

Divine King 251

Chapter 251: Artifact Refining Sect Master (Second Update)

Yann Xi's eyes flickered with surprise.

This Xu Nian brought her surprises time and time again.

Every time she thought she had completely seen through Xu Nian's hand, he would bring her another surprise.

It was as if the youth before her always had an inexhaustible supply of trump cards.

She could never fully see through him, shrouded as he was in mystery.

Xu Nian looked at Nangong Qing, who had collapsed on the ground, his gaze playful.

Little Xu Yu's massive body landed behind Xu Nian.

A pair of sharp eagle eyes swept over everyone, making their hearts palpitate.

An intense unwillingness filled Nangong Qing's face as he glared deathly at Xu Nian.

"If you have any tricks up your sleeve, just use them. If not, then I'm sorry, but it's time for you to be on your way," Xu Nian said with a slight smile, extending a finger.

A blade as thin as a cicada's wing appeared out of nowhere, swirling around his fingertip.

Spiritual Energy in a green hue was added to the flying knife, and with the integration of Wind Force, it became extraordinarily sharp.

Even from a great distance, the crowd felt their hearts palpitate at the knife's piercing aura.

They were certain that if the flying knife were aimed at them, they would have no chance of resisting.

Yann Xi's pretty face was also filled with immense surprise.

She had heard that Saints could control swords from afar, sending flying swords thousands of miles to behead people.

But she had always thought it was just a legend, yet now, seeing the flying knife controlled by Xu Nian, she believed it.

Because even she did not dare to claim she could survive under the edge of this knife.

"You... what do you want to do?" Nangong Qing swallowed hard, his face finally showing fear.

"I'm telling you I am the eldest young master of the Nangong Family, and my uncle is even the Law Enforcement Elder of the Artifact Refining Sect's Law Enforcement Hall. If you kill me, he will definitely not let you off," Nangong Qing threatened.

A trace of disdain flashed across the corner of Xu Nian's mouth.

Nangong Qing had already attempted to kill him; keeping him alive would only bring trouble in the future.

If killing him would cause a lot of trouble, and not killing him would also lead to a lot of trouble, then why not kill him.

"Go!"

Xu Nian's gaze sharpened, and with a flick of his finger,

the flying knife that swirled at his fingertip turned into a streak of green light, heading straight for Nangong Qing's brow.

The flying knife was incredibly fast, as swift as lightning.

Nangong Qing could only watch as the tip of the blade grew larger before his eyes, unable to dodge since his body couldn't keep up with the speed of the flying knife.

The surrounding crowd was also stunned; this youth actually dared to kill Nangong Qing.

"Buzz!"

However, just when everyone thought Nangong Qing's head was about to be pierced through, the flying knife stopped abruptly, a mere inch away from his forehead.

Xu Nian suddenly startled, raising his head to look straight ahead.

At that moment, a middle-aged man had appeared beside Nangong Qing, seemingly out of nowhere.

A warm smile hung on his face like a gentle spring breeze.

The man was dressed in simple green clothes, his presence plain and unadorned.

Standing there, he seemed no different from an ordinary person.

But Xu Nian was on high alert.

Saint!

Only a Saint who could perfectly conceal his aura to the point of Returning Truth could stand before him like this.

The faces of the surrounding people also showed extreme surprise at the appearance of this man in green.

The man in green clothes didn't pay attention to the astonished gazes of those around him, but instead looked towards the flying dagger that was suspended above the forehead of Nangong Qing and reached out two fingers to take the dagger.

Xu Nian was momentarily taken aback, he discovered that the moment the man in green clothes' fingers touched the flying dagger, he lost control over it.

"How interesting, did you craft this flying dagger?" the man in green clothes asked with a smile as he looked towards Xu Nian.

Although the man in green clothes now looked middle-aged, one could still tell that he was a handsome man in his youth.

Even now, he still radiated a certain heroic spirit.

"Replying to my senior, yes," Xu Nian nodded and answered, though his eyes carried a hint of caution.

"Hehe, not bad. To forge such a small weapon to be this thin without compromising its sturdiness, your mastery in artifact refining is not low," the man in green clothes commented with a chuckle.

"Thank you for the compliment, senior," Xu Nian replied, but the wariness in his heart did not lessen in the slightest.

As for the four flying daggers, they were all meticulously polished by him, compressed out of Xuan Iron. They seemed very thin, but their weight was considerable.

If one were to discuss the grade, they had already surpassed the average Nine-star Xuan Iron Level High Grade Weapon.

"Kid, there's no need for such caution. I won't harm you. If you don't believe me, just ask the girl beside you," the man in green clothes said with another warm smile as he noticed Xu Nian was still on his guard.

Xu Nian turned his head to look at Yann Xi beside him.

"He is our Sect Master," Yann Xi answered.

Startled by her words, Xu Nian then noticed that the disciples around them looked at the man in green with eyes filled with reverence.

This is the Artifact Refining Sect Master?

Xu Nian hadn't expected that this middle-aged man was actually the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

But thinking about it, it made sense; there were only three Saints in the entire Artifact Refining Sect.

With this man being so young, who else could he be but the Artifact Refining Sect Master?

"You are called Xu Nian, right? Could you possibly spare him this time for my sake? I can assure you that he absolutely will not seek revenge against you," laughed the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

Xu Nian nodded and asked, "You know me?"

The Artifact Refining Sect Master waved his hand, signaling Nangong Qing and the others to leave.

Though reluctant, Nangong Qing did not dare disobey the Artifact Refining Sect Master's orders; he could only leave dejectedly.

The surrounding disciples who had been watching also dispersed one after another.

In a short time, the plaza was left with only Xu Nian, Yann Xi, and the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

"I not only know your name, I also know your origins, as well as all of your past experiences, and even your purpose for coming to the Artifact Refining Sect is crystal clear to me," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile.

Xu Nian was slightly surprised, but he wasn't too shocked.

After all, the Artifact Refining Sect was the foremost among the Three Great Sects, so it naturally wouldn't be lacking in its grasp on intelligence.

"Could senior perhaps..."

Xu Nian was just about to make a request to the Artifact Refining Sect Master but was interrupted.

"The rules of the Artifact Refining Sect cannot be broken. Even as the Artifact Refining Sect Master, I do not have the authority to lend you the Heavenly Gang Pearl. As for accompanying you on a journey, I apologize; I have sworn an oath to the previous Sect Master that as long as I am the Sect Master, I will never step half a foot out of the sect," said the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

Xu Nian's brow furrowed immediately—things were not as simple as he had hoped.

"However, I do hope that you can become the new Sect Master of the Artifact Refining Sect. That way, I can break free from this oath and wander the world," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile.

"Eh?" His face showed surprise, followed by a surge of excitement in his heart.

It seemed that the Artifact Refining Sect Master wasn't really interested in being the Sect Master; he had just been compelled to take on the role.

"But becoming the Sect Master isn't an easy task, is it?" Xu Nian asked, looking towards the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master smiled and said, "That's right. I have been in position for twenty years, and in these two decades, I've seen many outstanding disciples, but in the end, all of them failed and not a single one met the requirements to become Sect Master."

"What requirements?" Xu Nian inquired further.

"Climbing the Sky-reaching Tower," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile.

"The Sky-reaching Tower?" Xu Nian looked puzzled.

However, Yann Xi beside him had a dramatic change in her expression.

Chapter 252: Saint Coughing Blood (Third Update)

"What is the Sky-reaching Tower?" Xu Nian asked, puzzled.

"The Sky-reaching Tower is a forbidden tower of our Artifact Refining Sect," Yann Xi said gravely. "It has five levels, each more perilous than the last. As far as I know, no one has ever successfully reached the top."

"Eh? No one has succeeded? Then how did the past Sect Masters succeed?" Xu Nian asked, confused.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master laughed and said, "That's because the method I told you is a special one. Other past Sect Masters, including myself, have been elected by the Elder Council."

Xu Nian was speechless.

So even the Artifact Refining Sect Master himself had never reached the top of the Sky-reaching Tower.

"When is the next election?" Xu Nian asked.

"Each Sect Master serves for thirty years. You can wait another ten years, or there's another scenario—my death," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a laugh.

Xu Nian had a grim expression.

That meant if he wanted to be the Sect Master of the Artifact Refining Sect within the remaining two and a half months, he had to conquer the Sky-reaching Tower?

The Artifact Refining Sect Master looked at Xu Nian with a smile, his expression meaningful.

Xu Nian wanted to curse. The Artifact Refining Sect Master seemed amiable.

But in reality, he was an old fox.

Luckily, he wasn't harboring any malicious intentions.

