hijaka said.

"What? Why would they have a poster of me?" Ning was a little surprised.

"To the Klavian people, you are what led to their growth and expansion of the land. You are also what led to the people's long life as well as let us see the rest of the world."

"Thus, to the Klavian people you are not just a benefactor, you are a god," Hijaka said.

Ning blushed a little. "Aish, here I even told them I was a nobody and that they didn't have to call me a god," he said.

"So, wait. You said you were his grandson; how many children does he have?" Ning asked.

"Grandfather only had 2 children, my uncle, and my mother. Haha, he even named my uncle Ning after you," Hijaka said.

"What? That's a little... " Ning didn't know what to say. "Sigh, I guess I can't really say anything. Instead, I should be happy he even named his son after me," he said.

Hijaka got silent for a bit and asked, "Why did you leave that day, Inikaka?"

"What?" Ning asked.

"Grandfather said that you fought the demon Fufuliki and won. But then you never returned. My uncle and the rest tried to convince him that you died but the older generation never believed us. We even thought they were stupid for putting so much faith in you," Hijaka said.

"Yet, here you are. I can't believe you really survived but, why didn't you return?" he asked.

Ning stayed silent for a while and asked, "They told you what I am right?"

"I... know that you are not human," he said.

"I currently am, technically. And I was one before too. However, after I changed, I became an undying entity that could live without a body," he said.

"Like a soul?" Hijaka asked.

"Kinda, but I'm more untraceable. Anyway, once I killed the snake, I... lost my consciousness and stayed in the deep dark sea for 164 years."

"I only just came back to consciousness a few years ago, and have been trying to get strong to leave this place," he said.

"Grandfather said you can teleport. Can't you do that now?" Hijaka asked.

"I... wouldn't know where to go. I only know that I want to leave. So, I was thinking of increasing my strength before I leave," Ning said.

"I will leave this place after this tournament. Maybe go up north, although I don't know where," Ning said.

"Hmm... I've heard of this place called Seven Lights City, up north to the east. I hear it's one of the most unique lands in all of the continent. Although, that is just hearsay. I've never been there myself," Hijaka said.

'Seven lights city, that's... around 20 thousand kilometers to the right,' Ning thought as he looked at the city's location on the map and its distance from where he was currently.

"Alright, I will think about it. By the way, what sect are you from?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm from the Young Jewels sect, but to better Klavia's relations with the rest of the continent, I was part of a transfer group and thus now, I'm in the Crimson Glory sect for a couple of more years," Hijaka said.

"I see. I guess that's enough dilly-dallying. Come on, we need to go get some more points," Ning said.

Both Ning and Hijaka went into the forest and started looking for beasts to fight. The beasts were no problem for the two of them.

Ning was obviously strong, but Hijaka's strength was no joke as well.

He was fighting against a jaguar beast right now. The beast was in the 8th Qi Condensation realm. The same as him, but he showed no fear.

"Are you sure you don't want my help?" Ning asked Hijaka with a face of concern. He was already looking at the boy from of status of an elder, even though physically, he was older than him.

"It's okay, Inikaka. As I said, this beast is nothing," Hijaka said and pounced at the jaguar. The jaguar was read for the attack and pounced on him too.

The jaguar's paw landed on Hijaka's shoulders, while Hijaka's attack landed on the beast's chest. The beast was sent flying, but Hijaka stayed right where he was.

Ning looked in surprise for a moment and immediately did an analysis on Hijaka. "No wonder he was so confident," Ning thought.

Even if Ning wasn't there, Hijaka would've perfectly been fine. After all, there was no way 2 people in the 8th Qi Condensation realm could win against a man who had both an 8th Qi Condensation realm cultivation base and a 9th level body cultivation.

The jaguar had its ribcage broken and couldn't move anymore. Hijaka dashed forward once more and landed a strong punch with the force of both the cultivation base and physical body behind it.

With a single smash, the jaguar's face was disfigured and it died.

"See Inikaka, it's easy," Hijaka said with a smile.

"Yeah, yeah, stop showing off. Come one let's go," Ning said. They walked around for another few hours. During this time, both of them fought many beasts and picked many different ingredients as well.

Ning helped Hijaka pick up rare ingredients that he didn't know were ingredients, or fight beasts in the Foundation Establishment realm when they did meet them 2 times.

Without a strong defense like the Cerulean Hornsnake, the Foundation Establishment realm monsters had no chance against Ning and died with ease.

Finally, night fell and both of them decided to stop fighting. Hijaka however took Ning with him a little further until they were in another grassland and they finally settled down and started cultivating for the night.

Chapter 172: The Angel's Touch

Ning felt some movement early morning. He got out of his cultivation and looked at what was happening.

Hijaka was up and at some point had started doing some dance-like maneuver. Ning looked at him and got a little nostalgic. Waking up before the sun rises, completing your morning routine of the body cultivation technique; it was very reminiscent of his time in Klavis.

He waited until Hijaka finished cultivating before asking, "You still follow that, huh?"

"Of course, it's one of the best body cultivation techniques out there," Hijaka said.

"Is it?" Ning asked. For him, the new technique he had right now was way better than anything he could expect from the Sun God's Morning Cleansing technique.

"Of course," Hijaka said. "It might not be the fastest and is location dependent, but if you manage to find the right spot where the sun never leaves, you can keep cultivating to great height for just 10 minutes a day. That is amazing when compared to how much time and suffering you have to put into the other techniques," Hijaka said.

"I see. That does make sense," Ning said. However, he still felt his new one was way better since it didn't slow down that much in terms of cultivation speed even at higher levels.

"Alright, let's go. We only have 6 hours together to get points before we separate again," Ning said.

"Yes," Hijaka said and they both left. They walked into another forest. The entire secret realm was nothing but a patch of the forest followed by a patch of grassland, followed by another patch of forest. It was almost like the entire land was nothing but a loop.

