

Battlefield 211

Chapter 211: The Terrifying Jie La

On top of the sand dune

Kazik chopped off the head of a desert scorpion, feeling irritable under the blazing sun. It still preferred darker places.

Just then, it suddenly looked up and saw Qin Tian walking out of the Black Gate.

Ssss!

Kazik waved its forearm in greeting to Qin Tian.

Qin Tian landed steadily in front of Kazik and then said with a smile:

"Kazik, let me introduce you to a new partner, Jie La~"

In the next moment, the green vine on his wrist suddenly grew as thick as an adult's thigh. One end was tied to Qin Tian's arm, the other stood high, its top curving into a hook, swaying gently.

Sss~~

Kazik's mandibles contracted, and a strong sense of vigilance filled its compound eyes. Its forearm instinctively positioned itself in front. From the green vine, it felt an extremely strong sense of threat, one that was potentially deadly.

"Don't be nervous, I've already said, she's our new partner, Jie La."

Qin Tian patted Kazik's body, indicating it to relax.

Hearing this, Kazik slowly lowered its forearm, but the gaze it directed at Jie La still held vigilance and a hint of curiosity.

Where did the master find this creature? It's much more terrifying than the previous vine.

"Kazik, you're quite familiar with this desert already. Help me find a formidable beast, I want to test Jie La's strength." Qin Tian said.

Formidable~

Kazik pondered for a moment and thought of a target.

Ssss~~

Kazik flapped its wings and said to Qin Tian:

"Follow me."

Jie La turned back into a bracelet, coiling around Qin Tian's wrist. Then, under Kazik's guidance, they flew deeper into the desert. After about an hour, they stopped mid-air.

Qin Tian looked down at the ground, spotting an enormous black entity crouching on the sand dune.

It was a giant scorpion, at least a hundred zhang long. Its carapace surface was covered with dark golden patterns, like ancient talismans glowing faintly. Each gap oozed a sweet venom, corroding the sand beneath into smoking pits.

Tens of thousands of scorpions spread like a black tide over the sandy sea, stretching from the giant scorpion's feet to the horizon.

They either clung to the eroded sand dune or burrowed into the scorching sand crevices. Their pincers reflected cold light as they opened and closed, the venom from their stinger dripped onto the charred sand, sizzling audibly.

In this domain of death, countless white bones lay scattered—some were antelope horns broken, some were travelers' rusty wristbands, and there were even complete giant skeletons.

When Qin Tian and Kazik arrived, the desert giant scorpion suddenly lifted its head, a deep, sonorous roar emanating from its belly.

Boom!!

The ground erupted in a storm of sand, attacking upwards like a tornado.

Qin Tian and Kazik deftly dodged.

"Jie La, go give it a try."

As soon as the words fell, the green vine detached from his wrist, plunging into the sea of sand.

Boom!

A dark green shadow broke through the soil, the main trunk of the Soul-Devouring Demon Vine as thick as a dragon, covered with menacing spikes.

As soon as it appeared, hundreds of branches shot out with the speed of lightning, each transforming into a crimson streamer, precisely piercing into the scorpion swarm.

In an instant, the shells of over a hundred scorpions shattered, their internal blood gushed like fountains into the vine, their shriveled bodies "thudded" to the ground.

The terrifying slaughter did not cease, with branches of the demon vine dancing like spirit snakes. Each piercing skewered seven or eight scorpions, the scorpions threaded on the vine futilely waving pincers, their vitality visibly disappearing. In mere moments, thousands of shriveled bodies hung like blood-red candied haws on the vine.

Quickly a thick pile of scorpion corpses stacked up on the sandy ground, yet the demon vine continued its ruthless harvest, the crimson liquid dripping along its length, dyeing the yellow sand an eerie purple.

"Hooh!"

The Sandstorm Giant Scorpion bellowed in anger, emitting a deafening roar.

Instantly, a terrifying might burst from within it, causing the whole desert to tremble.

"Tier Five Fierce Beast!"

Qin Tian raised an eyebrow, turned to look at Kazik. "You sure know how to set the bar high for Jie La, bringing out a Tier Five Fierce Beast and at least tens of thousands of underlings right off the bat."

Kazik blinked its compound eyes, spreading its forearms innocently.

Bang bang bang~

The Sandstorm Giant Scorpion's eight bowl-sized legs stomped the ground fiercely, the sand dune collapsed with a rumble, its massive body charging at the Soul-Devouring Demon Vine like a black mountain.

Simultaneously, tens of thousands of scorpions had their bodies suddenly glow with a khaki-colored spiritual energy light, dense as a solid substance circulating and coalescing around them, forming indestructible shields.

The surface of these shields patterned like ancient earth veins, shimmering with a heavy luster, interconnecting to become even more robust, amazingly blocking all the subsequent piercing assaults of the demon vine, ringing metallic collision sounds echoing through the desert.

However, in front of the Soul-Devouring Demon Vine, these Energy Shields were merely food.

Observed, the surface of the vine suddenly split open into dense patterns, like countless greedy little mouths.

When it stabbed into the Spirit Shield again, those patterns immediately swathed the khaki spiritual energy, devouring frantically at a speed visible to the naked eye. The Spirit Shield dimmed at the moment of contact with the vine, and the scorpions realized in horror that their once proud defensive power was continuously pouring into the demon vine, feeding this dreadful killing machine.

The branches of the vine grew ever thicker, spikes gleaming with eerie khaki glows, effortlessly piercing through the remaining Spirit Shields, continuing to harvest the lives of scorpions.

On the other side

Two disc-sized pincers flashed with a chilling sheen, the giant scorpion wielded immense strength clamping harshly onto a main trunk, "crack," the steel-like vine was forcibly snapped.

However, at the severed vine's end, new offshoots sprouted madly like bamboo shoots after the rain, resuming their original form in the blink of an eye.

Seeing this, the giant scorpion's poison sacs on its pincers contracted violently, spurting viridescent poison with high-pressure force all over the vine. Eerily enough, instead of corroding, the demon vine greedily absorbed the toxin, its spikes becoming increasingly crimson.

Seizing the momentary daze of the giant scorpion, countless branches of the demon vine rushed upon it like a web, crazily drilling into its carapace gaps.

The giant scorpion struggled fiercely, striking the vines with its stinger, but was ensnared by more vines, tightening like black chains.

It swung its pincers furiously, turning surrounding sand dunes to dust, yet the vine suckers clung to its body stubbornly, countless tiny suction pipes penetrating the carapace, voraciously extracting its blood.

Despite the giant scorpion's terrifying strength, each struggle raising a level-eight sandstorm, it failed to free itself from the demon vine's entanglement.

As blood continuously drained, its movements gradually slowed, its crimson compound eyes finally reflecting fear.

In the end, the main trunk of the demon vine coiled around its neck like a python, thousands of branches exerting force simultaneously, "poof," penetrating its toughest skull, completely draining away the desert overlord's vitality, leaving nothing but an empty shell.

At the same time, the tens of thousands of scorpions present were also completely dried into husks.

In the Desert of Death, the Sandstorm Giant Scorpion clan, feared by all, was thus wiped out effortlessly by Jie La.

Chapter 212: Recruitment

Qin Tian and Kazik fell to the ground.

Looking at the black shells scattered everywhere, and the remains of the giant scorpion, Qin Tian had to admit that Jie La's combat power was superior to his own.

He relied on the Shadowstrike Sniper Rifle to kill Tier Five, while Jie La was able to crush Tier Five Sandstorm Giant Scorpions with ease and also kill thousands of venomous scorpions along the way.

Moreover, ordinary plants fear fire the most, but in front of Jie La, it's just another form of energy. He couldn't imagine what methods could restrain Jie La.

Maybe only a High Tier Spiritualist, using martial techniques or magic that exceeds Jie La's endurance limit, could truly eliminate her.

"Jie La, amazing!"

Qin Tian gave a thumbs up, sparing no praise.

Jie La shrank back into a bracelet, the purple leaf at the top slightly swaying, as if joyfully dancing.

Hiss~~

Kazik looked at the dead bodies everywhere, and Jie La's participation ignited a strong sense of urgency and competitiveness deep within its heart.

To avoid falling behind, it must work even harder.

A deep purple light flashed in Kazik's eyes.

This battle gave Qin Tian a preliminary assessment of Jie La's combat power, able to easily kill Tier Five creatures, but there was still a noticeable gap between that and Tier Six, where the dividing line with Tier Five is evident.

However, Jie La has just awakened, having Tier Five combat power already makes him satisfied.

Next, as Jie La continues to devour energy, her combat power will gradually increase. Perhaps in a few years, she could return to being the Soul-Devouring Demon Vine that once shook the Star Sea.

Leaving the shells everywhere would be wasteful, especially the Sandstorm Giant Scorpion's shell, which is certainly an excellent material for making armor.