"I have high hopes for you. I'm looking forward to seeing your performance, haha!" The Artifact Refining Sect Master, with his hands behind his back, laughed heartily as he walked away.

Only three steps later, he vanished from Xu Nian's sight.

Xu Nian looked in the direction where the Artifact Refining Sect Master had disappeared, feeling helpless.

"Do you really want to challenge the Sky-reaching Tower?" Yann Xi asked with a frown.

Xu Nian nodded. "I have no other choice."

Yann Xi fell silent and said no more.

Xu Nian's purpose for coming to the Artifact Refining Sect was something she had already heard from Yann Hong.

Concerning this matter, she could not say much, but she admired Xu Nian deeply for everything he had done.

Next, under Yann Xi's guidance, Xu Nian got the keys to his residence.

To his surprise, his residence was right next to Yann Xi's.

During the walk, Xu Nian learned much about the Sky-reaching Tower from Yann Xi.

The Sky-reaching Tower, it was said, was left by an Immortal—a Pagoda that tested not only artifact refining.

It also included talent, strength, comprehension, and temperament, among others; each level was extremely dangerous.

Throughout the thousands of years of the Artifact Refining Sect's history, the highest anyone had ever reached was the fifth level.

As for the fifth level, no one had ever accessed it.

After bidding farewell to Yann Xi, Xu Nian locked himself in his manor.

For the next three days, Yann Xi did not see Xu Nian leave his yard.

Only on the morning of the fourth day did Xu Nian finally open his yard gate.

Leaving the household, Xu Nian headed straight for the Sky-reaching Tower.

Xu Nian's actions naturally drew much attention.

Since the recent disturbance with Nangong Qing, most of the Artifact Refining Sect disciples had come to recognize Xu Nian.

"Is he really going to challenge the Sky-reaching Tower?"

"It looks like it. But isn't he too bold? Doesn't he fear death?"

"Yeah, of those who attempt the Sky-reaching Tower, it's not bad if even two out of ten survive. I wonder how many levels that guy can clear."

"He might reach the second level at most, maybe even quit after the first."

...

The surrounding crowd burst into whispering.

They were clearly not optimistic about Xu Nian's challenge of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Xu Nian ignored the crowd's discussion; he had arrived in front of the Sky-reaching Tower.

"Kid, go back. This place isn't for you," said an old man guarding the tower.

The old man was quietly sweeping the floor, not even looking up as he spoke.

"Elder, I am here to challenge the Sky-reaching Tower," Xu Nian said respectfully.

He found his Spiritual Sense couldn't penetrate the cultivation of the old man in front, which meant one thing: the man was a Saint.

Hearing Xu Nian's words, the old man finally paused his sweeping and inspected Xu Nian.

"Spirit Body Dual Cultivation? Both are at the Battle General Level," the elder revealed a hint of surprise.

Xu Nian was unfazed by this.

His Dual Cultivation of Spirit and Body might fool a Marquis, but not a Saint.

"Hmm, go on in!" the old man looked at Xu Nian for a full minute before speaking.

"Thank you, Elder," Xu Nian said respectfully, then pushed open the grand doors of the Sky-reaching Tower and entered.

"He really went in!" The observing disciples were visibly shocked.

Although they had guessed as much, they were still immensely surprised when they saw Xu Nian walk inside.

"It's been three years since that kid Bai Feng emerged from the Sky-reaching Tower dejected, and no one else has dared to attempt it since," the elder said, watching the slowly closing doors, unable to help but remark with emotion.

"Whoosh!"

A breeze blew by, and the figure of the Artifact Refining Sect Master appeared in front of the old man.

"He's a promising seed. Why didn't you wait and let him mature for another two years? Wouldn't his chances then be greater?" the elder didn't turn to look at the Artifact Refining Sect Master, but he knew of his arrival.

"He can't wait, and neither can I," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile, his hands still behind his back.

The elder shook his head helplessly, "I hope we don't ruin another talent."

The Artifact Refining Sect Master chuckled, "Do you really think so little of him?"

The elder didn't respond, but his posture spoke volumes.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master laughed again and said, "I actually think he'll be the one to reach the top. I did a divination for myself a month ago."

"What did the divination reveal?" asked the elder indifferently.

"The divination showed that within three months, I'd be swimming in the sea as fish and soaring in the sky as an eagle," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a grin.

"With your divination skills, you haven't gotten it right in twenty years!" the elder scoffed.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master wasn't offended and continued smiling, "Three days ago, I divined for this young man again."

The elder asked sarcastically, "Did you divine that he'd reach the top?"

"No!" The Artifact Refining Sect Master replied with a grin.

The elder chuckled dismissively and resumed sweeping.

"That divination - I couldn't figure out anything, and even coughed up a bit of blood," the Artifact Refining Sect Master's smile suddenly faded, his eyes turning extremely serious.

The broom in the old man's hands snapped.

He stood shocked, as if struck by lightning.

Finally, he couldn't help but look toward the direction of the first floor of the Sky-reaching Tower.

If anyone had been paying close attention, they would have noticed the old man's hands trembling.

A Saint coughing blood, angering the heavens!

So, this young man really might reach the top after all.

Chapter 253: Xu Nian in White (Fourth Update)

Sky-reaching Tower's first floor.

Xu Nian was now looking at the three-star Battle General Level bear-shaped Demon Beast standing opposite him with a light smile.

The first challenge of the Sky-reaching Tower was to kill a Divine Beast Bloodline Demon Beast that was two levels higher in Cultivation than oneself.

This test might be difficult for others, but for someone like Xu Nian, who took on challenges above his level as if they were a daily routine, it was no challenge at all.

"Human, was it you who awakened me from my slumber? I am so hungry, you'll make a good meal to satisfy my hunger," the Demon Beast uttered a proud laugh, its eyes naked with desire as drool nearly dripped to the ground.

"Eat me? You seem hardly up to the task," Xu Nian said with a cold, mocking sneer.

"Arrogant human, how dare you insult me, the king? I am the Earth Demon Tyrant Bear King, descendant of the Divine Beast Split Earth Tyrant Bear. Do you believe I can tear you apart?" the giant bear roared furiously.

"Clamor, I don't have time to waste with you," Xu Nian huffed coldly.

Instantly, he used the Illusion Fascinate Trace technique and appeared right in front of the giant bear.

The bear was startled; it had not expected this human to be so fast and hurriedly swung its massive paws toward Xu Nian.

A trace of disdain flashed across Xu Nian's eyes.

Executing the Dragon King Fist, Earth Shattering.

A terrifying illusion of a giant dragon appeared behind him.

Then, Xu Nian threw a punch, striking the giant bear squarely in the chest.

"No..." the bear issued a roar of disbelief.

But before its cry had faded,

"Boom!" a loud sound echoed.

Its body exploded, turning into countless pieces of flesh.

With one punch, he had slain a three-star Battle General Level Divine Beast Bloodline Demon Beast.

Had someone seen this, they would have been astounded without a doubt.

At this moment, the level of Body Cultivation Xu Nian revealed was that of a One-star Body General Level expert.

During the three days he had secluded himself, Xu Nian had focused entirely on Body Cultivation.

Sure enough, as expected, he had broken through to the Battle General realm in Body Cultivation.

Having slain the giant bear, Xu Nian walked directly toward the second floor of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Currently, outside the Sky-reaching Tower, quite a crowd had gathered.

Attempting the Tower was a rare spectacle in the Artifact Refining Sect, and the news of Xu Nian challenging the Tower spread quickly throughout the Sect.

Not only did many elite disciples come to watch, but even Inner Sect Disciples and Outer Disciples joined the audience.

Some Elders, out of curiosity, also gathered around.

"Hey, how long do you think it will take Xu Nian to get through the first floor of the Tower?" someone in the crowd asked.

"At least a day, I reckon. The first floor is said to have a powerful Divine Beast Bloodline Demon Beast, not an easy opponent," someone else hypothesized.

"I beg to differ. Xu Nian's strength is not weak, I guess he'll need five hours. That's one hour less than what Brother Bai Feng took to get through," another spectator chimed in.

"How can he compare to Brother Bai Feng? It's uncertain if he can get through at all," Nangong Qing couldn't help but sneer.

Upon hearing that Xu Nian was attempting the Tower, he had come here with the sole purpose of watching Xu Nian die inside the tower.

Hearing his words, the surrounding crowd fell silent.

They all knew about the strife between Xu Nian and Nangong Qing.

"Look quickly, the Formation for the second floor is lit up, he's gone up to the second level!"

Just then, an exclamatory shout erupted among the crowd.

Everyone looked towards the Sky-reaching Tower, only to see the formation on its second level light up.

"How is that possible? He just entered the Sky-reaching Tower, not even two hours have passed, how could he have reached the second level?" Everyone's faces showed surprise as they involuntarily turned to look at Nangong Qing.

