

## Honoured 541

Chapter 541: Alchemy Exploration [6]

'And how the hell did I end up here?'

Zhao Tian uttered in his mind looking at the narrow passage he was in, approximately 1400 meters underground.

He was hemmed in by the stone walls on either side, which felt almost as if they were closing in on him.

Now in this tight space, he can only move forward or backward as the tight stone walls are clutching him from both sides.

He turned his head to the left and saw the dim light at the end of the passage, but there was a dim light on the right side too.

'Which side should I go?'

As he used his astral sense, all he could see was pitch black and he couldn't sense which side to go.

His gaze narrowed 'If anything goes down, I can still enter the artifact to escape... so let's see what's down here.'

He decided to go to the left, and since he couldn't run through the narrow corridor, which was almost crushing from both sides, he decided to teleport.

As his range is 200 meters, he quickly began to teleport within the narrow space, moving closer to the end of the tunnel.

\*woosh\* \*woosh\*

He moved swiftly through the passage, each teleportation bringing him closer to the end.

The passage felt endless, yet with each jump, the dim glow grew brighter. Finally, after several teleports, he reached the end of the tunnel.

A few minutes later he reached the end of the narrow tunnel and what he saw was... Dead end.

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A sigh escaped his lips and he turned back to look at the right side path.

\*woosh\*

He continued teleporting through the narrow path and finally reached the end of the path, as a bright light flashed his eyes.

The glow at the end of this path grew steadily brighter, becoming a dazzling light as he drew closer.

After a few more jumps, the narrow passage abruptly opened into a vast chamber, and Zhao Tian found himself stepping into a place that felt entirely separate from the oppressive tunnel.

The cavern stretched wide and high, with ceilings that seemed to vanish into shadows overhead.

The walls sparkled with veins of luminescent crystals, casting a mesmerizing glow across the rocky landscape.

The air here was dense with astral energy that tingled across Zhao Tian's skin as he took a few cautious steps inside.

His gaze narrowed looking at the diamond-like crystals embedded on the rocky walls and he instantly understood what this place is...

'An astral mine. My first time entering one...'

The astral stones which are circulating as currency in this world are all mined from Astral mines.

Middle stars can only condense middle grade astral stones where as High tars can concentrate High grade astral stones.

While in the astral realm, the currency is Divine Astral stones.

He has a lot of divine astral stones left by the first Honoured One and some stones Artoria gave before she left as it is the fuel for the ark she gave.

Even the storage rings he made for his women were all from this Divine astral stone.

(A/n: I have already mentioned this in old chaps, just reminding you :)

He again took a good look at the Astral cave "If other forces come to know about it.. they would surely fight each other."

"Astral caves are quite rare, especially since this cave has a Mother stone, which makes it even more unique"

As he muttered to himself, he raised his head and looked at the enormous diamond which is stuck on the ceiling high above, which was glowing brighter than the other small crystals.

"An infinite supply of High Astral stones... this would cause war among people in High Stars."

However, again looking at the place, he can clearly tell that he is not the first one to set foot in this place.

But he can somewhat sense that it's been abandoned for years and not active.

'But why would anyone abandon an Astral Mine with a mother stone?'

As he continued to explore deeper into the cavern, Zhao Tian's eyes fell on a row of scattered human skeletons lying along the cave wall.

Bones of various sizes and shapes, clad in the tattered remnants of robes, armor, and weapons, lined the path like silent sentries.

Looking at the bones, his gaze narrowed as he noticed a skeleton lying on the wall with a piece of paper in its hand.

He crouched down beside the skeleton and took the paper in his hand as he shook it, clearing the dust.

Opening the folded paper, he read through it "I am Xiang Min, an outer sect disciple of the Jade Eclipse Sect."

"We found this Astral mine with a Mother stone, but unexpectedly.. a sudden earthquake happened and closed the path for us to leave the mine."

"We were stuck here and people here are already fighting each other... without proper food and suffocating air in the underground."