Qin Tian waved his hand and tossed all the shells into the Spirit Space.

"Going home!"

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Star Moon City

Yuan Shan Group Building

Yang Fan sat in his private office, listening to the chaotic footsteps outside and the disorderly chatter, sighing deeply inwardly.

Nowadays, Yuan Shan Group is almost standing on the edge of the cliff, just a step away from falling into the abyss.

As the group's vice president, Yang Fan should be feeling worried and anxious, like the other executives, striving to save the group.

However, at this moment, his mood was exceptionally complex, not wanting the group to collapse, but also feeling that if it did, it might satisfy a certain resentment within him.

More than ten years ago, he expanded territories for the group, helped Yuan Shan Group acquire many important clients, leading to a steady increase in the group's performance.

Moreover, he also optimized the group's structure, expanded planting bases, and developed new products, making Yuan Shan Group transform from a medium-sized company into a leader in Silver Gray Star's medicinal industry.

During those years, he was almost at the peak of his success, believing that the position of CEO was practically within his grasp. However, just when the board meeting was held and he thought he was

about to take up his dream position, the group's official order hit him like a hammer, leaving his mind blank.

Not the CEO, nor an executive of any significant departments such as human resources, finance, marketing.

He was transferred to a department with almost no presence as a head, with a high salary but in reality, his power was stripped away, only holding the title of vice president.

At that time, he was furious and wanted to resign on the spot, however, Chairman Leng Yuanshan threatened him that if he resigned, he would then be considered an enemy of the group.

Yuan Shan Group never shows mercy to enemies.

He was scared.

He knew very well that Leng Yuanshan was a ruthless person with many lives under his belt.

For the sake of himself and his family, he chose to compromise, but since then, he completely lost his motivation, living like a monk ringing the bell every day, clocking in and out on time, considering the handsome salary, he felt this life seemed passable, but there was always a lingering resentment.

In the prime of his life, trapped in this small office, wasting away for over ten years.

Therefore, when the group was on the brink of bankruptcy, he was surprisingly calm.

After all these years, he had saved enough, ready for retirement, fishing, spending time with his wife and children, seemed quite nice.

Beep beep beep

The alarm for finishing work rang, Yang Fan picked up his bag, not staying even a second longer in the office.

After leaving the office, many employees would lower their heads and say "President Yang" when they saw him, while some ignored him.

Of course, this couldn't be blamed on those employees, mainly because Yang Fan's presence in the group was really low, besides necessary executive meetings, he rarely attended any events, causing many employees to know his name but not recognize him personally.

Fortunately, Yang Fan was used to it.

Taking the elevator to the top of the building, Yang Fan boarded his flying device and set the destination to a large supermarket.

He wanted to buy groceries to cook dinner for his wife and children.

Over the years, his cooking skills had improved considerably, almost catching up with star chefs.

Entering the supermarket, Yang Fan pushed a small cart heading to the vegetable section when suddenly someone blocked his cart and called out his name.

"Yang Fan, President Yang."

Yang Fan looked confused at the man before him, not tall, average appearance, but exceptionally strong, with large arms almost bursting his sleeves.

"I'm Yang Fan, may I ask who you are..."

The man introduced himself: "I am Zhao Zimo, a Spiritualist. Our boss wants to meet you."

Spiritualist.

Yang Fan felt a tightness in his heart, unsure of who wanted to meet him, and even sent a Spiritualist, was it because they feared he might escape?

"President Yang, don't be nervous, we mean no harm."

The man smiled and said, "Our boss is just next door in the teahouse, simply wants to meet you."

Next door teahouse.

Hearing this location, Yang Fan felt slightly relieved, this was the bustling area of Star Moon City with strict security, even the boldest wouldn't dare to cause trouble here.

"Can I ask why your boss wants to meet me?"

Yang Fan couldn't help but inquire, as he had been sitting cold for over ten years, almost becoming invisible within the company, he couldn't imagine who would want to meet him, let alone seek anything from him.

"Our boss appreciates President Yang's talents and wants to invite you to join our company," Zhao Zimo laughed.

Talent?

My talents had long been worn out over these ten years.

Yang Fan self-deprecatingly replied, "Thank your boss for his appreciation, but I think you might have the wrong person. I'm just an ordinary middle-aged man now, see, after work I have to buy groceries for my wife and kids."

"President Yang, whether you're capable is for our boss to decide."

Zhao Zimo extended his hand, "Still, I hope you can come with me."

Seeing Zhao Zimo's determined attitude, Yang Fan sighed inwardly.

"Alright, I'll go."

Chapter 213: Conversation

As he entered the tea room, Yang Fan quickly glanced around.

There were two people in the room. One was dressed in blue, with a short beard, thick brows, and eyes like tigers, with a strong build reminiscent of an ancient hero. The other was a young man, with rugged features and a cold temperament. When his gaze met Yang Fan's, Yang Fan couldn't help but feel a tightening in his heart, as if an invisible pressure enveloped him.

"Yang Fan, President Yang."

The young man spoke, his voice clear and cool.

"Hello, I am Yang Fan."

Yang Fan quickly nodded.

"Please sit."

The young man gestured for Yang Fan to sit and then poured him a cup of tea.

Yang Fan nervously took the cup and said, "Thank you."

"My name is Qin Tian, and I'm the one who emptied Yuan Shan Group's warehouse."

Clink~

The teacup slipped from his hand, spilling tea onto the table.

Yang Fan hastily steadied the teacup, repeatedly apologizing, "Sorry, sorry."

At that moment, a tidal wave roared in his heart.

The culprit who pushed Yuan Shan Group to the brink of bankruptcy was the man standing before him.

What kind of grudge did he have against Yuan Shan Group,

and why had he come looking for me?

"President Yang, no need to be nervous."

Qin Tian smiled slightly and said, "I'm a straightforward person, so I'll get straight to the point. The reason I invited you here today is to ask you to join our Lingfeng Company. The ship of Yuan Shan Group is sinking, and I believe talent like you shouldn't go down with it. Furthermore, Yuan Shan Group hasn't fully utilized you and even seems to have been holding you back for years. I'm sure you must feel a pent-up frustration."

Upon hearing this, Yang Fan fell silent for a moment, then spoke sardonically:

"You overestimate me. What kind of talent am I, after all? I'm just an ordinary worker."

Qin Tian smiled and didn't respond to Yang Fan's self-deprecation, continuing on his own:

"Let me introduce Lingfeng Trading Company. Our company was just established, and the company representative is this gentleman beside me, Feng Mochuan, leader of the Hurricane Mercenary Corps, a Tier Five Nine star Spiritualist."

Tier Five Nine star Spiritualist!

Yang Fan looked at Feng Mochuan, a look of shock flashing in his eyes.

He didn't expect that the man with thick brows and eyes like tigers, who exuded such presence, was nearly a Tier Six superexpert.

As an ordinary person, even a Tier Two or Tier Three Spiritualist seemed superhuman to him. It was said that the most powerful security captain under President Leng Yuanshan was only a Tier Four Nine Stars, falling short by a whole level compared to Feng Mochuan.

Even if he didn't understand much about the world of Spiritualists, he knew well how vast the gap between Tier Four and Tier Five was.

Then he realized something even more serious: a formidable Tier Five Nine star stood silently next to Mr. Qin Tian as if he were just a bodyguard. What kind of formidable figure could Mr. Qin Tian possibly be?

Qin Tian continued:

"Recently, I struck a deal with the Elf Race, obtaining exclusive rights to 7 types of Spirit Fruits and 10 types of Spiritual Medicine. A week ago, we shipped our first batch to Silver Gray Star, looking for business partners. Unexpectedly, Yuan Shan Group bribed the security bureau to detain our goods. I'm not one to be trifled with easily, so I emptied Yuan Shan Group's warehouse."

So that's the story.

This was indeed Cold Yuan Shan's style—overbearing and unwilling to let others challenge Yuan Shan Group's status.

Unfortunately, this time he messed with the wrong person, and it served him right.

Yang Fan's eyes shimmered with a touch of inexplicable delight. Although Yuan Shan Group had offered him what seemed like a high salary to outsiders, compared to the value he created for the company, it was like being given scraps.

Yet he spent over a decade in this condition, nearly exhausting his will.

Thus, seeing Yuan Shan Group hit a wall due to greed made him almost want to laugh.

Meanwhile, he keenly captured the vast business prospects offered by Lingfeng Company from Qin Tian's words.

Exclusive rights to 7 types of Spirit Fruits and 10 types of Spiritual Medicine.

If that's true, this company will undoubtedly become a giant worth billions, even trillions, with a development prospect far more extensive than Yuan Shan Group's.

Qin Tian watched Yang Fan, continuing:

"I highly value President Yang's abilities. Yuan Shan Group achieved its current heights significantly because of you. Nevertheless, they chose nepotism and neglected their pillars after the fact. I think it's best if such a company collapses earlier. President Yang should be on a grander stage, letting your abilities and talents shine."