"No... it can't be." Nangong Qing's face turned ashen.

He had just claimed that Xu Nian could not possibly overcome the second level, yet now he was instantly proven wrong.

Not only had Xu Nian surpassed the second level, but he had also broken the record set by Brother Bai Feng, and by a wide margin.

Those around were all filled with admiration, finding Xu Nian to be too defying of the heavens.

Yann Xi and Yann Hong stood amid the crowd, their faces also full of surprise.

Although they both believed that Xu Nian would have no problems getting through the first level, they hadn't expected him to be so quick.

"This kid has certainly given me a big surprise," said the Elder who guarded the tower, smiling as he looked at the illuminated formation on the second level.

"I'm surprised too. It seems his strength is even stronger than we imagined," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile.

The tower guardian nodded and then continued, "However, the second level is not that easy. It's not something that can be overcome by strength alone."

The Artifact Refining Sect Master nodded slightly, clearly agreeing with that sentiment.

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On the second level of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Xu Nian, looking at the figure sitting cross-legged in the center of the tower, also revealed an expression of astonishment.

At this moment, in the center of the tower, there sat a youth.

This youth, both in appearance and temperament, was exactly like Xu Nian.

The only difference was that, while Xu Nian wore a black academy robe, this youth wore a white one.

"You've finally arrived, I've been waiting for you for a long time," said the youth in the white academy robe with a smile that carried a chill.

"Who are you?" Xu Nian asked, perplexed.

"I am you, and you are me. Who do you say I am?" the white-robed Xu Nian replied with a cold laugh.

Xu Nian was taken aback, his brow furrowing slightly.

"Are you my shadow?" he realized something and spoke out.

"True to my original nature, quite clever indeed. Yes, I am your shadow. Under normal circumstances, I would never have appeared, but with the aid of this Great Formation, I can manifest my true self. Moreover, if I defeat you, I can take your place and become the real Xu Nian," said the white-robed Xu Nian with an excited expression.

After hearing this, Xu Nian finally understood what was happening.

In other words, this white-robed Xu Nian was his shadow, possessing everything he had.

And to get past this challenge, he must defeat his own shadow.

If he were defeated by his shadow, then he would be consumed by it as well.

"What a wondrous formation, no wonder many are stuck on the second level. It's easy to defeat an enemy, but very difficult to defeat oneself," Xu Nian commended inwardly.

"You have the leisure to study the formation when you should be more concerned about whether you can survive," the white-robed Xu Nian sneered, then his figure turned into a residual image and disappeared from the spot.

When he reappeared, he was already in front of Xu Nian.

"Uh? Illusion Fascinate Trace? You can even use Combat Skills?" Xu Nian was startled and hastily prepared to defend.

"Hmph, what I know isn't just Combat Skills. Die, Collapse Thunder!" the white-robed Xu Nian bellowed, hurling a punch straight at Xu Nian.

Xu Nian's eyes instantly focused, and he quickly mobilized his Gang Qi to use the Collapse Thunder Fist Technique.

"Boom!"

The two forces collided, releasing a thunderous roar of terror.

Both Xu Nian and the white-robed Xu Nian were knocked back dozens of steps before they managed to stabilize their forms.

Their clash was evenly matched.

"To think you've even mastered comprehension to the same degree," Xu Nian muttered to himself, his expression becoming solemn once again.

Chapter 254: Defeating Yourself (Fifth Update)

"Boom, boom, boom!"

Xu Nian had once again exchanged a few blows with the Xu Nian in white before him, resulting in the same outcome as before.

Both men had similar levels of strength, comprehension, and even physical robustness.

"Ha ha, you can't defeat me. On the contrary, you will ultimately lose to me. Haven't you realized that your power is continually draining during the battle, whereas mine isn't?" the Xu Nian in white laughed heartily as he spoke.

Xu Nian paused slightly.

It seemed to really be the case.

The white-robed Xu Nian's power hadn't diminished since the beginning, while Xu Nian himself had depleted some Spiritual Energy and Gang Qi due to the previous fights.

If this continued, wouldn't the gap between them keep widening?

That would be extremely disadvantageous for him.

"Ha ha, it looks like you've figured it out. Yes, it's because of the Great Formation. My power comes from the Great Formation. As long as the Great Formation exists, my power can continue endlessly, but yours will gradually deplete and you will finally lose to me," the white-robed Xu Nian laughed loudly again.

Upon hearing this, Xu Nian's expression grew more serious.

Indeed, the second level's test was not as simple as he had thought; it was even harder than he had imagined.

"Humph, just wait to die. Only I am the true Xu Nian, and I will complete everything you're supposed to do," the white-robed Xu Nian said sharply, a black sword appearing in his hand.

Black God!

Yes, even the weapons were exactly the same.

"Die!" the white-robed Xu Nian bellowed, slashing his sword at Xu Nian.

Wind's Absolute Kill, Fierce Blade Dance.

Countless Wind Blades suddenly poured down like a waterfall from the heavens, utterly crushing Xu Nian into fragments.

Xu Nian's arm trembled, and the Black God appeared in his hand as well.

Fierce Blade Dance as well.

With one slash, Sword Qi poured out, clashing against the numerous Wind Blades.

"Boom!"

The Wind Blades collided, ultimately exploding into a storm.

The scattered fragments of the Wind Blades fell onto the surrounding floor and walls, leaving behind trail after trail of sword marks.

Xu Nian's robe was shredded in several places by the Wind Blades, leaving numerous slashes on his body.

However, Xu Nian didn't care, for he noticed that the white-robed Xu Nian had disappeared.

"Die!"

At that moment, a terrifying Sword Qi poured forth from behind him, seemingly ready to split the space into two halves.

Wind Blade Kill!

A massive Wind Blade, like the arc of a moon, split the air, slashing towards Xu Nian with an incredibly fierce aura.

Xu Nian frowned; he could handle others' moves with ease.

Facing his own, however, was quite a headache indeed.

This Wind Blade Kill was indeed a highly lethal move.

"Break for me," Xu Nian finally grew angry.

Green Spiritual Energy surged in his hands, his robe rustling like the roar of tigers and dragons.

"I refuse to believe you know this move too," Xu Nian scoffed, his eyes flashing with disdain.

The sound of a dragon's roar burst forth from within him.

Two Sleeves Green Dragon burst forth, Sword Qi extending in all directions.

With one slash, the Sword Qi soared like an Azure Dragon, slaughtering for thousands of miles.

The Azure Dragon Sword Qi roared, instantly shattering the crescent formed by the Wind Blade Kill, heading straight for the white-robed Xu Nian.

The white-robed Xu Nian's face changed, quickly turning his sword into a fist, deploying the Dragon King Fist.

The Azure Dragon Fist Force collided with the Azure Dragon Sword Qi, emitting a deafening sound, causing the entire Sky-reaching Tower to tremble.

Outside the Sky-reaching Tower, everyone was shocked.

Staring blankly at the second level of the Sky-reaching Tower.

What kind of battle took place inside the Sky-reaching Tower to cause such a commotion?

"It seems he has entered into a tough battle, defeating others is easy, but defeating oneself is hard!" the tower guardian spoke again.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master laughed, "Great Elder, why not make a bet? I wager that Xu Nian will reach the third level within two hours, betting your piece of Fire Separation Demon Gold."

"Two hours? Impossible, I'll take that bet. If you lose, your Purple Phoenix Blood will belong to me," the tower guardian stated confidently.

"A deal is a deal, no regrets," smiled the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

The tower guardian huffed lightly, not believing he would lose.

"Hmph, last time it was Xu Nian's luck. He won't be able to pass the second level this time; he might even die inside the Sky-reaching Tower," Nangong Qing said coldly, looking toward the direction of the Sky-reaching Tower.

The elite disciples around nodded in agreement or maintained a skeptical attitude.

Yann Hong and Yann Xi looked toward the second level, their faces tense and they remained silent.

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Xu Nian in white breathed heavily, glaring fiercely at Xu Nian.

That last sword strike had nearly taken his life.

Even so, his sleeves were gone, and his arms were covered with dense sword marks.

One Sleeve Azure Dragon?

It was entirely formed by numerous Wind Blades condensing into a dragon shape, more lethal than Wind Blade Kill.

"When did you learn this move?" the white-clothed Xu Nian asked with a dark look in his eyes.

Xu Nian revealed a cold, arrogant smile.

"Since you are my shadow, you should understand that my true strength lies in improving constantly. You may be my shadow, but your combat power remains at the moment I entered the Great Formation. Now, I am no longer who I was at that time," Xu Nian said arrogantly.

The white-clothed Xu Nian's expression turned grave.