Along the way, they found multiple beasts that they were able to take care of very easily. Let alone, Ning, even Hijaka had no problem fighting any beasts even at the 9th Qi Condensation realm.

Ning just focused on fighting his own share of beasts and finding ingredients for himself. He would only interfere in Hijaka's fight when he was outnumbered or if the beast was in the Foundation realm.

Ning stabbed a scorpion beast right through the inside of its head and pushed the spear outwards, yet the spear stopped at the skin. The scorpion was dead, but it wouldn't have been if Ning hadn't pierced it through a soft spot.

"God, why do some of the beasts have such incredible defense? This one is only at the 2nd realm and I can't even scratch its skin," Ning said.

"Are you okay, Inikaka?" Hijaka asked.

"Oh yeah, I'm fine. It's just that I need a better spear technique. The one I currently have is getting weaker the stronger I get," Ning said.

The two moved on and fought more monsters as well as got more ingredients. Ning also asked about the new Klavis a little more.

Apparently, after Hyesi reached the peak of the foundation realm, he started looking for better land to live in. He used the map Ning had given him to traverse the lands. He was gone for nearly a decade when he found the perfect land for the Klavian people.

It was a desert with no mountains anywhere. But it also was very close to the sea and close to a massive city with access to forests and other cities.

All in all, it was the perfect place. Hyesi made friends with the mayor of the city and was allowed to move his people nearby. Soon, they formed a small city, which grew to a larger city, which soon grew enough to have the people transfer to multiple cities.

In less than a hundred years, Klavis was very well known amongst the western part of the Northern Continent.

Ning nodded as he heard those things. He was quite happy and honestly surprised to see Klavis develop to what it was now. And it was all thanks to the little guy he tried to swindle to get himself some energy.

Ning smiled as he thought of that.

Soon the two of them were out of the forests and into another patch of the grasslands. Ning looked to the sky behind the forest on the other side of the grassland.

He could still see the slightly purple barrier standing there. He looked to the left and right and saw that the barrier was equidistant on both sides of him.

"Could it be?" he said softly and immediately ran forward to look behind him. Once he was far enough, he could see that he was at the very center of the secret realm.

"Inikaka," Hijaka said. "Over there," he pointed to the distance. Ning turned around to see that there were a bunch of people gathered around something.

He walked forward and saw that it was a lake that they were all looking at. "I wonder what's going on," he said and walked to the lake.

He could see that there were about 12 people around the lake, but all of them seemed to be terrified. Their faces showed great fear, but they also showed great greed.

"What are they looking at?" Ning wondered as he walked a little forward and saw a small land in the middle of the lake. The land was barely a meter wide, so it wasn't that great. But what was growing on that land was.

In the middle of the land was a small, 2-meter tall tree with a single fruit in the middle. The fruit was pure white with not a speck of another color and looked like it was slightly glowing even in the intense sun of noon.

Ning's eyes turned wide when he saw it. "The Angel's Touch," he couldn't believe what he was seeing. There was an Angel's Touch in front of him right in the center of the lake.

Yet nobody was doing anything to reach it. "What's up with— " Suddenly, Ning stopped. Something moved in the waters. Ning slowly turned his head towards the water but the sunlight was making it hard to see, and his divine sense didn't reach that far.

However, from the slight undulation of the Qi in the air, he could tell that whatever the monster was, it was strong.

Chapter 173: Serpent-Like Beast

The Angel's Touch was an incredibly rare fruit using which one would simply have to eat the fruit at the peak of the Golden Core Realm, and they would automatically make a Nascent soul.

You didn't have to bother breaking through or be stuck in a long bottleneck. You just had to eat this fruit and you were done.

And that fruit was the one in front of him. If he got his hands on the fruit, he wouldn't have to worry about the Nascent Soul realm when the time came.

However, getting his hands on the fruit itself was a bit of a problem. There was a really strong creature inside the lake and everyone including Ning could feel it.

"Hijaka, I think you should leave this place immediately," Ning said.

"What's going on Inikaka? What is that fruit? And what is that monster?" he asked.

"I do not know what that monster is right now, but I do know that it is strong enough for you to not care about the fruit for now. Just leave this place. These other people are just waiting for their death."

Just as Ning said that one of the people had the stupid idea of flying to the fruit.

"Hey stop that," someone tried to stop him, but greed had overtaken his mind. He quietly flew past the beast, but just as he was about to reach the tree, a column of water shot up from the lake.

When the water fell down, the man was no longer there.

"Go!" Ning shouted.

Hijaka stayed no longer and started running immediately. Before the people were even thinking of running away, Hijaka has already run over hundreds of meters away from the lake.

Ning however decided to stay. With his cultivation base, he felt that he could run away whenever he wanted to. Besides, the fruit was too good to give up on.

The monster in the lake started moving suddenly. The people got terrified by the aura of the beast and started running away.

Ning knew it was too late for them to leave, so he thought, 'why don't I get the points instead of letting it go to waste.'

Suddenly, he brought out both the sword and the spear as he started slicing and stabbing with both his hands and Qi blasts started flying everywhere. Unfortunately, he could only attack the people on his side of the lake, so he could only get around half the people.

At the same time, blades of water suddenly appeared from the water, flying towards everyone in the vicinity of the lake.

Both his attacks and the blades of water landed on the running people around the same time and they disappeared from the secret realm.

Ning used his sword to block the attack and was thrown away from the lake.

"Arghh..." he said as he stood back up. 'Did I get the points?' he wondered. He couldn't tell whose attack landed first or whose attack did the killing blow, but he couldn't check it right now.

Instead, he turned around to look at the monster of the sea.

"A snake?" he thought when he saw the long body of the beast that had arisen from the lake. This serpent-like beast wasn't as big as the Yin Demon Serpent he fought in Klavis.