A grander stage~

At that moment, Yang Fan suddenly realized his cold heart had started to warm.

It turns out, my passion hasn't cooled. I still want to strive once more.

Yang Fan lowered his gaze, admitting he was indeed tempted, but the age where he could easily trust others had long passed.

Qin Tian's words were just his personal account.

Yang Fan couldn't be sure if they were true.

"Mr. Qin, I really appreciate your recognition, and you've indeed moved me. However, this matter is significant, and I would need to discuss it with my family. Could you give me two days to think it over?"

Upon hearing this, Qin Tian stared directly at Yang Fan, immediately making Yang Fan feel an unusually heavy pressure. Cold sweat covered his forehead, and his back was soaked.

Oh no, will he get angry?

What should I do?

Should I just agree immediately?

But what if he's a fraud?

Various thoughts raced through Yang Fan's mind, leaving him anxious. His heartbeat was erratic, as if it would jump out of his throat.

"Of course... you may."

Qin Tian smiled faintly. Actually, he could have used the Soul Seal to make Yang Fan comply, but he didn't want to always use such measures to secure subordinates.

Unless absolutely necessary, he felt that talent should be treated with due respect.

"Thank you, Mr. Qin."

Yang Fan sighed in relief, quickly expressing gratitude.

"Then, President Yang, please go home and discuss it with your family. I'll await your good news." Qin Tian extended his hand.

"Alright."

Yang Fan shook Qin Tian's hand, sincerely speaking.

"Zimo, see President Yang out."

"Yes!"

"Ah, no need to escort me; I can leave on my own." Yang Fan declined.

"No worries. Since I brought President Yang here, I'll see you back," Zhao Zimo said with a smile.

"Well... alright then."

Yang Fan bowed slightly toward Qin Tian and Feng Mochuan, then left the teahouse with Zhao Zimo escorting him.

After they departed, Feng Mochuan couldn't help but ask:

"Boss, do you really think Yang Fan is suitable?"

Qin Tian replied slowly:

"Yang Fan certainly has potential. Although he's been in obscurity for over a decade, his experience and natural business acumen don't fade with time. Besides, he was the final choice made by Li Qi out of many candidates, and I trust Li Qi's judgment."

"I see. Then I'm really looking forward to seeing what he can do next," Feng Mochuan said with a smile.

"Find a couple of guys to keep an eye on him. If he still hasn't made up his mind in two days, I'll help him decide."

Qin Tian spoke calmly.

"Understood."

Chapter 214: Decision to Join

"Honey, why are you so absent-minded today? Is it because you're worried about the group?"

During dinner, his wife Wang Wan noticed Yang Fan's odd behavior and couldn't help but ask.

Yang Fan was startled for a moment and smiled bitterly, "I thought I hid it pretty well."

After speaking, Yang Fan paused for a moment, then asked:

"Honey, are you satisfied with our current life?"

"I am satisfied."

Wang Wan showed a gentle smile: "Our family can be together every day, and we don't have to worry about making a living. I am very satisfied with our life now."

"Daddy, I'm satisfied too."

Their five-year-old son raised his hand and said in a childish voice: "If you buy me a model of a super battleship to play with, I'd be even more satisfied."

"You little rascal."

Yang Fan rubbed his son's head with his hand, his eyes dimmed slightly. If the family is satisfied with life, should I really change our current lifestyle?

"But I know you are not satisfied."

At this moment, a soft hand grasped his wrist. Wang Wan looked Yang Fan in the eyes and said seriously:

"You don't like your current job or this plain life. The Yang Fan who once dominated the business world and fulfilled his ambitions is the best version of you."

Hearing this, Yang Fan was very moved. He knew his wife must have noticed something, which is why she used these words to encourage and support him.

"Earlier, a company approached me, wanting to invite me to join them."

Yang Fan began slowly, "It's a very promising company, although newly established, its future prospects are extremely bright. But I'm not sure, if I join them, will our life improve, or will it cause uncontrollable effects."

Wang Wan gently held Yang Fan's hand, speaking softly:

"It doesn't matter. No matter what happens, our family will face it together. For the sake of this little home, you've endured grievances for over ten years. I hope from now on you live not only for the family but also for yourself, and..."

Wang Wan smiled:

"Compared to the current you who comes home to cook every day, I prefer the spirited Yang Fan."

"Daddy, I support you too!"

Their eldest daughter clenched her little fists.

"I support you too!"

Their youngest son raised his arm and added: "If you buy the super battleship model, I'll support you even more."

"Haha~"

The dining table echoed with laughter and joy.

Yang Fan looked at his family, full of smiles. With their support, he suddenly felt as if the weight pressing on his heart for years was lifted.

Indeed, I'm just over 40, should I really be content to live the life of a retired old man?

No, I am not content.

My blood is not cold yet.

I still want to fight for my dreams.

Yang Fan opened his smart watch and searched for Lingfeng Company on the trade website. The legal representative of the company was indeed Feng Mochuan.

Immediately afterward, he searched for the Hurricane Mercenary Corps on the mercenary registration website, and the leader was also Feng Mochuan, a Tier Five Nine Stars expert, exactly like the person he saw today.

Yes, they didn't lie to me.

A hint of joy flashed in Yang Fan's eyes. Since the information was correct, he could make up his mind.

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"Welcome President Yang, to Lingfeng Trading Company."

Qin Tian smiled at Yang Fan. He thought it would take Yang Fan a day or two to decide, but he didn't expect him to give a definitive answer that night.

Impressive, a man of decisiveness!

"Boss."

Yang Fan, like Feng Mochuan, addressed Qin Tian as the boss. He knew full well that even though the legal representative was Feng Mochuan, the actual controller was this young man in front of him.

"President Yang, from today, you are the general manager of the company."

Qin Tian said: "Neither I nor Old Mo have much experience in business, so you will need to take charge, establish the company's organizational structure, and recruit the staff."

Upon hearing this, a hint of joy appeared in Yang Fan's eyes. Judging from what the boss said, it seemed he intended to entrust the company entirely to him.

To him, this was not a burden but a vote of confidence.

"Alright, boss, I will complete this task as soon as possible."

Yang Fan was full of confidence. For someone who climbed from the grassroots to a senior position in the group through capability, operating a small startup company posed no challenge.

Qin Tian nodded and added:

"Besides that, there's another more important task for you."

"I've seized Yuan Shan Group's goods, and I hope you can contact these goods' clients to resell to them. As for the price, you decide."

After all, these are stolen goods, pure profit business, whether sold for more or less, it's all a gain.

"Understood!"

Yang Fan nodded heavily. He knew this was a challenging task but not particularly difficult.

After all, Yuan Shan Group's delays in shipping must have made the clients anxious.

Any disruption in the supply chain affects the entire company's operations.

Moreover, time is urgent, and they cannot find another company to supply in such a short period.

If, at this time, Lingfeng Company can sell them the goods at a lower price, those clients would certainly not refuse.

After all, they only pre-paid Yuan Shan Group and can claim a high penalty for breach of contract, making not just no loss, but even a small profit.

In this way, Lingfeng Company could not only profit greatly but also take this opportunity to build fame and establish partnerships with these clients.

"Go do it as soon as possible. The Hurricane Mercenary Corps will assist you. Once the first fund arrives, I aim to acquire Yuan Shan Group's significant assets." Qin Tian said.

"Understood."

Yang Fan nodded, thinking further than Qin Tian; besides acquiring Yuan Shan Group's assets, he could also attract talents from the group to complete Lingfeng Company's organizational structure, saving a lot of development time.

"Then go ahead. Remember, there's no such thing as a wall without cracks in this world. What you're doing will definitely reach Leng Yuanshan's ears. I'm worried he may retaliate out of desperation against you, so I'll assign some Spiritualists to protect you and your family's safety." Qin Tian said.

"I share the same concern, thank you, boss."

Yang Fan expressed sincere gratitude.

Of course, he also understood it's both protection and a form of supervision and deterrence. His family's safety and lives were under the boss's control. Going forward, he must wholeheartedly remain loyal; any disloyalty would not only cost him but also his family dearly.

Leaving the room, Yang Fan looked up at the vast blue sky, feeling the long-lost fervor and passion bubbling within, his lips curling into a smile.

Chapter 215: Crimson Flame (Blue)

The collapse of the Yuan Shan Group happened faster than anyone imagined.

As the saying goes, "When the wall falls, everyone pushes."

Ordinarily, Yuan Shan Group was arrogant and tyrannical, suppressing its peers and allowing no one to challenge its status and authority. But when it fell into crisis, those it had harmed were united in delivering a heavy blow.