"I am sure we will die soon..."

As Zhao Tian read through the letter, he noticed the dried blood stains on the paper.

The handwriting was shaky and uneven, as if the writer had fought against exhaustion and pain with every stroke.

"An earthquake. Then, I guess, the narrow path cracked open due to the same earthquake, and I slid in the narrow gap because of that fucking snow landslide while returning to the tent."

He recalled his own slip into the narrow gap, the way the ground had given way under his feet without warning as he descended the mountain.

The brutal impact of the snow landslide, as it had hurtled down from above, struck him like a wave, forcing him into the confined space before he could even react.

"Well I could have escaped if only I had properly teleported at that time, and soon the narrow gap was filled with snow and soil from the landslide, making me unable to climb up through the pathway."

A soft sigh escaped his lips, looking at the skeletons scattered around here and there.

He stood up, storing the letter back in his ring 'After returning to the Sect, I need to report this.'

Chapter 542: Alchemy Exploration [7]

Standing up, Zhao Tian glanced around at the cavern 'In the letter it is said, the way they came was closed... so I have to find that way.'

'If I can destroy the obstacle created by the earthquake, I can get out of here.'

He can easily escape here if he went into the artifact and as Fei Lingxi's ring is connected to his room in the sect, if she came outside with him, he would be directly teleported back to the sect.

But then he has to explain to Yao Jing how he disappeared from the forest and appeared in the Sect which is thousands of kilometers apart.

Another thing is, if he reported about the Astral mine to the Sect... they would ask him how he escaped the mine without a passage.

He can't say that he just teleported back into the artifact.

So first thing, he had to find the path that the outer disciples had once used and ensure his journey looked feasible from the outside.

'The only thing is... Yao Jing must be searching for me right now and that woman I saved in the cave, she might have woken up.'

With a faint sigh, he continued walking through the cavern and a spark of light energy is glowing on his palm showing the way forward.

He glanced around at the uneven walls and the astral stones stuck on them.

He continued down the uneven corridor, each step resounding in the cavernous silence, until he reached a section where the path abruptly ended at a formidable stone wall.

'So this is the way that was closed due to the Earthquake.'

He reached out and touched the stone wall as he used his astral sense.

He noticed many cracks and the slashes of swords over the wall which should probably be made by the outer disciples.

The walls in the Astral mine are extremely tougher than normal stones making it hard to mine, so as outer court disciples, they are very weak to break the wall.

Zhao Tian took a deep breath and clenched his fist as he threw a powerful punch to the wall.

\*THOOM\* The whole cavern shook for a second and the wall burst, several cracks forming on its surface.

He was quite surprised as the walls is tougher than he expected.

Taking a soft breath, he channeled astral energy into his fist and he threw a flurry of punches to the wall with full force, vibrating the walls as dust and debris rained down around him.

ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA! ORA!  
ORA!

\*THOOM\* \*THOOM\* With each of his punches, the wall began to crack and blast as the whole cavern began to shake intensely.

\*THOOM\* With a final pull of his hand, he threw a powerful punch blasting the stone to debris as they spilled to the other side of the wall.

He again gave a sturdy kick to the wall, breaking it into pieces as he stepped in, through the broken wall.

What the fuck?

However, he was startled to see the open space, where many eyes were watching him in shock.

--

There are large machines running inside the cave, and workers are standing there with powerful pickaxes in their hands, which could even break these walls.

Large, complex machines were set up along the walls, connected by long tracks and conveyor belts that carried chunks of raw astral stone from one station to the next.

'The cave is still active?'

He was surprised for a second as he glimpsed at the workers who were looking at him in shock, their bodies covered with dust.

Some workers started to back away, while others were cautious and took the pickaxes in their hands like a weapon.

"Is he the reason for the earthquake we felt just now..."

"Seems so."

They murmured amongst themselves and one young man working there, squinted his gaze.