However, when he looked closely, as more of the water dripped from the beast, he realized that it was not a serpent. Its body was long like a snake, it had scales like one, but its eyes looked a little different and it had some whisker on top of its mouth.

It also had two tiny horns, actual horns, protruding from its head.

If Ning wasn't feeling scared yet, he would now. "Th— This can't be. How is there something so rare in this secret realm? How is there a bloody Flood Dragon!!" Ning shouted.

The beast of the sea was not a mere serpent, but a flood dragon. A flood dragon was a lesser dragon that had the physical appearance of a True dragon, but not its power or ability.

Still, they had some blood of a True dragon mixed in them, so they weren't something everyone could fight.

Ning looked at its majesty and nearly faltered. The fear in him did not just grow because he knew the type of beast and how strong it could be.

He was also scared because he had just checked its cultivation base and body cultivation.

Fortunately, it only had a Level 3 body cultivation, so that didn't worry Ning very much. What did scare him was the cultivation base.

He looked at the cultivation base once again just to be sure.

5th Foundation Establishment realm.

That was way too strong for him. Suddenly, he saw the flood dragon move. It opened its mouth and shot out a blast of water. This was the same thing that had killed the first guy in the lake.

His sword would do him no good now, so he kept it away. He then immediately crossed his arms in front of his head and protected himself.

When the column of water disappeared, all that remained there was Ning with both of his arms mostly skinless. The water was so strong that it had managed to scrape away his body-cultivated skin.

'Ow, if I hadn't protected my head, I would've taken a lot of damage,' he thought. The Flood Dragon sucked in the air once more and blasted out a much-smaller column of water.

Ning tried to block, but the column was so strong that he was hit right in the chest. Fortunately for him, he didn't suffer fatal damage from that.

Unfortunately, that meant he would have to suffer through the attack now. His arms covering his body were blown away and the water landed on his chest. The spear he was holding was flung back into the forest.

His chest somehow didn't lose skin, but he could feel his ribs crack due to the pressure.

Suddenly, a yellow light appeared around him and he disappeared from the location once again.

Chapter 174: Treating

"Wh— What happened? Is he out?" Gion asked in a surprised voice. They had seen all that happened around the lake and were surprised to see Ning get taken out so easily.

"That monster— That was a Flood Dragon, wasn't it?" Yelca asked with a serious face. That was a level of danger that they hadn't expected for the competition.

"That's it, Elders. That's the monster that killed me. I couldn't even see what it was," A voice came from ahead of the group.

The one speaking was the first person that had exited the secret realm. The group finally understood why he was thrown out so soon.

"So... did he lose or not?" Gion asked still not seeing a sign of Ning being thrown out of the secret realm.

"He probably got transferred along with the date change. It is the afternoon after all," Yelca said. "If the attack had been fatal to Doctor Ning, he would've been thrown out of the realm much faster. The fact that he didn't mean that he is probably alright."

Ning wasn't alright. Pain coursed through his body as the broken bones in his ribs hurt beyond imagination. Even his arms burned from being exposed to the air due to his skin being ripped off of them.

He slowly got up from the long grasses he had appeared in. He saw that he was in another grassland somewhere. He looked around for the barriers and saw that it was really far away.

He looked back and saw that the other side was right inside the forest behind him. Up close, the barrier looked iridescent rather than purple.

He tried to walk but the ribs hurt a lot with movement. Even breathing was bad right now. So, he just got down and laid on the grass.

He sent his divine sense inside his body and checked the problems. 3 of his right ribs and 2 of his left ribs were cracked really bad. Thankfully, they didn't protrude inside of him and he had no danger of them accidentally stabbing his lungs or heart.

They just hurt a lot. Broken ribs weren't treatable in a day or two. It took more than a week and that was with a cultivator's natural healing.

His arms, however, he could treat just fine. He brought out some ingredients from his storage; Some he gathered here, and some he got from the outside world.

He quickly mixed them together with his hands and applied the resulting paste on his two arms. Soon, a cool feeling entered his arm from the place where he placed the paste.

"Ahh," he moaned in relief. The medicine would soon heal the arm, but it would still take overnight for him.

Next, he moved on to dealing with the ribs. While it wasn't possible for him to heal the ribs, he could deal with the pain. He quickly took out more ingredients.

This time, however, he didn't make any paste. Instead, he just crushed the ingredients all together and brought it on top of his face. He squeezed the mess real strong and juices started flowing that went directly into his mouth.

Soon, he could no longer feel any pain. Once that was done, he stood up and started walking. However, he made sure to not be hasty or make sudden movements as that may worsen the wounds.

Suddenly, a boar appeared quite close to him. When he noticed the boar, the board noticed him too. He quickly looked into his storage to bring out his spear, but he couldn't.

There was no spear. "What?" he was surprised. He thought if he left it behind at the place he came from but that wasn't possible. He had used his divine sense since then, so he would've noticed.

Finally, he remembered what happened. "Ah, the flood dragon," he said and got disappointed at the fact that he lost such a good spear.

"Sigh, at least I have this sword," he said as he pulled out the sword. The Boar was barely a 6th Qi condensation realm monster and thus couldn't survive a single attack of his.

Once he killed the beast, he took its corpse and moved forward. Along the way, he found a few beasts and found a few ingredients, but without question, he could say that the rate at which he was encountering both had significantly dropped since last time.

"Have we been killing so much that there just aren't that many anymore?" Ning wondered. If he couldn't find beasts or different ingredients, then he wouldn't get many points anymore.

"Wait, that's not right. There is a third source of points," Ning thought as he realized why the tournament holders had reduced the land by so much.

"They want us to fight each other and gather points," Ning thought.

Now that the land had been reduced by 4 times in size, he should be meeting more and more people soon. As he imagined, within the hour, he saw a man in a green robe walking out of the forest Ning was about to walk into.