Cutting off the supply of medicinal herbs,

Poaching middle management,

Forcing banks to withdraw loans,

Sending people to sabotage the planting bases,

The Yuan Shan Group was driven to distraction and chaos internally, with even some employees receiving death threats, coercing them to stop working for the company.

As the founder and chairman of the Yuan Shan Group, Leng Yuanshan's hair turned half-white within just one week. His face became haggard and emaciated, as if he had aged twenty years.

And his friends, relatives, and even former confidants around him all chose this moment to leave him.

In the end, Leng Yuanshan fell into complete despair and directly announced the bankruptcy of the group, entering the stage of bankruptcy liquidation. Thus, the renowned industry leader in medicinal herbs officially met its end.

At this time, a company named Lingfeng Trading Company forcefully rose, acquiring more than thirty percent of Yuan Shan Group's employees and half of its assets, including Yuan Shan Group's headquarters building, making a sensational name in the industry.

People in the know understood that Lingfeng Company's first fund came from selling a batch of goods stolen from Yuan Shan Group. However, nobody would despise Lingfeng Company for this; instead, they would feel incredibly wary.

Even a giant like Yuan Shan Group was brought down by them, so who would dare provoke them lightly?

Furthermore, Lingfeng Company has its unique moat.

The exclusive agency rights for 7 types of Spirit Fruit and 10 types of Spiritual Medicine from the Elf Star.

Everyone knows that with these exclusive agency rights, Lingfeng Company is equivalent to holding a renewable gold mine. Coupled with acquiring part of Yuan Shan Group's assets and customers, aiming for the top of the industry is just a matter of time for this company.

Of course, some people harbored greed and tried various methods to gather intelligence on Lingfeng Company or infiltrate it. However, anyone who attempted this without exception faced various accidents, such as poisoning, illness, or flying device malfunction.

Anyone with discerning eyes could see this was Lingfeng Company's silent warning—not to meddle, or it wouldn't be just a simple accident.

From then on, Lingfeng Company firmly established its footing on the Silver Gray Star, taking the first step on the path to becoming a corporate giant worth billions or even trillions.

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The yellow sand filled the sky.

A tall silhouette stood like a solitary peak atop a sand dune, with his fluttering robes fiercely clashing against the howling gales.

Hundreds of fire salamanders, as large as war horses, came charging wildly from the depths of the sand sea, crimson vertical pupils flickering with greedy murderous intent, as the fireballs they spewed from their mouths resembled falling meteors, scorching the air into distorted shapes, hurtling toward that silhouette.

"Ssshhh"

The earth suddenly trembled, and dark green vines burst forth from the ground, their surfaces bristling with sharp barbs. They twisted and intertwined like living creatures, forming a thick vine wall in the blink of an eye, protecting the silhouette within.

The vines' surfaces glistened with blue and purple micro-lights, with lines lighting up like countless opened little mouths. When the fireballs crashed into the vine surface, they were instantly absorbed by the lines without stirring the slightest ripple.

The figure within the wall slowly raised his right hand, his distinct bony fingertips tracing through the air, trailing a string of golden runes.

At the moment he clenched his fist, his clear voice shot straight to the sky: "Celestial Thunder Fall!"

Before the words finished, the clear sky was instantly swallowed by dark clouds.

Deep within the cloud layers, purple light surged violently as if an ancient fierce beast had awakened.

With a tremendous roar, the clouds were ripped open, revealing countless cracks as hundreds of lightning bolts as thick as bowls streaked like silver dragons from the abyss, accompanied by deafening thunder and blinding electrical light, accurately striking each fire salamander.

The raging lightning exploded among the salamander horde, with the crackling sounds of electrical currents intertwining with the salamanders' shrill wails.

The fire salamanders twisted their massive bodies, their scales splitting under the lightning's scorching heat, flesh torn instantly apart, as charred black smoke rose.

In just a few short breaths, the once fierce horde of fire salamanders turned into smoking charred remains, collapsing onto the scorching sand.

Hundreds of blue and green light spheres flew into the body, leaving only a single deep blue light sphere.

[Name] Crimson Flame (Blue)

[Type] Active Talent

[Introduction] This is a strange flame evolved from the depths of the desert, using scorching sand grains as a guide to temper the fire with a unique dual nature. It can fuse free earth elements with flames in the air, freely shaping them into various flame forms. The surface of the condensed Crimson Flame is covered with flowing sand patterns, which, when slicing, inflict a "Scorching Sand Rend" effect, wherein high-temperature sand grains penetrate the wound, continuously burning and hindering healing; simultaneously, Flame Resistance is increased by 20%.

"Crimson Flame, Blue Talent, not bad."

Qin Tian nodded contentedly, though he was more pleased with the power of Celestial Thunder Fall. A Bronze Level magic paired with his immense Spiritual Power far exceeding that of mages of the same level, along with the electric enhancement from [Purple Sky Thunder Body], could not be survived by an ordinary Tier Four Spirit Beast in one blow.

Powerful and wide-ranging, its only drawback is that it requires casting time.

If the enemy catches the gap during the casting, getting close, then the mage is in danger.

Therefore, mages will surely master some instant-cast spells, while high-level spells are often used when restraining the enemy or from a safe position.

However, Qin Tian doesn't plan to learn those simple basic spells. His position is always as a Spirit Warrior; close combat is his forte, with magic only serving as a tactical supplement. When facing a throng of weak opponents, spiritual ability magic comes into play.

Of course, even without relying on magic, he has many talents that can inflict mass damage, such as Poison Gas Domain, Super Energy Flame Burst, Eye of Fear, Sandstorm Control, and the newly acquired Crimson Flame.

However, talents have their limits, while Spiritual Energy is limitless.

The ceiling of spiritual ability magic lies beyond the reach of these talents.

In this world, Spiritual Energy is always king.

"Training ends today, time to head back."

Qin Tian glanced at the time, ready to leave, but just then, a video call suddenly came through.

Seeing the name, his eyebrows slightly rose.

"Hello, Mr. Dongfang."

"Hello there, Qin Tian, hope I'm not disturbing you."

On the video, Dongfang Yunhai glanced at the environment behind Qin Tian and smiled lightly.

"No, I'm just training in the desert."

Qin Tian replied with a smile.

After exchanging pleasantries, Dongfang Yunhai finally stated the purpose of his call.

"Qin Tian, do you have any interest in participating in the Azure Wood Star Realm Genius Battle?"

Hearing this, Qin Tian was momentarily stunned; wasn't the selection for the Genius Battle already over, with the participant list online, and even professional agencies having given a rating from One Star to Five Stars?

Could it be that Dongfang Yunhai wants him to squeeze in?

"Mr. Dongfang, I remember that the list for the Genius Battle has already been finalized, right?"

"That's right."

Dongfang Yunhai smiled, "So I'm here to invite you to be an examiner."

An examiner?

Instantly, a peculiar expression appeared in Qin Tian's eyes.

Chapter 216: Examiner or NPC?

Qin Tian had heard Xiaopang mention before that the Cyan Wood Genius Battle is the most popular event every year, so he studied it a bit when he had free time.

Overall, it's a top-level competition that's both entertaining and commercial.

Any Spiritualist under the age of 25 can sign up for the preliminary round. Of course, some geniuses who have already made a name for themselves can skip the preliminaries and go straight to the final selection round.

After a few months of selection, the list of 100 geniuses is officially determined. They will be placed in an isolated environment, which could be an island, a desert, or an abandoned city. They will compete and eliminate each other until only ten contestants remain for the arena battles.

In this process, the contestants not only have to compete against others but also encounter masked examiners and various Spirit Beasts. These are like NPCs in a game, tasked with eliminating contestants.

However, interestingly, around the examiners and Spirit Beasts, there are prizes set by the Dongfang Clan, such as Heavenly Materials and Earthly Treasures, Elixirs, Weapons, Martial Techniques, etc. If contestants eliminate the examiners and Spirit Beasts, they will receive corresponding rewards, much like getting loot in a game.

Therefore, many contestants consider forming alliances to eliminate challenging NPCs first, and then fight fiercely for the prizes.

The entire event is broadcast live, where audiences can see these geniuses disguise, ally, turn their backs on each other, backstab, set traps, and other engaging activities, akin to a large-scale, high-end combat variety show that is both intense and humorous, also showcasing the terrifying combat skills of top geniuses.

"Was inviting me to be an examiner a way to watch me get beaten up by those geniuses?"

Qin Tian thought quietly to himself.

Examiners are akin to NPCs or roaming monsters. Generally, the examiners are stronger in level than the geniuses, but geniuses who make it to the final list must have Bloodline Abilities not under the silver level, with many at Gold level. Thus, it's hard to predict who will win in a fight between examiners and geniuses.

It's just that geniuses can ally to defeat examiners, but examiners can't form alliances, hence the examiners will eventually be eliminated by the geniuses.