It was apparent to Xu Nian that this move was something he had comprehended during the fight.

And as his shadow, he simply lacked such powerful comprehending ability.

"I can't accept this, I must kill you," the white-clothed Xu Nian roared, as the Meteorite Iron Hammer appeared in his hand.

A powerful aura burst from his body, enhancing the Meteorite Iron Hammer with the mighty mountain's force.

It was as though the white-clothed Xu Nian was not swinging a hammer, but a majestic mountain.

However, Xu Nian's face bore a light smile, with no trace of fear in his eyes.

Defeating oneself is hard, but overcoming one's past self is not so far out of reach.

"It's time to end this, a shadow is merely a shadow, you will always live under my shadow," Xu Nian's eyes sharpened, and a Kingly Aura erupted from him.

The Meteorite Iron Hammer appeared.

It too was like a meteor.

But now, the mountain force in Xu Nian's hands was even more substantial, its presence even more majestic.

"Crush!"

Xu Nian roared loudly, swinging his hammer to collide with the white-clothed Xu Nian's hammer.

"Boom!"

The ground instantly cracked, the fissures spreading like a spider's web.

And under the terrifying force of the mountain-like blow, the white-clothed Xu Nian was completely shattered.

Crushed!

The crushing force of the mountain was enough to flatten a person into a pancake.

This battle, Xu Nian was victorious.

From the second level, he ascended to the third level.

Outside the Sky-reaching Tower, everyone watched the suddenly lit-up formation of the third level, their faces filled with immense surprise.

Xu Nian had actually passed the second level and moved to the third.

Seeing this scene, the tower guardian felt both anger and joy.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master laughed heartily, feeling extraordinarily refreshed all over.

Chapter 255: A Dream (The Sixth Update)

"He actually made it to the third level,"

A wave of surprise rippled through the crowd.

In nearly a hundred years, only three people from the Artifact Refining Sect had made it that far.

Others had either failed at the first level or the second.

Anyone who could reach the third level was considered a prodigy.

Among these three, Xu Nian had taken the least amount of time.

At this moment, Nangong Qing's face turned red with rage, his eyes brimming with intense fury.

He had been humiliated once before, and now it happened again, infuriating him.

Now, whenever he spoke up, the people beside him looked at him as if he were a fool.

Yann Hong and Yann Xi both showed surprise on their faces, clearly taken aback by Xu Nian's unexpected performance.

"Look, Brother Bai Feng has arrived; even he has been drawn here by the commotion," someone exclaimed in the crowd just then.

Everyone turned their heads in the direction pointed out.

A man with a beard was seen approaching from afar.

Though he looked older because of his somewhat decrepit appearance, he was actually only twenty-seven years old.

"Brother Bai Feng!" the crowd around him greeted.

However, the young man seemed not to hear, just standing to one side, staring blankly at the third level of the Sky-reaching Tower with a complex expression in his eyes.

He had failed at this very level three years ago, never managing to recover his stride.

Not only had his Nine-star War General Level cultivation made no progress, but his artifact refining skills hadn't improved in the slightest either.

"That Bai Feng kid seems to still be fixated on his failure," the old tower guardian sighed.

He had once had high hopes for this young man, but in the end, he was disappointed.

"Don't worry, he'll come to terms with it soon," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile, though his gaze once again turned towards the third level of the Sky-reaching Tower, displaying a seriousness he seldom showed.

...

"Uh, where is this? Shouldn't I be in the Sky-reaching Tower?" Xu Nian opened his eyes, staring blankly at the dilapidated temple.

The moment he had entered the third level, he had blacked out.

When he woke up, he was inside this ruined temple.

"Ah... it hurts so much!" A sudden and intense pain shot through Xu Nian's body.

"My Dantian is ruined, my spiritual energy is gone, and my legs, why are they broken?" It was only then that Xu Nian realized he was not only devoid of any cultivation, but his legs were also completely fractured.

"What on earth is going on? Could the Sky-reaching Tower have been a sham? Or have I already failed the challenge, become a cripple, and been thrown out by the Artifact Refining Sect?" Xu Nian was filled with confusion and doubt.

His situation was dire, and the pain in his body was tearing him apart.

"Ha ha, my dear brother, you've finally awoken. How's it, comfortable in your new home?"

Just then, a voice laden with sarcasm arrived from outside the temple, followed by a young man walking in, flanked by two other youths.

"Qin Hen? You're not dead?" Xu Nian's eyes widened in surprise.

Hadn't he killed Qin Hen?

Why was he here?

What was going on?

"Dead? My dear brother, didn't you get knocked silly? I'm really sorry, brother, I accidentally went too far," Qin Hen continued in a sarcastic tone.

Xu Nian glanced around and realized he was in a decrepit temple at the corner of Tianhai City.

And his current condition was exactly like when he had been crippled and expelled from the Qin Family.

"Could it be that everything I've experienced was just a dream? Impossible, how could a dream feel so real?" Xu Nian muttered to himself, panic surfacing in his eyes.

If everything before had truly been just a dream...

"Wouldn't that mean he ultimately still became a waste?"

"Ha ha, it seems I've really knocked him silly, babbling nonsense here," Qin Hen laughed heartily, his eyes brimming with mockery.

The two lackeys behind him also revealed wanton smiles.

"It can't be, this absolutely can't be a dream, a dream can't feel this real. I'm still inside the Sky-reaching Tower, this place is the Illusion Realm," Xu Nian muttered excitedly to himself.

He refused to believe that everything he had experienced before was just a dream.

"Dream? Sky-reaching Tower? What nonsense are you spouting? I don't care what grand delusions you've had, today you must die. If it weren't for the ancestor's interference yesterday, you'd already be dead before me. Now, I'll torment you bit by bit until you wish for death from the pain," Qin Hen said with a smile.

After he spoke, his hand clenched on Xu Nian's broken leg.

"Ah..." A piercing pain shot up from his leg, a pain so intense that Xu Nian couldn't help but cry out in agony.

"Ha ha, scream louder, the louder you scream, the more excited I get," Qin Hen said with a ferocious grin.

His two lackeys laughed loudly along with him.

Xu Nian was in unbearable pain, his reason told him that none of this was real, but the severe pain was undeniably genuine.

"Ha ha, scream, scream louder," Qin Hen laughed heartily.

"Qin Hen, even if this is the Illusion Realm, I will kill you once more," Xu Nian roared with rage, the intense pain contorting his face, his voice trembling.

"Illusion Realm? I think you're living in a dream! Ha ha, then let me help you wake up," Qin Hen chuckled heartily.

After saying this, he increased the force in his hand, and Xu Nian was in so much pain he nearly passed out.

"I can't pass out, if I pass out, I may never wake up again," Xu Nian warned himself internally.

However, the pain spreading from his legs made him wish for death.

Qin Hen and the two lackeys were all savagely laughing, their brazen laughter constantly echoing in Xu Nian's ears.

Xu Nian was on the verge of unconsciousness, about to completely succumb to the pain.

"Hmph!"

Just then, a cold snort suddenly rang in Xu Nian's mind.

The sound wasn't loud, but as it landed in Xu Nian's mind, it was like a clap of thunder.

"It's Emperor Ye Tian's voice, no doubt about it, it's Emperor Ye Tian's voice. It's the Illusion Realm; everything at this moment is an illusion," Xu Nian excitedly muttered to himself.

Qin Hen was still laughing wildly, the intense pain was still present.

However, Xu Nian was feeling exceptionally clear-headed at this moment; he simply closed his eyes, forgetting everything around him.

...

"What's the matter? It's been three days already, how can Xu Nian be staying so long on this third level?" The crowd outside the Sky-reaching Tower expressed their perplexity.

That's right, within the Sky-reaching Tower, it seemed as though only a short time had passed for Xu Nian, but in reality, a full three days had elapsed.

"I think he's already died inside the Sky-reaching Tower. Three days have gone by and he hasn't cleared the third level; there's no hope at all," Nangong Qing sneered once again.

However, Bai Feng, who was standing beside him, suddenly glared at Nangong Qing and harshly reprimanded, "A piece of trash like you doesn't even have the right to step into the Sky-reaching Tower, what right do you have to mock others?"

Upon hearing this, Nangong Qing's face turned pitch black.

He couldn't understand what he had done to offend Bai Feng.

But just thinking of Bai Feng's status within the Sect, he didn't dare express even the slightest grievance and could only obediently shut his mouth.

This induced snickers from the surrounding crowd, further embarrassing him.

Bai Feng, on the other hand, paid no attention. He knew the third level of the Sky-reaching Tower better than anyone else present.

The third level was different from the others; the longer the time, the more excruciating the pain.