He looked a bit frustrated from the lack of monsters and ingredients as well, so when he saw Ning and his 5th Qi Condensation aura, he immediately smiled and ran towards him to attack with not a single word.

"Well, I like this more. No talking and just fighting," he said to himself. Ning couldn't really run forward like the guy due to his ribs, so he waited for him to come instead.

The man took out a spear along the way and tried to stab Ning. However, there was no way that was going to work. The man was at the 8th Qi Condensation realm, and there was no way Ning was going to have problems dealing with the man.

Ning grabbed the spear by the body just after the blade and pulled it towards him. The man couldn't control his body and was pulled along with the spear.

Ning left the spear and made a fist with the same hand. With just a punch to the chest, the man's talisman worked up and he disappeared from the spot.

Chapter 175: Guard

"Haha, Idiot. So weak, and you dare cultivate outside?" a woman spoke from behind Ning. Ning slowly opened his eyes and looked back at her.

The girl was riding an elephant beast which seemed to have bonded with her. Despite the night sky being cloudy and without light, Ning had no trouble seeing the reddish-brown color of the elephants.

'Sigh, that's just a normal Earth-Skinned Elephant. It's not even at a high cultivation base,' Ning thought.

He looked at the woman and said, "You do know that If I kill your elephant it will die for real right? Only you will get saved, not the elephant."

"Oh, big words for someone about die," the woman said as she laughed. "Let's hurry, Tiny. We need to go kill some more."

"T-Tiny? The Elephant?" the corner of Ning's lips twitched as he forced himself to not laugh. 'What sort of psycho names their elephant Tiny?' he thought.

Tiny walked forward and slammed its trunk on Ning. Ning didn't move however and simply stopped the Trunk with his left hand.

With his broken ribs, he couldn't afford to move very fast. He easily stopped the trunk and grabbed it with both his hands.

The woman was shocked at the scene. But before she could even do anything, Ning turned around and pulled the elephant by its trunk before slamming it on the other side of him.

The woman was still on top of the elephant, so when it was slammed on its back, she was the first that would hit the ground. Just before that, however, a yellow barrier appeared around both her and her elephant, and both of them were sent outside the barrier.

"Oh," Ning said in surprise. "So if I kill the Master, the beast follows them out, huh." He learned something new.

He got back on the rock below the night sky to cultivate once more but no more than half an hour later, another person appeared. This time, however, Ning was pissed. He needed to cultivate properly to heal his wounds. If he didn't, it would take a really long time for them to heal.

"F*ck," he cursed. He didn't want to have to do this, but it seemed he had to. With a flick of a hand, a golden light appeared in front of him.

The light soon turned into a massive 3 meters tall and 2 meters wide beetle with a golden back and a horn with a trident-like tip that extended a meter more in height.

The Golden Shelled Beetle appeared. "Go kill him," Ning said. Despite being a defensive creature, the beetle's offensive abilities were nothing to cough at.

The beetle dashed forward, without even opening its wings when its horn started lighting up with golden light. Like a golden arrow being let loose in the darkness, the beetle accurately hit the incoming man with its horn.

If it had been any other time, the man would've been pierced through the stomach and died, but with the talisman, he was excited to the outside world.

Ning checked his own talisman and nodded. He had expected it, but still, it was good to confirm that he didn't have to kill the participants himself to get the points. As long as the one doing the killing was refined, or bonded by him, he would get the points.

The Beetle flew back with a little confused face. It now had enough intelligence to know that what just happened was weird, but it wasn't sure why.

"I will cultivate, protect me," Ning said.

The beetle nodded. Ning was a little surprised to see that. "Woah, the system did say mental strength really started at the Foundation Establishment realm, but I didn't expect it to be so intelligent too," Ning thought.

He threw away any other thought and got back into cultivation. Throughout the night, he was brought out of his cultivation a few times, but every time the problem would be solved before he even had to say anything.

His points continuously increased throughout the night, but he mostly remained unaware. The Golden Shelled beetle was good enough to kill most of the intruders before Ning was even aware of their presence.

Finally, morning hit, and the daylight arrived. Ning slowly opened his eyes as well as his palm. The spirit stone he had been using throughout the night had run dry, so he just threw it away.

He had actually run dry a while before he got out of cultivation, but he never changed it because he had finally managed to hit a bottleneck.

His second level in the Sea of Qi had been filled to the brim and he only needed to breakthrough now. However, that would take a few days, so he was in no rush.

He called the beetle back to him and looked at it. "Damn, you really are tall," the height was still a shock to him. "I can't really walk yet, so you will have to carry me for a bit," Ning said.

The beetle understood him and nodded. It then tried to take him on a princess carry, but Ning immediately stopped it. He instead flew up to its head and sat down on its shoulders.

"Alright, either walk slowly or fly slowly; whichever you prefer," Ning said.

The beetle seemed to have misunderstood Ning and instead started to jump and fly a few seconds to hover and fall down to the ground before taking another leaf and hovering a bit, all while moving forward.

It was like the beetle was taking gigantic steps. "I guess this works too," he thought and accepted what was happening. The beetle carried him until a bit further where he found a few people and entered the forest.

Once inside the forest, the beetle had a hard time maneuvering due to its huge body and many branches, so Ning decided to store it back and walk himself.

As he walked forward, he heard some noises up ahead. He cautiously walked there and noticed that a giant bird was fighting 2 cultivators to protect something.

Ning looked to see what it was and thought in surprise, "Eggs?"

Chapter 176: Group Attack

The bird had a really long yellow beak and a body full of red feathers. It was around 2 meters in length and was bleeding slightly from the head.

In front of it were many cultivators all wearing orange robes. They were all from the Dazzling sect.

The bird was around the 2nd Foundation Establishment realm. Most of the cultivators didn't have that high of a cultivation base here.

However, the two that were fighting did. They were both in the 2nd Foundation Establishment realm.

Ning looked at the current scene of battle. A Bird protecting its eggs, against two assailers surrounded by many others in a field that looked like it was charred.