However, to be honest, Qin Tian was quite interested in participating in this genius battle, even if it was as an examiner.

Recently, he's been cultivating Martial Techniques and Magic like "Celestial Punishment Nine Strikes," "Dark Prison Demon-Suppressing Fist," and "Celestial Thunder Fall" in the desert. The progress was okay, but being isolated like this felt a bit dull, and after reaching a certain point, the progress became very slow.

The best way to improve quickly is through practical combat and finding some substantial opponents, and the contenders in the genius battle fit his requirements well.

Additionally, he wanted to test his combat power by relying solely on his abilities and Swordsmanship, without using the Shadowstrike Sniper Rifle, to see if he could compete with those top geniuses under 25.

"Mr. Dongfang, thank you very much for your invitation. Personally, I am very interested in participating in the genius battle; it's just that, due to my special status, whether I can attend needs to be approved by my superiors," Qin Tian said.

"Of course, I understand."

Eastern Cloud Sea smiled: "However, I still hope to see you in the genius battle. By the way, for every examiner participating, the Dongfang Clan will prepare a gift. The longer you persist, the richer the gift will be. With your capabilities, there's a good chance of lasting until the end."

After the Elf Star battle, Eastern Cloud Sea was very impressed with Qin Tian's stealth capabilities. To him, the Dark Forest, considered a death trap, was no different from walking in an open field, and entering and exiting the Dark Nest was at will. Such stealth ability is the strongest he's ever seen in the younger generation.

As for the reason behind inviting Qin Tian to the genius battle, there are a few considerations.

Firstly, before serving as an examiner, Qin Tian needs to register at Azure Wood Star, and during this time, he will send family juniors to engage with Qin Tian, to bring them closer, and subtly recruit Qin Tian to join the Dongfang Clan.

Suggestions and invitations among peers are often more effective.

Secondly, serving as an examiner will earn Qin Tian a gift from the Dongfang Clan. There's a saying, "accepting gifts ties one," which could increase Qin Tian's willingness to join the Dongfang Clan.

Lastly, he hopes the elders of the Dongfang Clan will notice Qin Tian during the genius battle, thus adding more incentives to recruit Qin Tian.

He is quite optimistic about this young man, possessing a Bloodline Power of Gold level, and his character and conduct are impeccable. Given time, he will surely become a major general in charge of a territory.

Currently, he's still young and not too tied with the Seventh Bureau, leaving a possibility of recruitment. However, if they wait till Qin Tian further matures, success is less likely.

"And there's a grand gift, the Dongfang Clan's grand gift is really something to look forward to~"

Qin Tian thought silently.

"Qin Tian, discuss it thoroughly with Yan Qing, and let me know when you have good news."

End of the call

Qin Tian thought for a moment and dialed Yan Qing's number.

It took a while before the call connected.

"Qin Tian."

"Director Yan!"

Yan Qing's face looked a bit tired. It seemed the secret mission he was executing was not going smoothly.

"Qin Tian, is there something you need?" Yan Qing asked.

Qin Tian: "Director, there's something I wish to report to you."

Qin Tian explained the situation of Eastern Cloud Sea's invitation for him to participate in the Cyan Wood Genius Battle.

After listening, Yan Qing first pondered for a moment, then a smile appeared on his face.

"Go, since there's a grand gift to receive, why not go and showcase your abilities at the genius battle, to suppress the arrogance of those geniuses."

Yan Qing knew that since Qin Tian voluntarily reported this matter, it indicated Qin Tian's own interest in participating.

He also guessed the Dongfang Clan's intention of inviting Qin Tian.

Aren't they just trying to poach talent?

But trying to poach Qin Tian? Impossible.

Even if Qin Tian wished to leave the Seventh Bureau, the Bureau wouldn't permit his departure.

To know, Qin Tian has long been in Marshal Lin's sights.

An excellent clone with mutated bloodline, possessing abilities similar to the Blood Race, is unprecedented in hundreds of years.

Even Marshal Lin hadn't reached Qin Tian's current level within just a year.

Thus, it's only a matter of time before Qin Tian is transferred to the Imperial Capital.

No matter how high the stakes the Dongfang Clan offers, it cannot match the allure of working alongside Marshal Lin.

Yan Qing believes Qin Tian will undoubtedly make the most suitable choice for him.

Therefore, the Dongfang Clan's sugar-coated cannonball, leave the sugar, but return the cannonball.

Agreed!

Qin Tian slightly raised the corner of his mouth and said:

"Yes, Director!"

Chapter 217: Azure Wood Star—Mad Botanical Garden

The Genius Battle is about to commence

Having decided to participate, Qin Tian immediately booked a ticket and set off the next day.

Before leaving, he had a small meeting with Yang Fan, Feng Mochuan, and Li Qi. He didn't say what he was going to do, just mentioned that he would be away for a while and promised bonuses once he returned.

Early the next morning, Qin Tian boarded the spaceship heading to the Azure Wood Star.

Five days later

"We have arrived at Azure Wood Star."

Through the porthole, Qin Tian looked down.

Outside the porthole, Azure Wood Star appeared like an infinitely magnified jade, filling the entire view, with its atmosphere veiling the planet like a light gauze.

Ten satellites, like dazzling gems, circled Azure Wood Star, varying in size and shape.

Some satellites were covered with dense fluorescent vegetation, emitting a soft green light in the dark cosmos. Others were pockmarked with craters of varying depths, where exotic mosses grew, adding a touch of vitality to the cold rocks.

The satellites moved along their orbits, sometimes lining up in a straight line, other times scattering, together with Azure Wood Star forming a dynamic cosmic marvel.

In the synchronous orbit of Azure Wood Star, massive armed fortresses rotated slowly, their hexagonal main structures filled with energy cannon arrays, shimmering with a ghostly blue shield glow, like a mechanical spider lurking in the darkness.

Surrounding the fortresses, innumerable battleships formed a rhombus formation, their silver-gray hulls glistening with a cold metallic sheen under the starlight. Their ion thrusters emitted blinding tails of flame, resembling a swarm of steel bees spiraling in the cosmos.

"No doubt, the main star of the Azure Wood Star Realm is heavily guarded."

Qin Tian couldn't help but feel a sense of awe.

The spaceship docked at the star port, and passengers entered the ground through a space elevator.

At the exit, many people were there to pick them up; some were family, some friends, and there were also some holding signs.

Qin Tian didn't pay much attention and walked out with his black backpack, but at that moment, he suddenly noticed his own name among the pickup signs.

As his gaze landed on it, the person holding the sign met his eyes.

It was a young man in his twenties with a fair and handsome face and a tall and slender build. When their eyes met, a gentle smile appeared on his face as he walked over quickly.

"Hello, Qin Tian, welcome to Azure Wood Star."

The man extended his hand, saying, "I'm Dongfang Mingyu, and Eastern Cloud Sea is my grandfather."

Qin Tian extended his hand, sizing up Dongfang Mingyu, noticing some resemblance to Eastern Cloud Sea.

Qin Tian had guessed that Eastern Cloud Sea would send someone to arrange his itinerary, though he hadn't expected it to be his direct grandson.

"Hello."

The moment they shook hands, Qin Tian could feel the strong power contained in that hand, indicating that Dongfang Mingyu was also a powerful Spiritualist.

"Qin Tian, my grandfather tasked me repeatedly to ensure you are well taken care of as our esteemed guest."

Dongfang Mingyu smiled, "I've already arranged your accommodations, though since you don't have much luggage, why don't we first grab something to eat? Azure Wood Star has many unique delicacies."

"Sure, that would be great," Qin Tian replied.

They got into a flying device, and as Dongfang Mingyu piloted it, he asked:

"Qin Tian, is this your first time visiting Azure Wood Star?"

"Yes."

Qin Tian nodded, gazing out of the window.

In the distance, a giant sunflower, a hundred meters tall, stood like a golden lighthouse. Its flower head had a diameter comparable to a football field, with blue fluorescence along the edges, slowly rotating along the star's trajectory. Each time the flower head shook, tiny luminous seeds fell like meteors, creating phosphorescent ripples on the ground.

Further away, clusters of "Neon Trees" towered into the clouds. Their trunks were entirely crystalline, with colorful sap flowing inside. Umbrella-shaped flowers blossomed at the canopy, their petals changing color with the breeze, from fiery scarlet to deep indigo, like colorful clouds floating in the sky, with rich fragrances wafting into the flying device through the air currents.

As the flying device continued, Qin Tian saw the "Jade Forest" at the street's end.

There, glowing bamboo grew, with each bamboo stem emitting a gentle green light. Bell-shaped flowers hung from the tips, producing a clear and pleasant sound when the wind blew through.

And deep within the bamboo grove, several "Transforming Trees" were faintly visible. Their branches twisted into various shapes based on light and wind direction, with canopies sometimes gathering into spheres, sometimes stretching into umbrellas, resembling living green clouds.