Whether Xu Nian succeeded or failed, having persisted so long on the third level was respect-worthy.

"Quick, look, there's movement!"

Just at that moment, someone in the crowd exclaimed.

Everyone raised their heads, gazing toward the third level of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Then, their faces revealed surprised expressions.

Chapter 256: Human Trafficking

Inside the third level of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Xu Nian suddenly opened his eyes, gasping for breath.

"Thank goodness, I finally woke up. I was tortured for three days straight, and it was really unpleasant," Xu Nian muttered to himself with a bitter smile.

Although he realized that he was in an Illusion Realm, escaping from it was not an easy feat.

It took Xu Nian a full three days to break free from that Illusion Realm.

"Hmph, useless trash. If I hadn't reminded you, you would have already died within this Illusion Realm," the voice of Emperor Ye Tian rang out in Xu Nian's mind.

"Thank you, Your Imperial Majesty, for saving my life," Xu Nian said with a bitter smile, yet his heart was truly grateful.

Emperor Ye Tian was right; if it hadn't been for her cold snort,

he really might have gotten lost in the Illusion Realm, and once lost, the only outcome would have been a dead end.

"Boy, the matter of the Qin Family has always been your inner demon. I hope you can resolve it soon, or else your path of cultivation will soon come to an end," Emperor Ye Tian's voice echoed in Xu Nian's head.

Xu Nian nodded in agreement.

Emperor Ye Tian was right.

The Qin Family was indeed his inner demon, and the origin of all this was his mother.

It wasn't a matter of just killing the Qin Family or eradicating them entirely to resolve this inner demon.

He could let go of his own hatred, but not the part that belonged to his mother.

The debt the Qin Family owed him, he could choose not to pursue.

But the debt owed to his mother had to be repaid.

Long ago, he had sworn

to have the Qin Family, especially Qin Yuanshan, kneel before his mother and confess their sins.

That was precisely why he had not taken action against the Qin Family in the first place.

"It's time to go to the fourth level."

Xu Nian exhaled a murky breath and took steps toward the fourth level.

...

The outside world had already been thrown into an uproar.

The moment the formation of the fourth level lit up, everyone gasped in astonishment.

It had been five hundred years since anyone had ascended to the fourth level.

Xu Nian had actually passed through the third level and reached the fourth level—this was a rare sight in centuries!

And how old was this Xu Nian? Seventeen, much younger than any tower challenger in the history of the Artifact Refining Sect.

"Did he make it through?" Bai Feng's expression was poignant, his eyes complex.

Watching the formation of the fourth level light up, his lips trembled slightly.

After what seemed like a long time, Bai Feng's eyes suddenly sharpened.

"Ha ha, I understand now. I finally get it. All these three years, I've been drawing lines for myself like I'm in a cage, ha ha!" Bai Feng suddenly burst into loud laughter.

All those around him were drawn to Bai Feng's laughter, wearing puzzled faces.

However, Bai Feng's aura suddenly surged, climbing rapidly, as a powerful spiritual energy sprang forth from beneath his feet.

Then Bai Feng rose into the air, standing suspended.

"Marq... Marquis Realm, has Brother Bai Feng broken through?" The crowd's eyes widened in extreme shock.

They all looked at Bai Feng, who was floating in the air, their eyes filled with awe and astonishment.

Bai Feng stood with his hands behind his back, his hair flying wildly, exuding the surging, powerful presence of a Marquis.

After three years of silence, he had finally achieved a breakthrough.

And all this was thanks to Xu Nian.

"Xu Nian, thank you. If it weren't for you passing the third level, I, Bai Feng, may never have been able to break through to the Marquis Realm. As long as you can come out of the Sky-reaching Tower, I, Bai Feng, am willing to serve you as my master," declared Bai Feng, his voice resounding throughout the venue.

Everyone was stupefied.

Bai Feng was willing to serve Xu Nian as his master?

That was the person once praised as the most talented individual of the Artifact Refining Sect in a thousand years!

Such a favored son of heaven was willing to follow Xu Nian; just how heaven-defying was Xu Nian?

The tower guardian and the Artifact Refining Sect Master exchanged a smile, Bai Feng had made a breakthrough.

This was good news, it meant the knot in his heart had been untied, and the Artifact Refining Sect had gained another genius.

Nangong Qing stood among the crowd, his lips turning white.

At this moment, he was beyond words to describe his feelings.

Despair, nothing but despair.

There was no longer the slightest thought of seeking revenge.

...

The fourth level of the Sky-reaching Tower.

Xu Nian looked around the empty fourth level with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Eh, why is there nothing on this level?" Xu Nian said in surprise.

He had thought that there might be some hidden dangers.

But after walking around, he found nothing at all.

What the hell?

"Kid, it's not that there's nothing, it's just that the little thing saw you and got scared, hiding itself," the voice of Emperor Ye Tian laughed in Xu Nian's mind.

"Scared and hiding? Little thing?" Xu Nian's confusion deepened; he had scanned the area with his Spiritual Sense, but there was nothing around!

"Use the Gray Dragon Eye to take a look," Emperor Ye Tian said with a hint of impatience.

Hearing this, Xu Nian then activated the Elderly Eye.

The sight startled Xu Nian.

Holy shit, this is a little thing?

He saw a huge dragon lying prostrate at his feet, quivering.

This dragon was a hundred meters long; it was far from the little thing Emperor Ye Tian had mentioned.

"Is this a dragon? Why is its body ethereal? And why is it afraid of me?" Xu Nian asked, puzzled.

"Ignorant, it is indeed a dragon, but it's just a Residual Soul of a dragon. It naturally has the ability to hide itself and launch Soul Attacks, so your Divine Sense can't detect it. As for why it's afraid of you, that's because you are the Nine Dragons Supreme Body, the leader of the Nine Great Divine Dragons. Who else would it fear if not you?" Emperor Ye Tian said scornfully.

Xu Nian suddenly understood and turned his gaze to the ethereal soul before him.

This was a Residual Soul of a True Dragon, Xu Nian's first encounter with a True Dragon.

"Little guy, oh sorry, big guy, what's your name?" Xu Nian communicated with it using his Spiritual Sense.

The Residual Soul of the dragon said pitifully, "I am called Wo Shui, great lord. Please don't kill me; I had no intention of harming you."

"Alright, alright, I won't kill you. Do you want to leave this place?" Xu Nian said, looking like someone who trafficked souls.

"Yes, of course, I do. I've been here for thousands of years, and it's been so long since I've seen another person," the dragon's Residual Soul said, eyes filled with hope.

"Well then, come into this, and I'll take you out," Xu Nian said, taking out the Netherworld King Bow.

The Residual Soul of the dragon glanced at the Netherworld King Bow, smiled, and immediately turned into a beam of light, entering the bow.

Seeing this, a brilliant smile appeared on Xu Nian's face as well.

With this, his Netherworld King Bow would be augmented with the power of Spiritual Sense Attacks, making it much more powerful than before.

Inside the Black Jade Pendant, Emperor Ye Tian was speechless.

This guy really had the potential to traffic in souls.

However, Xu Nian was all smiles as he stored the Netherworld King Bow back in his Dantian, whistling as he walked towards the last level.

The fourth level, easily passed.

However, the outside world was once again in a frenzy.

"Holy shit, the fifth level already? How can he be so fast? He's actually going to reach the top!" Everyone was exclaiming in shock.

Even the tower guardian and the Artifact Refining Sect Master showed surprised expressions.

Although they had never gone up, they knew that the fourth level was home to a powerful dragon soul.

Facing that Residual Soul of the dragon, they would have only met death.

How did Xu Nian manage to get through so quickly?

Chapter 257: Birth of Black Hou (Eighth Update)

Xu Nian ascended to the fifth layer.

The news completely rocked the entire Artifact Refining Sect.

For thousands of years, that perpetually untraversed fifth layer was finally scaled by a youth named Xu Nian.

This news astonished everyone; it meant Xu Nian was an unprecedented genius in the history of the Artifact Refining Sect.

"Good, very good," the Tower Guardian Elder said excitedly.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master's face also revealed a radiantly splendid smile.

As long as Xu Nian conquered this fifth layer, he could be completely liberated.

...

Xu Nian arrived at the fifth layer.

Contrary to his expectations, the fifth layer was not filled with danger, but it was also not empty.

Within the fifth layer, an old man was sitting cross-legged.

The old man had white hair and beard, yet he had the complexion of a youthful man.

"Eh, is this elder my opponent?" Xu Nian pondered with doubt in his heart.

"Come, sit," the elder smiled and gestured towards the cushion opposite him.

"Senior, who are you?" Xu Nian walked over to the cushion and sat down, asking with confusion.

Yet, he was filled with caution in his heart.