Ning looked at the bird and realized what it was. "A Blazing Toucan," he said with a bit of astonishment. They weren't very strong creatures, but that was according to Ning's standard.

To the normal people of the Shattered Isles, this bird would be worth a lot. "Those 3 eggs especially would sell for a lot," he thought.

He looked towards the 2 men and was even more surprised. One had a sword in his hand, while the other one held a spear.

'It's him,' Ning thought. The one holding the spear was the man from the auction house that had looked at him weirdly.

The toucan suddenly breathes fire out of its mouth like a flamethrower. The man with the spear suddenly spun it creating a barrier out of water in front of him.

The flames never passed through the water and were completely stopped. The other guy suddenly jumped up and slashed down at the bird with a very strong gust of wind.

The poor bird couldn't move away due to its eggs being behind it.

A 2nd Foundation Establishment realm bird and 2 other men with similar strength, as well as a crowd of other men at various lower strength— Ning didn't like that.

'Sh*t, I need to get out of here,' he thought and slowly tried to move back, however, unfortunately, and nearly comically, he stepped on a branch that made a rather loud sound.

Most of the people didn't really hear it over the sounds of the fight in front of them, but the two people that were surrounding the fight closest to him did and turned around.

Ning didn't even wait and started running, but as he did, his ribs started hurting once more. Due to the sudden movements, the mild pain relief from yesterday that was starting to end suddenly couldn't stop that much pain at once.

"Arghh," he screamed as he held his chest and stumbled to the ground.

"Someone's here," the guy closest who had seen Ning shouted, letting the others in the crowd know. The two fighting the bird didn't bother with a random nobody showing up and kept on fighting the bird.

The others, however, immediately ran to Ning to see who would get the points first. Before they even reached Ning, they already had their weapons out.

Some were even shooting arrows at Ning. However, that wouldn't do much damage to Ning right now.

"F*ck, I can't move properly right now. It hurts," he thought. He took out the sword and started blocking the arrows that were coming for him.

Then, he called out the beetle once more. The Great Shelled Beetle immediately deterred a lot of threats, but with the crowd, there was always confidence.

Even when something seemed stupid or impossible, when people got together, they would always choose to do that. It was the same here.

Despite seeing and feeling how strong the beetle was, the crowd rushed toward the beetle to attack it. "Protect me," Ning gave the order.

That was all the Beetle needed to know what to do. Immediately, the beetle spread its wings and flew to the nearest man. Its horn was glowing yellow, which the man tried to stop with his armor, but that didn't work.

A 7th Qi Condensation realm cultivator could not survive the attack of a 1st Foundation Establishment realm beetle at all. He immediately turned to yellow lights and disappeared.

If the beetle itself wasn't a great deterring factor, the current event was. Seeing a beetle kill one of their sect members scared them a bit.

"H-Hey, he was weak. We are much stronger than him. Don't be afraid," A man said immediately lifting the other's spirit.

"F*ck off," Ning shouted and swung his sword at one of the men. The man tried to block with his sword, but he was instead blown away and quickly disappeared in bright yellow light.

"Sh*t. He is strong too. Everyone, split in half; half of you attack the beetle, the rest attack that guy," another person shouted.

There were about 10 of them remaining aside from the 2 fighting the bird, so 5 of them started surrounding Ning and the beetle each.

Ning looked around. He wasn't very worried about them wounding him or his beetle. He was more afraid that the movements would lead to his wounds getting worse and him having to leave the secret realm early even.

Also, the 2 cultivators away right now weren't nobodies either.

The beetle immediately flew back and stood near him. Its orders were to protect him, so it would prioritize that. Ning slowly got up with his left arm on his chest and his right hand holding the sword.

"Come."

The people immediately released nearly a dozen attacks on Ning. The Beetle got in front of him and protected him. Ning then immediately sent out another attack with his sword. This time it was a black slash.

He targeted the weakest one of the group he could find. The last remaining 7th Qi Condensation realm cultivator. Two men came up to him and swung their swords, but the beetle got in front of them.

They were surprised at how agile the beetle surprisingly was. "Move," Ning ordered and the beetle flew up. With the two attackers exposed, Ning immediately swung at them, defeating them in an instant.

Chapter 177: Help

The beetle suddenly started moving its wings really fast and created a gust of wind. However, these weren't normal gusts of wind.

Ning had taught the beetle one of the only two beast skills it knew, the Blinding Gusts technique. The gusts of winds suddenly blinded 3 people that the beetle had targeted.

The beetle then slammed onto two of them at the same time before piercing the other one with its trident-like horn. The one that got pierced was sent out of the secret realm, but the two that were slammed on still remained.

Apparently, the damage wasn't fatal. The beetle simply flew up and slammed back down on them with its hard back. This time, the two were sent out of the secret realm before they could be hurt.

Now there were only 4 of the people remaining.

Ning slashed at one of the men with his sword, sending out an energy slash towards them. However, just as it was about to land, a sword flew at the slash and destroyed it.

"What's going on here?" A voice came from a little further back. Ning looked behind the man and frowned. He was getting into more trouble now.

"Where are the rest of the guys," the man with the sword that was fighting the bird asked as he walked up to his fellow sect member.

"Brother Jan, why are you here? Is the bird dead?" the man asked.

"No, we left it because of the sounds here. The bird's not going anywhere with its eggs being there," the man with the spear also walked forward. "Where are the others?" he asked as he looked around.

"That man and his damn beetle defeated the rest of us. They already left the secret arena," the guy answered.

"What?" the 2 of them were a little surprised and looked towards Ning and the Golden Shelled Beetle who had jumped close to him to protect him.

"That's... I've never seen such a beetle, what is it?" the guy with the sword asked.

"Me neither. But it should be strong to be in the 1st Foundation Establishment realm," the guy with the spear said as he turned to look at Ning.