This place didn't feel like a city but rather like a dreamlike wild botanical garden.

Noticing the change in Qin Tian's gaze, Dongfang Mingyu couldn't help but smile slightly. Anyone visiting Azure Wood Star for the first time would be awestruck by the scenery here.

"We have arrived."

Dongfang Mingyu led Qin Tian to a restaurant, which wasn't a traditional grand restaurant but an extraordinary dining establishment centered around a giant tree a thousand meters tall.

The entire tree's bark shimmered with a warm amber hue. Its canopy spread out like an umbrella high in the sky, and hanging from the branches were luminous mosses, resembling starry bead curtains that fragmented the twilight into tiny specks of light.

Translucent tree-hole private rooms were carved into the tree trunk. Each "window" was made of a resilient tree gum membrane, ensuring privacy while allowing guests to enjoy the street's beautiful scenery.

A warm yellow glow flowed out of the tree holes, intertwining with the naturally growing fluorescent patterns on the trunk, creating a breathing abstract painting.

Through the tree holes, diners could be seen sitting around tables naturally formed by tree burls, with leaf-rolled dishes before them, enjoying dishes exuding exotic aromas.

Even more astonishing were the Spirit Birds hovering around the giant tree.

These creatures, their feathers glowing with a rainbow sheen, wore vine-woven aprons around their necks, with sharp beaks securely holding platters arranged with flower petals.

They moved gracefully between the tree holes, lightly knocking with their tail feathers on the tree gum membrane before an enclosure. When summoned, they elegantly placed the dishes on the table, the entire process smooth as flowing water, without making any unnecessary sound.

Seeing this, Qin Tian couldn't help but express his admiration:

"Brother Mingyu, the environment here truly opens my eyes."

Dongfang Mingyu replied with a smile:

"This is a hallmark of Azure Wood Star. Compared to heavy steel and concrete or cold metal frameworks, we prefer to integrate with nature, maintaining the diversity of the natural ecosystem. Qin Tian, unique buildings like this are countless on Azure Wood Star. If you stay a bit longer, I believe they'll bring you many more surprises."

Dongfang Mingyu recalled his grandfather's instructions to subtly highlight the strengths of the Dongfang Clan during his interactions with Qin Tian, fostering more interest and favor towards the clan.

The ultimate goal was to draw Qin Tian into the family.

Though Dongfang Mingyu didn't yet understand Qin Tian well, his grandfather's focus on Qin Tian indicated that he must possess outstanding qualities.

Chapter 218: Overlord Blade Body (Purple)

Entering the private room, the air was filled with a faint aroma of bamboo leaves, refreshing the senses.

"Qin Tian, try the specialty of this restaurant, the crispy bamboo shoot jelly."

Dongfang Mingyu pushed the bamboo leaf plate towards Qin Tian's chest, the fresh bamboo shoots were verdant and dripped with frost, emitting a faint chill.

Qin Tian picked a piece of crispy bamboo shoot jelly with chopsticks and placed it in his mouth, taking a bite.

The crystal-like jelly trembled slightly between his teeth, with a cool sensation exploding on the tip of his tongue, then he tasted the crispy, tender bamboo slice, mixed with the fresh bamboo fragrance and the subtle mushroom broth undertones.

The juice seeping out as the jelly melted carried a slight salty freshness, as if holding the morning dew and new shoots from a spring forest in his mouth, even the aftertaste was wrapped in the clean scent of plants.

Now Qin Tian finally understood why Xiaopang and others felt so reluctant to leave Azure Wood Star, just this dish alone completely conquered his taste buds.

"Fantastic!"

Qin Tian gave a thumbs up.

"Haha, I'm glad you like it."

Dongfang Mingyu laughed, then dish after dish of specialties were placed on the table, each one astonishing Qin Tian.

"Brother Mingyu~"

Qin Tian put down his chopsticks and began to speak.

"Just call me Mingyu," said Dongfang Mingyu.

"Alright, Mingyu."

Qin Tian asked, "I came here because Mr. Dongfang requested me to serve as an examiner for the talent battle, but I suspect not just anyone can be an examiner, there must be some sort of assessment involved."

Dongfang Mingyu nodded and said:

"That's right, actually every year the examiner selection is quite competitive, as examiners receive considerable rewards after the talent battle ends."

"However, my grandfather has already written a recommendation letter for you, and it has been stamped and signed by the family's Elder Council, so next you'll just need to randomly select an opponent among the existing examiners and defeat them to formally confirm your examiner status."

"I see~"

Qin Tian nodded and said, "I understand."

Dongfang Mingyu picked up a piece of crispy bamboo shoot jelly, chewed a few times, then smiled and asked:

"Qin Tian, I've heard from my grandfather that you come from the Silver Gray Star's Seventh Bureau, you must execute quite a few secret missions regularly, don't you?"

Qin Tian replied, "Actually, I haven't been with the Seventh Bureau for long, embarrassingly, I haven't really executed any missions yet."

Not long?

Dongfang Mingyu's eyes flickered with a slight smile:

"Maybe your abilities are too strong, so the usual minor tasks don't require your involvement."

Qin Tian laughed, "Mingyu, you're overestimating me, compared to those veterans, I still have much to learn."

A modest person indeed.

Dongfang Mingyu chuckled, then they chatted about other topics.

During the conversation, both left a good impression on each other.

Dongfang Mingyu had an extraordinary demeanor, witty and humorous yet measured in speech, clearly an excellent offspring nurtured by a large family.

And in Dongfang Mingyu's eyes, Qin Tian might not speak much, but he could hit the mark on many issues with his unique insights, and he skillfully avoided many subtle probes during the conversation.

Indeed, none who enter the Seventh Bureau are simple characters.

.....

The accommodation arranged for Qin Tian was a luxurious treehouse, standing atop a thousand-meter-high giant tree, overlooking a large part of the city.

Inside the room, the table was adorned with over a dozen rare exotic fruits, varying in shapes, wafting with faint fruit fragrances.

Qin Tian stood in front of the window, gazing down at various plants he had never seen before, a mysterious power surged within him, as if excitedly calling out.

It was the power of the [Sovereign of the Verdant Wilds].

With a mere thought, these strange plants could instantly transform into deadly weapons of war.

The Dongfang Clan's Qingmu Bloodline was even stronger and more domineering than the Sovereign of the Verdant Wilds.

Therefore, this seemingly beautiful, dreamy, vibrant Azure Wood Star, under the control of the Dongfang Clan, could transform at any time into a terrifying ultra-large war machine.

After finishing daily cultivation of Spiritual Energy and Spiritual Power, Qin Tian started thinking about tomorrow's examiner challenge.

He had to randomly select an opponent from many existing examiners, according to Dongfang Mingyu, all these examiners were Tier Five or higher experts, among them, those rated as A-level were all Tier Six Spiritualists.

While his current Spiritual Ability Level was still Tier Four Three Stars, hence, the challenge had its difficulties.

With only one night left, if he wanted to enhance his combat power, he would need to focus on the Talent Light Sphere.

Glancing at the numerous talents, he could skip the purple ones, as his over two million Evolution Points would not be enough to upgrade purple talents to orange.

His attention lingered over the numerous blue talents, and eventually, Qin Tian identified his target for enhancement.

Sword Soul Resonance

This was swordsmanship talent, strengthened all the way from the initial white [Lesser Blade Sense].

In recent battles, he mostly used a sniper rifle to hunt enemies, hence did not invest much resources and effort in swordsmanship.

In the upcoming talent battle, he did not plan to use Shadowstrike anymore, but intended to face those geniuses, hone his martial techniques, and incidentally test his real combat strength.

Thus, enhancing swordsmanship talent became necessary.

He invested 100,000 Evolution Points to enhance the talent [Sword Soul Resonance]

The blue light sphere vibrated, soon a streak of purple light appeared.

A new talent was born—

[Name] Overlord Blade Body (Purple)

[Type] Passive

[Introduction] Only when swordsmanship cultivation reaches its peak can one awaken the Overlord Blade Body. Those possessing this talent comprehend swordsmanship at an extraordinary level, quickly grasping the essence and flaws of any sword technique on mere observation, learning, and mastering any sword technique after just one viewing, even capable of autonomously improving and innovating. Every attack carries fierce sword intent, increasing swordsmanship damage by 30%. When attacking the enemy, each hit accumulates 1 layer of Overlord Sword Intent. When Sword Intent accumulates to 7 layers, the "Overlord's Ultimate Slash" can be actively unleashed, causing sword intent intimidation and 15%-40% additional armor-piercing damage.

At the moment of Overlord Blade Body awakening, a fierce and domineering sword intent erupted from Qin Tian's body, seemingly about to cleave the treehouse open. However, at that moment, the top of the ancient tree slightly trembled, an enigmatic force flowed into the room, forming an amber-colored protective barrier, sealing the sword intent within the room.