The elder before him was very powerful, absolutely at the Saint Level, and even beyond the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

"Hehe, I am called Qi Baiyu, the second generation Artifact Refining Sect Master," said the elder with a chuckle as he stroked his beard.

"The second generation?" Xu Nian widened his eyes, a look of astonishment spreading across his face.

The current Artifact Refining Sect Master seems to be the forty-seventh generation, how many years ago was the second?

"Hehe, the fact that you have made it here means that you are now the next Sect Master, so you are the forty-eighth," the elder said with a smile.

"Eh, don't I still have one more challenge to pass?" Xu Nian asked, puzzled.

Logically, he should have conquered the fifth layer before he could be considered the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

"Don't rush, this final challenge indeed needs to be passed, but it is not within the tower," the elder said with a chuckle.

Xu Nian was indeed becoming more confused.

Seeming to notice Xu Nian's confusion, the elder continued, "Your opponent for the fifth challenge is not me, but the Demon Beast at the bottom of the lake in the rear mountain."

"What?" Xu Nian exclaimed, eyes wide with surprise.

That Demon Beast?

That's at least a Saint Level Demon Beast; even if he had a hundred clones, they wouldn't be enough to even get stuck in the terrifying beast's teeth!

"Ha ha, are you scared?" the elder laughed heartily.

"Scared, can we not switch opponents? Maybe you could conjure up a dragon's Residual Soul or something!" Xu Nian shamelessly suggested.

"Ha ha, you lad, don't worry, it's not like you will be fighting alone, I will lend you my strength when the time comes. That beast has been suppressed by me at the bottom of the lake for three thousand years, and it is about to break through the sealing now, while I've long been dead. What you're seeing now is merely an energy entity condensed from a strand of Spiritual Power, not my true body or Spiritual Sense," the elder laughed heartily.

"Eh?" Xu Nian was startled, only then realizing that the elder before him was not a true physical body.

An energy entity condensed from Spiritual Energy?

Is that even possible?

Probably through the use of some special method within a Great Formation, right?

Xu Nian speculated in his heart while also feeling astonished.

"Can't the Sect's three Saints deal with that Demon Beast?" Xu Nian asked, taken aback.

"Indeed, that beast has reached the peak of the Holy Realm," the elder said seriously. "Those three juniors, although they have reached the Holy Realm, are not a match for that creature. Once it breaks free from the seal, it will absolutely seek revenge, and then it will surely slaughter all the disciples of the Artifact Refining Sect, so I need your help to reseal it."

Xu Nian was at a loss for words.

Why did these ancient ancestors always like to bring trouble to their descendants?

Whether it was sealing some powerful Demon Beast or a demon within the sect, the Demon Beast always ended up breaking the seal.

The entire sect would be slaughtered, completely wiped out.

Such examples were not uncommon.

He really wanted to ask this ancestor, what were you thinking, sealing such a Saint Level peak Demon Beast within the sect?

"Boom!"

Just then, a violent tremor came from outside the tower.

In the back mountain of the Artifact Refining Sect, a black pillar of fire shot up into the sky.

The earth trembled, and the mountains shook.

"Haha, I have finally come out, Qi Baiyu, you bastard, you sealed this old one for three thousand years, I will kill all your disciples and grandchildren." A massive figure rose from the pillar of fire and turned into a man in black robes.

The man's hair, like black flames, burned fiercely, and his aura swept through the entire Artifact Refining Sect, instilling fear in everyone.

All the disciples of the Artifact Refining Sect changed their expressions, looking in the direction of the back mountain.

"This is not good, that beast has broken the seal."

At the same time, both the Tower Guardian Elder and the Artifact Refining Sect Master's faces changed. They then turned into streaks of light and instantly appeared in the air, facing off against the man in black.

From another direction, another elder flew in from afar, also a Saint.

The three Saints blocked the black-haired man's path from three directions.

"Black Hou, you dare break the seal, now go back and stay in the lake," the Tower Guardian Elder shouted.

"Haha, you think I would go back? You think you three little babies can stop me when I, a Saint, want to leave?" The man in black robes laughed arrogantly, looking at the three Saints with disdain as an aura of a Saint at his peak radiated from him.

The faces of the three Saints changed, the Demon Beast before them was stronger than they had imagined.

"All Elders and disciples, retreat to the safe zone. Great Elder, Law Enforcement Elder, follow me into battle," ordered the Artifact Refining Sect Master solemnly. He made the first move.

Seeing this, the other two Elders also made their moves.

Black Hou merely snorted with laughter, engaging in a great battle with the three Saints.

Thunderous booms echoed in the sky one after another.

The surrounding disciples were stunned, their faces showing shock.

At this moment, everyone had forgotten about Xu Nian still in the Sky-reaching Tower, staring intently at the great battle in the sky.

This was a battle between four Holy Realm powerhouses, such a level of fighting was rarely seen in a hundred years.

...

Inside the Sky-reaching Tower, hearing the noise from outside, Xu Nian knew what was happening.

With a wry smile, he looked at the elder.

Even from such a distance, he could feel the Demon Beast's scorching and violent aura.

Was he really going to fight such a formidable Fierce Beast?

"It's happened even faster than I predicted, alright, since it's out, I won't waste any more time. Now, I will transfer my power to you, boy. I hope you can endure it, otherwise the Artifact Refining Sect will really be doomed," said the elder seriously.

After speaking, the elder turned into a ray of light and instantly entered Xu Nian's body.

Xu Nian was about to speak when the terrifying force invaded him.

The powerful energy surged within him like a tsunami, and Xu Nian's body felt like a small boat in the midst of it, on the verge of capsizing.

The intense pain was nearly bursting Xu Nian's body, which swelled up visibly.

Chapter 258: The Power of Black Hou (9th Update)

As Xu Nian accepted the frenzied infusion of power, the battle outside had reached a fever pitch.

The Three Great Saints were locked in a fierce battle with the Demon Beast, but they were being overwhelmingly suppressed by it.

"Haha, it's been a long time since I've stretched my muscles. You three juniors are really too weak, far inferior to Qi Baiyu back in his day," the Demon Beast laughed heartily.

It easily handled the attacks from the Three Great Saints, paying no earnest attention to their onslaught, as if it were simply toying with them.

In contrast, the three Saints found the battle incredibly taxing.

Among them, the strongest was the Artifact Refining Sect Master, who was at the Seven-star Saint Realm.

The other two Elders, however, were only at the Four-star Saint Realm.

Together, they stood no chance of victory against such a peak-level Saint Demon Beast.

If the Demon Beast had been serious from the start, they probably would have already been defeated.

"What do we do, Sect Master? This Demon Beast is too strong," the Great Elder transmitted his voice to the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

"You and Elder Han take the Sect's disciples and hold it off. I'll do everything in my power to delay it," the Artifact Refining Sect Master transmitted back.

"Okay!" the Great Elder nodded in agreement and then rushed towards the Sect's disciples along with the Elder.

The Demon Beast, seeing the two flee without a fight, revealed a hint of a sneer on its face.

"Haha, think you can escape? It won't be that easy. Today, not a single one from the Artifact Refining Sect shall escape," the Demon Beast laughed loudly, and with that, its figure split in two, chasing after the two Elders directly.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master was shocked and quickly shouted, "Be careful!"

The two Elders also realized the danger and turned around hastily.

However, before they could react, they discovered the Demon Beast's figure already looming before them.

"Down you go!"

The Demon Beast let out a cold laugh and instantly slapped his palm onto the chests of the two Elders.

"Bang!"

Without any power to resist, the two Elders crashed to the ground like meteorites, creating a vast deep pit upon impact.

The people around were utterly dumbfounded.

These were Saints, and yet they were powerless before this Demon Beast.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master was also astonished, looking at the two Elders lying in the pit, a surge of intense anger welling up in his eyes.

Although the two Elders were not dead, this single blow had caused them severe injuries, leaving them with no strength to fight again.

"So boring, too weak," the Demon Beast sneered with disdain, then turned its head towards the Artifact Refining Sect Master and coldly said, "Kid, so you're the new Sect Master of the Artifact Refining Sect, huh? Your Sect isn't quite impressive, nothing like back in Qi Baiyu's heyday!"

The Artifact Refining Sect Master's eyes narrowed, a chill emanated from within.

"Senior, since you've freed yourself, why not simply leave? Why harm the people of my Sect?" the Artifact Refining Sect Master asked coldly.

"Haha, Qi Baiyu trapped me for three thousand years. What's wrong with killing a few of his disciples and grandchildren? I've already said no one from the Artifact Refining Sect will live today," the Demon Beast laughed heartily.

"So, it's a fight to the death?" the Artifact Refining Sect Master clenched his fists and said.