'I should go and report this to the Leader.'

Looking at the workers, Zhao Tian's gaze squinted, 'Is there already a powerful sect in control of the mine or the royal family of the Jade Eclipse star?'

'And the people here are fairly powerful... so I can tell there is a powerful faction behind this.'

One old worker, a man with graying hair and a grizzled face streaked with sweat, finally broke the silence. "Who... who are you?"

His voice wavered, though he did his best to sound firm. "And how did you get here?"

The other people also tensed as they were actually working here illegally.

Zhao Tian didn't reply to the old man and turned his gaze to the large door, through which a woman clad in a black suit appeared.

She had long black hair and the suit was quite tight on her body showing her sexy curves and the shirt showed her bust cleavage.

Looking at the beautiful woman, Zhao Tian's eyes narrowed 'She is powerful...'

The woman raised an eyebrow, surprised by Zhao Tian's handsome face and she tilted her head, a teasing smile appearing on her lips "Oh well, aren't you a cutie...?"

As she asked, she turned her eyes to the large opening on the wall and her lips curled up.

She turned to look at the workers and gestured them to look into the hole.

"You, there," she said, her voice taking on an authoritative edge. "Go check out that hole. Looks like someone found a hidden pathway we didn't know about."

Some workers nodded and quickly rushed inside the cavern.

Zhao Tian's eyes followed the workers for a second 'Seems like they are still not aware of the Mother stone in the mine... this is going to create chaos.'

The woman looked at Zhao Tian "So, cute little brother, how are you going to explain the hole you put on the wall?"

Zhao Tian met her gaze with a calm expression, showing no sign of discomfort.

He shrugged casually, his voice steady. "Got caught in a landslide on the mountainside," he said smoothly.

"Ended up sliding through a narrow crevice and found myself stuck in the back end of this mine."

-- Huh?

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The woman's smile didn't waver, but her eyes sharpened, assessing him in silence. "Oh?"

She purred, her fingers lightly resting on her chin as though deep in thought. "And that brought you here, all the way into our precious mine, in the middle of a mountain range?"

She crossed her arms, her gaze narrowing. "Quite a tale. Care to elaborate?"

Chapter 543: Alchemy Exploration [8]

The woman's gaze narrowed, her fingers lightly resting on her chin as though deep in thought. "And that brought you here, all the way into our mine, in the middle of a mountain range?"

She crossed her arms "Quite a tale. Care to elaborate?"

Zhao Tian shrugged casually "I am not lying, it's up to you if you want to believe me or not."

The woman continued to stare, clearly not convinced by his nonchalance, but something about his calm demeanor unsettled her.

She leaned in slightly thinking about it 'Seems like he isn't lying...'

Zhao Tian's eyes glanced around at the workers who are still standing there, staring at him.

'What's up with them? Why are they looking at me like that? I can feel their hostile gazes.. and some people seem nervous.'

'Maybe they are illegally doing things here?'

With a thoughtful face, Zhao Tian looked at the woman "I wonder.. which great faction are you from."

The woman smiled faintly "That's none of your concern, cutie."

"MADAM CALISTA! MADAM CALISTA!" A worker came rushing out from the newly opened tunnel Zhao Tian had created.

His face was flushed, a mixture of excitement and fear in his expression as he approached Calista, casting quick and wary glances at Zhao Tian.

Calista glanced at the man and raised an eyebrow "What happened? Is that side also an astral mine?"

The worker hurriedly nodded and replied "Yes, madam Callista.. more than that.. there is a Mother Stone."

What?

Calista was startled to hear this and hastily turned to Zhao Tian "A Mother.. stone?"

To confirm it herself, she dashed inside the cavern and instantly reached the open space in the cavern.

Raising her head, she glanced at the large diamond-like stone embedded on the ceiling of the cavern and her lips parted in surprise.

"A Mother stone... my first time seeing one,"

As she muttered, her eyes squinted in thought "No wonder, there is a rich amount of High astral stones in the mine... there is actually a Mother Stone hidden inside the cavern."