Qin Tian sharply opened his eyes, his pupils flickered with a blade-like cold gleam.

He raised his hand in an empty grip, a thread of silver-white sword intent burst from his fingertips, coalescing into a half-meter long blade glow in the air.

This sword intent was so sharp it made the air produce a faint tearing sound, yet it hovered precisely three inches above the green porcelain teacup, slicing the floating tea leaves in half without leaving a scratch on the glaze.

Impeccable control

"It worked!"

Qin Tian murmured softly, releasing his grip, the sword intent dispersed into points of starlight in the air, his lips curling into a smile.

Chapter 219: Black Crow Mask, Assessment Begins

The next morning, Dongfang Mingyu took Qin Tian to a special building.

"This is the selection venue for examiners."

Dongfang Mingyu showed the family crest and led Qin Tian into the open arena.

As they stepped through the gate, a chilling aura of killing intent surged towards them. Qin Tian's pupils slightly constricted—nine arenas arranged in a circular pattern lay across the ground like giant beasts, each with a diameter of several hundred meters. The surfaces shone with a deep purple-black luster, and intricate patterns resembling solidified magma flowed with a bizarre metallic sheen under the morning light.

"These arenas are cast from Meteorite Iron Profound Crystal,"

Dongfang Mingyu explained softly, seeing Qin Tian staring at the arena surface, "They can withstand the full force attacks of Tier Seven Spiritualists. The self-healing feature of the surface can repair any cracks within ten minutes."

No sooner had the words left his mouth than a blinding flash of lightning burst from one of the distant arenas. Two figures collided like meteors, sending shockwaves that scattered rocks from the ground.

Yet, the seemingly fragile arena surface only rippled like a spider's web and restored itself in less than half a minute.

Carved with grotesque glutton patterns, the bronze pillars surrounding the arenas, each suspending a translucent Spirit Crystal at the top, interwove a faint blue light into a dome, enveloping the entire arena in a soft glow.

In the corner of the viewing area, dozens of gilded seats were arranged methodically, the runes engraved on the backrests flickering intermittently, evidently set up as protective arrays to withstand the aftermath of battles.

Beside the arena, an elderly man in white stood with his hands clasped behind him. When a man wearing a white crane mask fell to the ground spitting blood, the elder instantly appeared in the middle of the combatants. His seemingly withered hand clamped down on the attacker's wrist like an iron claw.

"The battle is over, Flame Fox wins," the elder declared the result.

The woman behind the Flame Fox mask had an exquisite figure. After the elder announced the result, she stepped back, turned her head towards Qin Tian and Dongfang Mingyu for two seconds, then jumped off the arena, disappearing before them.

The elder waved his hand, releasing a green spiritual light that fell upon the White Crane, instantly healing his injuries.

"This is a Longxiang Seven-leaf Pill, which can enhance your physique and heal injuries. Consider it a gift for participating in this examination."

The elder offered a pill to the White Crane.

The White Crane held the pill silently for a moment, then stood up, bowed to the elder, and left.

After they left, Dongfang Mingyu stepped forward, warmly calling out:

"Grandmaster Yue."

"Mingyu, what brings you here?"

The elder asked with a smile, clearly having a good relationship with Dongfang Mingyu.

"Grandmaster Yue, let me introduce you. This is Qin Tian, invited by my grandfather to participate in the examiner selection for the Genius Battle," said Dongfang Mingyu.

"Qin Tian, this is my grandfather's friend, Dongfang Yue."

"Hello, Mr. Dongfang Yue."

Qin Tian slightly bowed in respect.

"So it was Yunhai who recommended you,"

Dongfang Yue looked Qin Tian up and down, asking, "Mingyu, did you bring the introduction letter?"

"Yes, I have it."

Dongfang Mingyu took out a letter from his bosom, saying:

"The Elder Council has already stamped and signed it."

Dongfang Yue glanced at it, nodded, and said:

"Good, let's officially enter the selection process. Qin Tian, what is your spiritual ability level?"

Qin Tian replied truthfully, "Tier Four Three Stars."

Tier Four

Both Dongfang Mingyu and Dongfang Yue were somewhat surprised.

It was well known that within the contest, there were Tier Four Spiritualists, and all the examiners were without exception Tier Five or above.

After all, to pose a threat to the geniuses, or even eliminate them, the examiners' spiritual ability level must be strong.

Tier Five was the minimum standard.

However, Eastern Cloud Sea must have known this, and yet he still recommended Qin Tian, which showed that in his heart, Qin Tian's combat strength was by no means as simple as it seemed.

"Come over and choose a mask first,"

Dongfang Yue took out a box full of various animal masks.

At this moment, Dongfang Mingyu's eyes flickered; among the examiners, there were also levels, with C-level being the lowest and A-level the highest, and the examiner's level could be distinguished from the masks.

C-level examiners' masks were all animal-based, such as White Crane, Flame Fox, Ferocious Tiger, etc., and were the most numerous.

B-level examiners wore special Zodiac attire and golden masks, and thus, the number of B-level examiners was only twelve.

A-level examiners were even rarer, with no more than five such examiners in each annual event, usually just three.

A-level examiners could almost crush every contestant in terms of hard strength, so contestants could only defeat A-level examiners by forming alliances.

The higher the examiner's level, the more precious the guarded prizes, and the more generous the rewards received at the end of the event.

Grandmaster Yue directly took out animal masks, evidently categorizing Qin Tian as C-level.

Of course, this was reasonable.

After all, the spiritual ability level was Qin Tian's weakness.

Qin Tian swept his spiritual power over the masks, and all the mask shapes appeared in his mind. After thinking for two seconds, he pulled out a Black Crow mask.

The Black Crow mask was crow-shaped overall, made of pure black metal with a chilling glow. The beak was sharply chiseled, and the eye positions were hollow rhombus grids, with edges slightly upturned, exuding an aura of aloofness. The sides of the mask extended into narrow crow feather patterns, and the jaw was fastened by three silver pins, conveying a killing aura through its simple design.

After putting on the mask, his vision was surprisingly clear, with no obstruction at all from the mask. Moreover, there was an odd fluctuation on the mask surface, which could block any spiritual probing, protecting the true face of the examiner from being revealed.

"Interesting~"

Under the mask, Qin Tian's lips curled slightly.

"Next, you need to randomly draw an opponent."

Dongfang Yue projected a screen in front of the two, with names like Violent Ape, Blue Cat, Black Panther quickly switching in the middle, and a button-like symbol at the bottom of the screen.

Qin Tian stepped forward and lightly tapped the symbol.

Swish

In almost an instant, the page froze, leaving only one name.

White Elephant!

"White Elephant, I remember this lad,"

Dongfang Yue recalled briefly and said to Qin Tian, "Your luck is somewhat unfortunate. Among many examiners, White Elephant is one of the stronger ones, with great strength while being moderately agile."

In light of his friendship with Dongfang Yunhai, he gave Qin Tian a bit of information about his opponent. Technically, this could be considered a violation, but it wasn't a big deal.

Ultimately, victory still depended on the strength of both sides and would not be significantly affected by a few simple words.

Power type Spiritualist

Qin Tian nodded slightly. Knowing the opponent's characteristics in advance allowed him to make appropriate tactical preparations, slightly increasing his chances of winning.

Next, Dongfang Yue informed White Elephant about being challenged, asking him to arrive at the venue promptly.

Half an hour later, a towering and burly voice echoed in the venue, with a height of at least over 2.2 meters, wide shoulders, bulging muscles, holding dual hammers, and wearing a White Elephant mask on his face.

White Elephant immediately noticed Qin Tian with the Black Crow mask, and a surge of robust momentum erupted as if a mountain were pressing down on Qin Tian. A deep, heavy voice resonated throughout the venue.

"You are the one challenging me?"

Clang~~

At that moment, an overwhelmingly powerful Sword Intent soared into the sky, slicing through the heavy momentum lingering in the venue.

Standing on the arena, Qin Tian lifted his Battle Sword, the tip pointing directly at White Elephant, and softly uttered:

"Come!"

Chapter 220: Tyrant Blade Slays the Elephant

In the arena, two masked men faced off from a distance, their auras clashing—one sharp and domineering, the other grand and imposing, the air faintly crackling with subtle sounds.

"Such a domineering sword intent."

Dongfang Mingyu looked at Qin Tian, a flicker of surprise in his eyes. He never expected that Qin Tian, who appeared calm and composed, would possess such an overwhelming sword intent.

Truly, one cannot judge a book by its cover.

"No wonder Yun hai recommended this kid, he certainly has some skills."

Dongfang Yue nodded silently, then said:

"White Elephant, it's your turn."

"Alright!"

White Elephant's voice was deep, and with a push of his legs, he shot up like a cannonball, landing heavily on the platform.