Within a second, his eyes went from disinterest to confusion, to anger, and to finally happiness.

"It's you, bastard," he shouted.

'Sh*t, he recognizes me,' Ning thought.

"You are the one with the spear, yes, I recognize you. Give it back to me you bastard," he shouted.

"You recognize him, brother Gai?" the man named Jan asked.

"Remember what I told you about the auction where I lost that amazing spear? It was to this guy. Hey, bring the spear out, I want it," he said.

Ning said nothing and just stood there with the sword pointed in front of him.

"I said give it to me," Gai shouted and immediately dashed forward to stab Ning with his spear, but the beetle got in between them.

CLANG

The spear was stopped without a single damage to the beetle. "What the?" the man was surprised. He tried to tab the beetle once again, but it didn't work.

Slashing, Stabbing, or even just pushing, nothing worked.

"Brother Gai, why are you taking so long?" Jan asked.

"This damn beetle is—" Ning suddenly attacked with his sword from the side. Gai blocked the sword with his spear and parried it sideways.

'F*ck, it hurts,' Ning said as he held his chest. The sudden movement had agitated his ribs once more. While he wasn't in any danger, the pain was too much.

Gai thought he had an opportunity and stabbed at Ning, but the beetle arrived once more to block his attack.

"Tsk. Brother Jan, I need your help. Can you handle the beetle?" he asked.

"Sure," the Jan guy said and he too dashed up to beetle to attack it. When his advancements were stopped as well, he was shocked.

"Damn, how is a beast a realm below us so strong?" Jan asked.

"How should I know? I have never even seen a beetle-like this before today," Gai Said. "Keep it busy."

"Sure," Jan said and started furiously attacked the beetle. None of the attacks were making a single scratch on the beetle's back, but it was enough to keep it busy and stop it from going back to Ning.

Now that Ning was without protection, Gai immediately tried to stab his shoulders. He didn't want to give him a fatal wound and risk him leaving the realm before handing over the spear.

Ning parried spear attack with his sword and slashed back. A water barrier appeared out of nowhere blocking most of the damage, while a bit more went and landed on Gai. However, that wasn't strong enough to even ruffle his robes.

Gai was a little surprised. 'This barrier can blocks attacks from other 2nd Foundation Establishment realm cultivators. Just how strong is he? And why is he fighting so stiffly?' he wondered.

Ning was only using one arm to fight to avoid moving his entire body. That was the same reason why he wasn't using any movement techniques either.

Gai started attacking him with barrages of spear attacks, while all Ning could do was block them and maybe throw in an attack or two.

'Sh*t, I won't be able to keep up much longer,' he thought.

Off to the side, the beetle was also suffering from a ton of attacks. The remaining 4 people had joined the man named Jan and started attacking the beetle.

All that the beetle could do was get onto the ground and take the attacks. The only way for it to get out of it now was to either call it back to the beast space or help defeat its attackers.

'F*ck, it's not time yet,' Ning thought. He really didn't want to do this since the timing wasn't right, but he was about to die and this was his last resort.

Suddenly, he slashed at Gai horizontally and sent him flying a few meters back. Then, he took a deep breath and shouted.

"Come out, Night."

Chapter 178: Half Evolution

The crowd didn't understand why Ning had suddenly shouted, but at the next second, they did.

Space itself twisted as a black figure appeared in front of Ning. It was a black-feathered blob about half of Ning's height. Light started dimming in the surroundings as if clouds were blocking the sun in the sky, yet nothing was there.

"What is that thing?" someone asked.

Jan who was beating the Beetle stopped and looked at the feathered blob, unable to figure out what exactly it was. However, he didn't worry much for his friend as it was only at the 1st realm of the Foundation Establishment.

Suddenly, the blob of feathers started moving. Wings unfurled a bit followed by a head poking out, and finally, the talons standing up on the ground.

When it finally stood on its legs, the blob which turned out to be a bird was half a meter taller than Ning. It was none other than Night.

"So big," Ning couldn't help but admire. The beetle was taller than Night right now, but it was a fully evolved beast. White Night's evolution was only halfway through and he was called out during his sleep.

Night's eyes were still closed, but now he slowly opened them. Night was unfortunately disrupted out of its hibernation.

Like darkness itself, his eyes were now fully black. The same was true for his talons as well.

In fact, there was not a single part of his body that wasn't black in color. As if lights were sucked in through those eyes, when Nights opened them, the light around them dimmed a step further.

"What the F*ck is this?" Gai said in exclamation.

"Do. You. Need. Help?" a bunch of broken but fully coherent set of words appeared out of Night. Ning was surprised at the level of intelligence he had gotten.

'And he's not even fully evolved yet. I wonder how much better he would get once he is fully evolved,' Ning thought.

"Yes, Help the beetle," Ning said. The words hadn't finished leaving his mouth when suddenly Night disappeared. Gai was surprised too to see the bird disappeared from in front of him.

"Where did it go?" he asked. He looked around, but couldn't find any signs of Night anywhere. However, he did see something weird.

"Hey, where are the other 2?" he asked Jan.

"What two?" Jan looked back to see that 2 of the 4 sect members of theirs had suddenly disappeared. He turned to the remaining two and asked, "Where did the tw—" before he could even finish his words, the two people suddenly turned to yellow lights and disappeared.

Jan neither heard nor saw anything. And yet, all 4 of his sect members were gone. "What is going on he—" before he could finish the sentence, he saw a flash of black before his eyes, and similar to the rest of them, he too vanished in yellow light.

Seeing his sect members disappear, Gai knew he was in trouble. Without a second's delay, he took out a talisman and threw it on the ground immediately.

The talisman spilled out blue energy that engulfed him in less than a second and he vanished. In the same second, the vanishing energy was moved a little, but it didn't affect much at all.

After another second, Night appeared next to Alex and looked at him with his dark eyes.