"What if it is? Do you think you might kill me?" the Demon Beast mocked.

The eyes of the Artifact Refining Sect Master suddenly grew sharp, and a powerful aura erupted from him.

Dark clouds rolled in the sky, and strong thunder surged within them.

"Boom!"

A bolt of lightning thundered down, striking the Artifact Refining Sect Master directly.

Not only was the Artifact Refining Sect Master unharmed, but his aura also became even more ferocious.

Terrible thunder entwined around him, like a Thunder Dragon.

"Die!"

The Artifact Refining Sect Master squeezed out a word, and his whole being charged towards the Demon Beast.

His fist burst forth, infused with the terrifying might of thunder.

"Strong!" Disciples from various sects at a distance all showed a look of astonishment, their eyes filled with hope.

"The Thunderclap Secret Technique, interesting, but it seems not good enough."

However, Black Hou snorted coldly. Watching the Artifact Refining Sect Master's punch rushing towards him, he unleashed a punch of his own.

"Boom!"

Lightning exploded, and the ground shook violently.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master's body instantly flew backward.

Yet Black Hou's body remained unmoved, standing tall in the air like an iron tower.

Those around were astonished, pondering how powerful this Demon Beast could be.

Even the Sect Master, using the Thunderclap Secret Technique, was no match for it?

Black Hou sneered, his figure flashed as he pursued, stepping directly on the chest of the Artifact Refining Sect Master.

"Boom!"

The Artifact Refining Sect Master's body was instantly crushed from the sky by Black Hou, causing a thunderous roar upon impact.

Where the Artifact Refining Sect Master fell, a huge crater with a diameter of a hundred meters formed.

The disciples of the Artifact Refining Sect had their eyes turning red instantly; this was their Sect Master.

To be stomped from the sky by this Demon Beast.

The disciples all clenched their fists, their eyes filled with intense anger.

Of course, more than that, they were afraid; the Demon Beast in front of them was too powerful.

Their sect's Three Great Saints were not its match, and they would be sending themselves to death if they went up.

Yann Hong and Yann Xi also had angry expressions on their beautiful faces, yet they were helpless.

"Run!"

The Artifact Refining Sect Master in the crater shouted desperately, struggling to stand up.

Hearing this, Black Hou immediately turned his gaze toward those distant disciples.

"Ha ha, you humans are so melodramatic, even on the verge of death, you still care for others. Well, since you're so concerned about them, I'll kill them all right before your eyes," Black Hou laughed wildly and then swept toward the disciples.

"Don't!" The Artifact Refining Sect Master screamed, trying to stop him, but after struggling for a moment, he fell to the ground again.

The surrounding disciples, seeing the Demon Beast charging at them, showed extremely terrified expressions.

"Run! I'll hold him back!" Yann Hong shouted, about to intercept.

Black Hou's eyes flashed with disdain, and with a wave of his hand, he sent Yann Hong flying out.

He then continued toward the disciples.

The disciples were all frozen in place by Black Hou's presence, unable to move.

Black Hou sneered coldly and was about to kill the group of disciples.

"Ah, I can't take this anymore!"

At that moment, a roar suddenly came from the Sky-reaching Tower, followed by an explosion, and a figure shot out from the tower.

Soaring into the sky, then it crashed down onto the ground.

The earth trembled violently.

Where the person landed, the ground formed a crater three hundred meters in diameter.

Black Hou was also startled by this sudden force, immediately abandoning the pursuit of the disciples, his eyes fixed on the figure that had unexpectedly emerged, a strong fury rising in his gaze.

"Qi... Bai... yu!" Black Hou squeezed out these three words between clenched teeth, his eyes ablaze with the black flames of immense killing intent.

However, the surrounding disciples were all surprised, because the one who had shot out from the Sky-reaching Tower—

If not Xu Nian, then who could it be?

Chapter 259: I'm hitting you (The tenth update)

Everyone watched the emerging figure in disbelief, their faces showing extreme astonishment.

At this moment, Xu Nian looked different from before.

A layer of white light covered Xu Nian's body, making him appear as if he were draped in a holy veil.

His terrifying aura permeated the air, making one's heart tremble just by glancing at him.

"Is this the power of the Saint Peak? So strong!"

Xu Nian felt the power inside him that was almost exploding, and he was extremely ecstatic.

He needed to vent, to release it all.

Destroy everything!

At that moment, Xu Nian caught sight of Yann Hong, who had fallen in the distance.

Yann Hong had been struck by the Black Hou. Although not dead, he was severely injured, with fresh blood trailing from the corner of his mouth.

"Did you do this?" Xu Nian turned and glared at Black Hou, asking angrily.

"You're not Qi Baiyu, but why do you have Qi Baiyu's aura?" Black Hou coldly stared at Xu Nian, his eyes filled with killing intent.

"I'm fucking asking you, did you do this?" Xu Nian roared.

At this moment, his internal power was restless, and his temper was incredibly violent.

"I did it, hmph, just ants, they will all..."

Black Hou sneered with disdain.

However, before he could finish his words, his expression changed.

Suddenly, Xu Nian had appeared in front of him and landed a fierce punch directly on his abdomen.

Black Hou instantly bent over like a shrimp, his eyeballs bulging as his body rapidly flew backward.

Xu Nian, however, let out a cold snort, two plumes of white air shooting from his nostrils.

The white air hit the ground, leaving two large craters.

He stomped on the ground, and it instantly shattered.

He quickly chased after him.

"I'll show you ants; I'll show you arrogance, I'll fucking kill you."

Xu Nian's fists moved like thousands of illusions, all striking the chest of Black Hou.

Each punch landed like thunder, with spiritual energy surging.

With every punch, Xu Nian felt more exhilarated.

The power inside him was too strong, too overwhelming.

He wished he could throw a thousand, ten thousand punches in an instant.

Black Hou's form skimmed the ground as he rapidly retreated, the ground and buildings around him completely destroyed, forming a long, deep trench.

The disciples were all petrified on the spot.

Is this Xu Nian?

Isn't this a mistake?

The Demon Beast Black Hou, who even the Sect Master couldn't defeat, was being brutally beaten by him.

How is this possible?

In the distance, the two Great Elders and the Artifact Refining Sect Master who climbed out of the pit were also dumbfounded.

"He must have been imbued with power by the ancestor, which is why he's rampaging like this," the Artifact Refining Sect Master observed and said.

The other two elders nodded in agreement.

However, they were still incredibly shocked.

Xu Nian was merely at the Battle General Level, yet his body could endure such terrifying power.

It was truly astonishing.

"Enough!"

Black Hou finally got angry, let out a roar, and exploded with a terrifying black flame around his body.

Xu Nian stepped on the void, retreating hundreds of meters in just a few steps.

"Such terrifying speed, this Saint Peak speed is simply too exhilarating," Xu Nian stood in the void, his eyes filled with uncontrollable excitement.

The ability to tread through the air in the Saint Realm was vastly different from his previous wind-riding.

This air-treading was clearly a hundred times more agile.

He treaded the void as he wished.

At this moment, Black Hou had also floated up from the ground, his body engulfed in black flames.

"Qi Baiyu, you old fool, even in death, you left a contingency to target me, since that's the case, I will flatten your Artifact Refining Sect," Black Hou roared towards the sky.

His anger was like the black flames, furiously blazing.

Looking at Xu Nian, his eyes were filled with endless killing intent.

The crowd around watched the two figures with surging momentum, their eyes filled with immense surprise.

"Come on, let's have a thrilling battle; this is the power of the Saint Peak. It might be a long time before I become this strong, so I'll use you to feel just how powerful this strength truly is," said Xu Nian with a cold snort.

He then kicked off from the void with one foot.

The void exploded with a loud noise.

Xu Nian's figure instantly transformed into an afterimage, emitting a sonic boom sound.

"Courting death!"

Black Hou's black flames surged, throwing a punch directly at the charging Xu Nian.

Xu Nian just sneered and counterpunched.

"Boom!"

The force exploded.

Black Hou was instantly blasted away.

Yet Xu Nian merely swayed in the air and then rapidly pursued.

The crowd around was utterly astonished.

"How fierce, how domineering!" the crowd couldn't help but exclaim.

It was as if the fervor in their hearts was ignited all at once, surging violently.

However, what happened next shocked them even more.

Xu Nian grabbed Black Hou's leg, swung him up, and furiously smashed him into the ground.

Black Hou's body hit the ground, creating one deep pit after another.

The crowd fell silent.

Was this the same mighty Demon Beast who had punched an Elder and kicked the Sect Master?

Why did it seem so weak in front of Xu Nian?

"I'll show you fierce, show you fierce!" Xu Nian cursed while continuing to smash.

In just a short while, the entire square had been wrecked beyond recognition.