"Begin."

Dongfang Yue announced. In an examiner's duel, there were no rules—defeat the opponent by any means necessary. No matter how severe the injuries were, with him present, it was not an issue.

As soon as he finished speaking, White Elephant charged forward like an armored battle vehicle, and his massive hammer, wrapped in earth-colored spiritual energy, swung up with a roar—that energy flowed over the hammer like solidified lava, reflecting a coarse metallic luster in the sunlight.

As he shouted and brought the giant hammer down, the compressed air howled like an elephant trumpeting, the airflow from the hammerhead even pressed Qin Tian's stray hair against his mask, this strike was like an ancient titan wielding a mountain-smashing hammer to cleave chaos, with the momentum of a thunderbolt aiming straight for his face!

When facing a power type spiritualist, the most correct strategy was naturally to avoid their sharpness first, dodge using speed, then take the opportunity to attack their weakness.

However, Qin Tian's choice surprised both Dongfang Yue and Dongfang Mingyu.

They saw him step forward, violent thunder erupted from within his body, and then he swung the Thunderbolt Slash towards the giant hammer.

He was actually going to take on the hammer head-on!

BAM!!!

A metal blast loud enough to burst eardrums erupted, as the giant hammer clashed thunderously with the battle sword, terrifying ripples of force spreading outward, the ground cracked with fine lines from their transmitted power.

The giant hammer and battle sword were stalemated in the air.

White Elephant's arm muscles bulged, twice as thick as an ordinary person's thigh, like gnarled roots. In contrast, Qin Tian appeared exceptionally slender, yet he stood like a pine deeply rooted in the ground, his body stable and unmoving.

In the power clash, Qin Tian was not at all inferior to White Elephant.

Seeing this, a trace of astonishment flickered in Dongfang Yue's eyes.

He knew of White Elephant's background—this person from the Silver Clan, possessing the Golden Elephant Bloodline, had thick skin and immense strength. Among peers, few could rival him in power.

Yet, Qin Tian, despite being a level lower, was not disadvantaged at all in a power confrontation with White Elephant.

Evidently, Qin Tian's bloodline was anything but ordinary, possibly even a Golden Bloodline.

There weren't many with Golden Bloodlines; he only needed a slight display of ability to discern which Golden Clan Qin Tian belonged to.

Clang.

The two separated.

White Elephant focused intently on Qin Tian, a hint of seriousness in his eyes.

He hadn't expected that this seemingly slender man would be no weaker than himself in strength.

Boom!

Earth-colored spiritual energy exploded, a phantom of a Golden Elephant emerged behind White Elephant, and even more immense power surged within him. He roared, swinging his hammer towards Qin Tian, the terrifying force creating sonic booms in the air.

Facing this strike, Qin Tian was not prepared to take it on directly this time.

Just now, he had already confirmed his power level. With the augmentation of the Barbaric Dominator Body and the Night Demon King, his power level was in no way inferior to that of a Tier Five power type spiritualist.

However, his strength wasn't his only advantage; speed was equally his forte.

Crackle, crackle, crackle—

Lightning exploded at Qin Tian's ankles, razor-sharp like the scraping of iron chains, his body streamlining close to the ground.

Lightning danced across the muscles of his calves, heating his pant legs to the point of smoking. In the next instant, he transformed into a stream of blue and purple light skimming the ground.

White Elephant's hammer swung through empty air, stirring a strong wind, but only brushed the stray hair on Qin Tian's shoulder. That streak of lightning slipped through the gap beneath his ribs like a serpent.

Celestial Punishment Nine Strikes—Thunder Shadow Flash!

As his low shout mingled with the crackling of electric currents exploded, the blade light from Qin Tian emerged from under his arm.

In the shrill whistle of the battle sword slicing through the air, White Elephant suddenly felt a chill around his waist—not pain, but a certain extreme cold thunder light instantaneously freezing his nerves.

He instinctively spun around swinging his hammer, only to see the earth-yellow Spirit Shield around his waist crack like a spider web. The scale-like defensive layer granted by the Golden Elephant Bloodline was forcibly cut open by a three-inch gap; the moment the dark red blood seeped out, it was sizzled into green smoke by the residual thunder light.

Boom!

The giant hammer heavily smashed into the spot where Qin Tian stood moments ago, the earth-yellow Spiritual Energy plowed the ground, blasting out a three-foot diameter pit, and spider-web cracks crawled outward.

That thunder light had already swept to the edge of the arena, the sword hilt spinning out half a circle of blood flowers in the palm, the breathing beneath the mask remained steady as ever.

White Elephant stared at the wound on his waist, the remnants of thunder light reflected in his pupils from Qin Tian's sword.

The Golden Elephant's apparition behind him uneasily pawed the ground, only then did he realize that the previous slash had astonishingly shattered the bloodline defense he prided himself on.

Fingertips brushed over the cracked scales, sticky blood mixed with faint electric light made the hair on the back of his neck stand on end.

Such speed

Such domineering Sword Intent

One must know, he cultivated Earth Spiritual Ability Technique, renowned for its heavy defense, additionally, the Golden Elephant Bloodline granted him extremely strong physical defense.

Very few spiritualists of the same level could break through his Spirit Shield, let alone draw his blood.

So powerful, speed even far surpassing my own

This battle, becomes difficult

Boom!

White Elephant pressed forward to attack, the heavy twin hammers danced out shadowy hammer strikes, the Golden Elephant's apparition behind him neighed, bloodline boiling, golden battle patterns emerged on his skin, granting him even more astounding power.

Clang clang clang

Qin Tian countered attack with attack, the ferocity of the thunder, the domineering Sword Intent, and the unparalleled physique granted by two Golden Level bloodlines, allowing him to easily cope with White Elephant's ferocious assault.

The Dominating Blade Intent surged like ground fire, roaring within Qin Tian's chest. When the Sword Intent accumulated to the seventh layer, cold lightning abruptly intensified in his eyes.

It's time to end this!

Boom!

The green bricks on the ground shattered in response, a ten-zhang tall pillar of lightning rose around Qin Tian.

In the instant the battle sword slashed diagonally, the air was split with a sharp whistle, thunder light wriggled along the blade, gathering into a ferocious Thunder Serpent three zhang away.

The serpent's head sprouted horns, bowl-thick electric arcs danced between its scales, within its gaping mouth even thunder-constructed barbs were visible. This strike carried the Seven-Layer Dominating Blade Intent, where the sword light passed, space rippled like water.

Celestial Punishment Nine Strikes – Serpent Bolt Thrust!

The Thunder Serpent detached from the blade, its body coiled with spiraling Sword Qi, resembling the Spear of Judgment descending from the nine heavens.

The lightning shadow in White Elephant's pupils rapidly enlarged, the Golden Elephant scales on his skin instinctively erected, yet were unable to withstand the Murderous Qi contained within the Sword Intent—a pressure seemingly intent on completely obliterating his Bloodline Power, even causing his heart to skip half a beat.

Roar!

The Golden Elephant apparition deep within his Dantian suddenly raised its head and neighed, the sound waves caused White Elephant's ears to hum.

He bit his tongue sharply, using the pain to dispel the fear in his heart, the muscles in his arms bulged like piles of rock, the earth-yellow Spiritual Energy on the giant hammer and the bloodline golden pattern exploded simultaneously, trying to gather a defensive barrier in front of him.

However, before the light shield formed, the Thunder Serpent already roared in with overwhelming force!

In the sharp sound of sword light tearing through the air, White Elephant's pupils contracted sharply, he saw the barbs in the Thunder Serpent's mouth suddenly expand, transforming into terrifying blade edges.

In the next moment, the domineering Sword Intent cut through the Earth Spiritual Energy like a hot knife through butter, the scale-like defensive layer granted by the Golden Elephant Bloodline sizzled into vapor in the thunder light, and the Thunder Serpent's "fangs" viciously pierced into his left chest!

Pfft!

Blood mist mixed with shattered bone splattered out, a bowl-mouth sized wound burst open on White Elephant's chest in an instant, the jagged ends of ribs charred under the thunder light, the contours of internal organs faintly visible.

The giant hammer slipped from his powerless palm, the clatter hitting the ground mumbled by the blood froth in his throat.

He looked toward his opponent in disbelief, the Golden Elephant apparition behind him emitted a mournful cry, disintegrating into light spots before vanishing.

The process of his body toppling was as slow as a movie, White Elephant could vividly feel the blood trickling along his spinal groove, the droplets hitting the ground still pulsed with unresolved thunder light.

His back crashed heavily onto the ground, and in his vision, his opponent had already sheathed his sword and turned away, Thunder Spiritual Energy flowing back into the battle sword, leaving behind a trailing serpentine electric afterimage.

I lost!

White Elephant coughed up a mouthful of blood froth, his gaze dimmed.