"Did. I. Do. Good.?" he asked.

"Yes," Ning said as he put away his sword. "You did very well. You must be tired right now. I'm sorry I called you out while you were hibernating, but I needed you."

"Night. Like. To. Help. Master."

"I see. Thank you. You can go back and rest now," Ning said sending Night back to the Beast Space to continue evolving. He probably couldn't call him next time until he evolved.

Interrupting his hibernation more than once for the sake of a tournament was not worth it.

"Come here," Ning called the beetle. The beetle flew up to him and landed.

"Sigh, with how much you helped, I guess I can't just keep calling you a beetle right? You need a name," Ning said.

"What name should I give you?" Ning thought for a second. "Hmm... Oh, I know. How about, Aegis? That was the name of a shield or something in my world. I remember reading about it once."

"Yeah, Aegis is a great name. You like it?" he asked.

Aegis cocked his head in confusion and for the first time spoke, "Name?"

"Holy Sh*t, you can speak?" Ning said in surprise. He had tried talking to the beetle the first few days he had got him, but it couldn't at the time.

"What changed? Did your evolution bring it? Or your increase in cultivation base? Hmm... since your mental strength increases with cultivation base, then it's probably your cultivation base," Ning said.

The beetle didn't speak any further. "Sigh, alright you too can go back too," Ning said and sent Aegis back to his beast space.

"Aii. The pain is getting stronger," he said as he clutched his chest once more. "Damn, just how strong is that Flood Dragon to crack my chest like that. Its strength definitely doesn't match its cultivation base," Ning thought.

He brought various ingredients out once again and started mixing them in his hands before dripping the juices directly into his mouth.

The sweet juices entered his body and brought out a cool feeling that took away all the pain. His chest stopped hurting and he laid back down on the ground.

He laid there for a few minutes before standing up and walking towards the Blazing Toucan.

The bird was tending to its wound while constantly being on the lookout for the 2 men returning. When it saw Ning, it immediately got in front of Ning and protected its eggs.

Parents were a soft spot for Ning. He couldn't possibly think of hurting someone or something that was fighting for their lives to protect their children.

Seeing the situation, Ning just shook his head and walked away.

Chapter 179: Charm

Ning slowly trekked through the jungle. He was walking very slowly to not agitate his wound, so it took him forever to come out of the jungle.

However, just as he did, yellow light surrounded him and he disappeared for the third time.

When he reappeared, he was inside another jungle. "F*ck, I just got out of one," he said in anger. However, there was nothing that could be done, so he just sighed and moved on.

Now that 3 days had gone by, finding a single ingredient or beast worth killing was hard to come by. He kept on walking forward to get out of the jungle. Unfortunately, after an hour or so, he couldn't walk anymore.

In front of him was an iridescent barrier that shifted to purple the further up it went.

"Did I... walk all this way only to get to the edge?" Ning was in disbelief. He couldn't even fault anyone for this. He looked back and thought, "I have to walk all that way and more again, don't I?"

He didn't want to, but the forest was too narrow and obstructive to let Aegis carry him. "Sigh, whatever, let's go."

* * * * *

"I'm sorry sect leaders, I wasn't able to last through the entire tournament," a bald, buff guy said to Gion and Yelca.

"Sigh, I guess it's hard. There are so many strong participants this time around. It's not surprising you were thrown out," Gion said.

"By the way, how exactly did you lose?" Yelca asked.

"It was a guy in Orange cloth. He had a really high cultivation base and kept attacking everyone in sight. I actually tried to team up with three other guys, but none of us was his match," the disciple said.

"I see. You did well either way. Take a rest," Yelca said.

"So, that's all but Doctor Ning right?" Gion asked.

"I'm afraid so. How many participants are still left? 300? The top 128 should be revealed soon," Yelca said.

They all were now looking for Ning through the many screens hovering in the air. Now that the ground was shrunken down, there weren't as many screens like the initial times.

Still, the center of the secret realm was where most of the fun stuff took place, so the tournament holders had made sure for there to be enough screens to see all the important places, some from multiple directions.

Still, after all of this, they still couldn't find Ning at all.

* * * * *

"Ah finally," Ning said as he left the forest and reached a long stretch of grassland. The sun was coming down and the evening was approaching.

"I guess this is as far as I get today," he thought and started searching for a rock or similar place to cultivate throughout the night.

Just as he was searching, he saw a group of people walk towards him. 'Sigh, I'm not in the mood to fight right now,' he thought.

Still, he took out his sword and got ready.

"Oh, there is someone there," a voice said.

"Hmm, he has a sword," another voice said.

As the group approached closer, Ning could see a group of unfamiliar faces consisting of 3 girls and 2 boys. They all had different robes so they couldn't be from the same sect.

Ning got a little curious about this. The strongest one of the group was a girl with a 9th Qi Condensation realm cultivation base. That wouldn't really be a problem to Ning.

"Brother, please put your sword down. We aren't here to fight you," the girl said.

"Oh, then you wouldn't mind taking a different route away from here right?" Ning asked.

"Actually, we are looking for people to add to our group and we're hoping that you would join us," the girl said.

Ning looked at the group carefully and acted like he was cautious about it. "What is your motive? To kill people to make their points? Or steal their corpses and materials?"

"No, our motive is to... survive," the girl said.

".... Sorry what?" Ning asked.

"To survive. We hope to gather enough people so that people get scared of us enough to not mess with us. Like that, we can all survive for the rest of the competition, and we can definitely use someone with an 8th realm cultivation like you" the girl said.

"Hmm..." Ning thought. He was quite surprised by their motive. 'It does make sense though,' he thought and looked at the group. They had 2 7th Qi Condensation realms and 2 8th Qi Condensation realm cultivators along with this girl.

If they were together, the only ones who could fight them were Foundation Establishment realm cultivators, and those were few and far in between.