"Roar!"

Giant Hou was utterly enraged, releasing a terrifying roar.

Black flames transformed into a massive black flame beast, charging towards Xu Nian.

Xu Nian chuckled lightly and threw a punch directly at the black flames.

He shattered the black flames completely.

The flames churned, and Xu Nian stood tall and proud, the black flames unable to harm him in the slightest.

"Roar!"

Giant Hou had now transformed into its true form, breaking free from Xu Nian's hold, and turned into a terrifying giant beast, towering over ten meters tall.

The behemoth walked in the air, its black flames burning fiercely, those black scales giving off an indestructible feeling.

"Human, I will tear you to pieces!" Black Hou roared.

The roar was earth-shattering, vibrating in all directions.

It then fiercely charged towards Xu Nian.

The surrounding crowd showed worried expressions.

When a Demon Beast turns into its true form, its strength doubles.

With such a powerful Black Hou transforming, wouldn't it be even more ferocious?

However, Xu Nian was not afraid in the slightest.

"Hmph! Dragon King Fist!"

With a light snort, a giant Azure Dragon phantom surged from behind Xu Nian, soaring into the sky, and then infused into Xu Nian's body.

Empowered by the Azure Dragon, Xu Nian radiated a terrifying dragon might.

"Dragon King Splitting Sky!"

Xu Nian yelled, and threw a punch directly at the charging Black Hou.

"Boom!"

Like a massive bell, a terrifying booming sound erupted.

An extreme burst of energy instantly exploded.

Then, the crowd saw Black Hou being blasted away by Xu Nian's punch.

It fell like a meteor, creating an earth-shattering noise.

The Saint Peak Level Demon Beast was utterly crushed.

Yet Xu Nian did not stop there.

He leapt up, like a meteor crashing down, and fiercely stomped on Black Hou, who was about to rise.

Pressing Black Hou down again, the ground sunk violently, forming a crater hundreds of meters in diameter.

Chapter 260: The First Power

"Boom!"

The very earth trembled violently, the roaring sound thundering continuously, echoing non-stop.

"Howl!"

The Black Hou let out a wail, clearly overwhelmed by Xu Nian's kick.

The disciples around stood dumbfounded.

Such a level of combat was far beyond their imagination.

At this rate, the entire Sect would be destroyed.

"Human, I will kill you!" the Black Hou bellowed in rage.

It struggled to stand up.

However, Xu Nian, standing atop it, let out a cold snort and threw a punch directly down.

"Bang!"

The ground shook and the mountains quivered; the Black Hou was once again struck down fiercely.

"Do you submit?" Xu Nian asked coldly.

"I do not submit. Without Qi Baiyu's power, how could an ant like you defeat me?" the Black Hou roared in resentment.

"Bang!"

Another punch shook the earth, the scale armor on the Black Hou's body shattered, and blood gushed.

This was scale armor as tough as Meteorite Iron, yet it was smashed to pieces by a single punch from Xu Nian.

"Do you submit?"

Xu Nian demanded coldly.

Now his power was simply forcibly infused by Elder Qi Baiyu; he could not possibly retain this strength.

Before long, this power would fade. By then, who else would have the power to suppress the Black Hou?

If they couldn't suppress it, then they would all die.

Qi Baiyu wanted Xu Nian to seal it again.

But Xu Nian had a very bold idea.

Once this idea materialized, he would gain another powerful trump card.

"Humph, you wish for me to submit? Impossible, you are only temporarily formidable. Once Qi Baiyu's power disperses, you all will die," the Black Hou retorted coldly, seeing through Xu Nian's plan.

A hint of helplessness flashed in Xu Nian's eyes.

The Black Hou was smarter than he had anticipated; making it submit was basically impossible.

"It seems I have to seal it again," Xu Nian said to himself reluctantly.

The power Elder Qi Baiyu left in him was enough to perform a seal; he just had to release all of it.

"Boy, try activating the Nine Dragon Supreme Bloodline in your body to suppress it," just then, Emperor Ye Tian's voice suddenly sounded in Xu Nian's mind.

"Eh?" Xu Nian blinked.

He remembered that his bloodline had a suppressive effect on the Divine Dragon Soul.

For a descendant of a Divine Hou, it should also be somewhat effective.

"Buzz!"

Xu Nian did not hesitate and immediately activated the Nine Dragon Supreme Bloodline.

Instantly, a powerful dragon's might heavily weighed down upon the Black Hou.

The Black Hou trembled violently, its eyes filling with terror.

"How is this possible? How could you possibly have such a constitution?"

The Black Hou's eyes filled with extreme panic; its look towards Xu Nian began to show fear.

It felt a strong sense of oppression.

This oppressive feeling came from deep within its bloodline, instinctively causing it to feel terror.

The Nine Great Divine Dragons were peak existences among Divine Beasts, the highest of bloodlines.

Yet, the bloodline within this person was superior to the Nine Dragons Bloodline.

Even the Nine Great Divine Dragons would be suppressed by it.

"I'll ask you one more time. Are you willing to submit to me? You've now seen my secret; you should know what my future achievements could be. Even if I can't kill you now, I can seal you again and come back to kill you later. You don't still think I'm incapable of killing you, do you?" Xu Nian transmitted mockingly.

The Black Hou truly felt fear.

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Indeed, what truly terrified others about Xu Nian was not his strength, but his potential.

Even if he had the power of Qi Baiyu now, at most he could only seal it.

But possessing the Nine Dragons Supreme Body made all the difference, it meant that as long as he kept growing,

his future achievements would surely surpass those of the Divine Dragons.

The Black Hou really hesitated.

If he truly followed Xu Nian, his future would undoubtedly rise with the tide.

But by doing so, he would also lose his freedom, his life completely controlled by Xu Nian.

"Rest assured, as long as you do not betray me, I will not make things difficult for you," Xu Nian said upon seeing that Black Hou was somewhat tempted.

"Alright, I am willing to submit," Black Hou agreed decisively.

Submitting to humans was a shame, but the human in front of him was different.

He was someone who could even suppress Divine Dragons, so serving such a human was instead a source of pride.

"Hand over your Soul Mark," Xu Nian ordered, suppressing the excitement in his heart.

"Buzz!"

A wisp of dark light flew out from Black Hou's forehead and streaked directly into Xu Nian's brow.

As the dark light entered, Xu Nian felt a new connection to Black Hou.

With just a thought, he could immediately disperse Black Hou's soul.

"Master!" Black Hou, transformed into human form, kneeled half-knelt before Xu Nian, respectfully said.

Xu Nian nodded, "Rise."

Black Hou nodded his head.

The watching crowd in the distance was completely stunned by this scene.

What?

Xu Nian had actually subdued the Black Hou?

Oh my, that's a Saint Peak Level Demon Beast!

Even the Artifact Refining Sect Master and the two Great Elders couldn't believe their eyes.

Such a proud Demon Beast, even their ancestral Qi Baiyu could not subdue back in the day.

Now it had submitted to Xu Nian, leaving them feeling dazed.

Xu Nian, too, was incredibly excited.

A Saint Peak Level Demon Beast as an enforcer was a super trump card for him.

With this, he would have a much greater assurance when going to the Xu Family.

"Sect Master, are you all right?"

Xu Nian walked toward the crowd, with Black Hou silently following behind him.

Although the people knew that Black Hou had been subdued by Xu Nian, they still felt a bit intimidated upon seeing Black Hou approaching.

"I'm no longer the Sect Master. The moment you came out of the Sky-reaching Tower, you became the new Sect Master, and you saved the Artifact Refining Sect, so you truly deserve this title," the Artifact Refining Sect Master said with a smile.

The two Great Elders also nodded in agreement.

"But my strength is still weak, isn't it a bit...?" Xu Nian said, feeling somewhat embarrassed.

The Artifact Refining Sect Master and the two Elders rolled their eyes at this.

Yes, your strength is weak.

But you have such a powerful creature following you; who would dare oppose you if you force your way to Sect Master?

"Alright, then I will take on the role of Sect Master," Xu Nian said, realizing he had misspoken.

Hearing this, the Artifact Refining Sect Master and the two Elders also showed a hint of a smile.

They knelt on one knee and proclaimed loudly, "We are at the Sect Master's service."

The thousands of disciples in the distance also knelt down, chanting, "Disciple, greets the Sect Master."

Their voices echoed for miles, resounding over the entire Artifact Refining Sect.

Xu Nian looked at the thousands of elders and disciples kneeling before him.

His heart surged with exaltation.

These thousands of people would be his first power base on this continent.

At the same time, a bold ambition grew in his heart; he wanted to build the Artifact Refining Sect into the most dazzling Sect on the Tianhen Continent.

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