Ning didn't want to believe her, but she looked so innocent saying that. He almost wanted to believe what she was saying. It was like his brain kept telling him that she wasn't a liar at all and that he should follow her.

'Interesting. Is this hypnosis? Or charm? Either way, she must have the incredible mental fortitude to make me even have these feelings,' Ning thought.

Whatever was coming up, he thought it was going to be fun.

"Sure," Ning said and joined the group.

The group didn't rush through the grassland and Ning was thankful about that. 'Well, at least the bones seem to have set properly. I should properly treat myself once I go out,' Ning thought as he checked his ribs.

They were much better now, but he still didn't want to do anything to worsen it.

The 4 people conversed like normal people, asking each other about their lives and how their day was going, and they surprisingly answered very easily.

One person asked for the points they earned and the other person even answered very simply. 'Is their mind influenced to just accept suggestions and be truthful? Does she not really control them' he wondered.

Whatever the girl was doing, however devious she was, Ning couldn't help but secretly applaud her for being so amazing at it.

He couldn't wait to see where she was taking the sheep to be slaughtered.

Chapter 180: Big Fish

"Brother Ning, what sect are you from?" a person in the group asked.

"Oh, I am from the Blue Dragon sect of Deepskull island," he answered truthfully. Just in case someone from the group knew his clothing or had seen him before, he didn't want the girl to be tipped off about him not being truthful.

"Are you one of their strongest?" another person asked.

"Uhh... I'm in the top 5 for sure," Ning answered.

"Brother Ning, why do you walk so slowly?" someone else asked.

"Ah, I was injured when fighting a monster two days ago. My ribs were nearly broken and it hurts when I make sudden movements or move too fast," Ning said.

"Oh, what monster was this?" a person asked in surprise.

"A serpent monster. It only attacked me once and I was thrown far away with broken ribs," he said.

They kept conversing as they asked Ning various questions. Ning answered them as truthfully as he could while also asking questions of his own. During this whole time, the girl never participated in any of these. She was even constantly looking for new people to add.

Ning noticed 2 people far away, a man and a woman. However, they were away from the path Ning's group was walking to. However, the girl suddenly changed her direction towards them. It was only sudden to Ning. Everyone else took this as natural and followed her.

The girl kept on walking and even when she saw the 2 people, she didn't speak.

"Oh, there are people there," one of the other girls in the group said. Only then did the girl act as she noticed them.

"Where? Oh, yes there are two. Good job Fren," she complimented the girl.

Ning was really surprised. 'No wonder these people aren't the least bit curious. They think these encounters are random and they are the ones finding the people,' Ning thought.

The two cultivators were vigilant at first, but once the girl spoke to them, they were lulled into accepting her request and joined the group.

'This easily?' Ning was truly surprised. He knew the charming / Hypnosis skill of hers was strong, but this was way too fast.

The two joined their group and now they were eight. They walked under the moonlight for another couple of hours and collected 5 more people.

There were now a total of 11 people lulled into following the girl.

BANG

A firework exploded in the sky. 'Firework inside the secret realm?' Ning was surprised.

"Oh look, something interesting must be going on there. Let's go check it out okay?" the girl finally spoke for the first time in a while. The group accepted without question.

The fireworks had come from a very close location that would take them around half an hour at most to reach. So the group walked there as fast as they could.

Soon they reached the location from where the firework had been set off, yet no one was there. The group tried to find a hint of someone, yet they couldn't.

Ning was stunned too. 'Nobody?' he thought. But after a more careful check and use of his divine sense, he found that there was something right in front of them. He just couldn't tell what.

"Huh, there is nothing here. You guys check what's forward," the girl said.

The 11 people slowly walked forward, and Ning followed behind them. But the girl wasn't moving at all. 'What's going on?' he wondered.

He couldn't tell what was wrong with the situation but he stopped moving.

"What's wrong? Go ahead," the girl said.

"I'm sorry, my chest suddenly started hurting. I can't move," Ning said as he tried to fake his chest hurting.

"Oh, just move forward then. It will be okay," the girl said with added influence on her voice.

"Is that so?" Ning asked.

"Yes," the girl said.

"Very well then. Why don't you come with me then?" Ning suddenly grabbed her by the neck and dragged her forward. As soon as he walked forward, the girl started screaming.

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I'm inside. Don't shoot!"

"Who are you screaming to? Your friends who are waiting to kill us?" Ning asked.

The girl was surprised. She couldn't believe he had so much mental freedom right now. "N-No," she tried to lie. She struggled to get his hands off of her, but no matter what she did, she couldn't open his arms at all.

"Stop lying, you dumb B*t*h. Your charm never worked on me. Now tell me, why did you bring us here?" Ning asked. The rest of them were still blissfully unaware of what was happening.

"Oh, Ria. It seems you caught a big fish huh. Tsk, you messed with someone big and now it came to bite you back," A voice appeared from somewhere.

Ning looked up to see a man with a bow and a bunch of arrows.

"Haha, she actually failed and got herself locked inside the formation. This is too funny," Another voice came from the side.

Ning soon realized there was more than just a single person. There were actually 5 people surrounding them. Each one at the precipice of entering the Foundation Establishment Realm.

'Formation?' Ning sent out his divine sense and realized that there were foundation flags stuck on trees around a 10-meter radius.

"Hey, help me. Let me out you dipsh*ts," the girl named Ria shouted.

"We would, but it's a shame. The formation only releases automatically after 6 hours of activation. So just wait there," the first man said.

"Actually, never mind. I will just take your points too," the man said as an evil grin appeared on his face.

"You Bastard. You think yo— " the girl suddenly turned into yellow light and disappeared.

"Yeah, I liked you more when you spoke less."

Ning lifted his sword and propped it on his shoulders before looking at the surprised faces of the 5 people.

"You weren't wrong about her baiting a big fish. Only you failed you realize that I'm big enough for the lot of you as well."