A faint sigh escaped her lips. "He was such a cutie," she muttered to herself with a hint of regret, "and I even had thoughts of playing with him. But poor guy..."

Her lips curled into a smirk. "I can't risk getting punished by the 'Summit'."

She turned her head to look at the workers and spoke in an authoritative tone "Kill him."

The workers nodded their heads and quickly rushed out of the cavern to the space where Zhao Tian was.

Calista again took a glimpse at the enormous diamond and a smirk appeared on her lips "Lucky."

She took a mobile-like device from her pocket and clicked a picture of the Mother Stone.

"Let me send it to the headquarters... I might get a promotion in the Mandate."

After snapping a few more pictures with her device, she tapped a sequence on the screen and sent the image to the encrypted channel linked directly to her headquarters.

As she adjusted her suit, her thoughts were interrupted by a static crackle from her device. \*beep\*

The face of her supervisor, a stern and cold woman named Lysandra, appeared on the screen.

"Calista, What is the nature of this message? You found a Mother Stone?"

"Yes, Lysandra," Calista replied, unable to hide the smirk tugging at the corners of her lips.

"It's hidden deep within the cavern till now. This mine is far richer than the Mandate initially anticipated."

Lysandra's brows lifted slightly, betraying her interest. "Proceed carefully. If word spreads, you know the repercussions. Have you secured the area?"

"Yes," Calista nodded her head.

"There's only one... complication. A young man stumbled in from that part of the mine. Claims he ended up here accidentally, but..." she paused, considering her next words.

"I don't trust his story entirely. He's too calm for someone who's supposed to be a mere passerby."

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"Eliminate him," Lysandra ordered, her voice cold and indifferent.

"No witnesses, no loose ends."

Calista nodded as the screen went black.

Tucking her device back into her suit, she let out a long breath, her gaze returning to the Mother Stone.

'You brought me luck today, didn't you?' she mused.

...

Zhao Tian who was standing on the other side of the cavern looked at the enormous machines in huge interest and at this time he heard the hurried footsteps from behind.

He turned his head and looked at the workers who were rushing out of the hole.

He can see that they are tense and are gripping the pickaxes in their hands tightly.

The pickaxes are not normal as they are enhanced enough to break through the rocks of this mine, which outer disciples can't.

\*flick\* A sleek black sword with a purple hilt appeared on Zhao Tian's hand 'Well, I already expected this...'

'I am a witness who knows about the Mother stone, if words went out... it would cause wars. How can they let me go easily after this?'

The workers who stepped out of the cave looked at the others and spoke "Madam Calista has ordered us to kill hi-"

\*flick\* \*sleesh\* Zhao Tian teleported from his place and appeared behind the worker as he slashed the sword, cleanly cutting his body in half from his waist.

\*thud\*

Without stopping, he twisted around and a surge of lightning elemental sparkled on his blade as his sword sliced through the next worker's head.

\*splash\* As blood splattered on the cave walls, Zhao Tian didn't stop, and with a burst of energy, he weaved through the group of workers beheading them.

As he moved, more workers leaped toward him, desperation and fear propelling them forward.

Looking at the group of workers jumping at him from all sides, a blue glint passed through Zhao Tian's eyes.

Suddenly the temperature in the cave went low and in the next instant, crystalline icicles appeared out of thin air trapping the group of workers inside it.

Looking at the huge icicle berg, Zhao Tian snapped his finger and the icicles burst into pieces, blasting their bodies as blood splashed everywhere.

Those who remained alive stumbled backward, trembling, their faces pale as they looked upon Zhao Tian in horror and before they could respond, Zhao Tian again disappeared from his place.

\*swoosh\* \*sleesh\*

"ARGH!"

"GURAGH!"

"Wai-"

"NO!"

Chapter 544: Fight against the Gorilla [1]

\*tap\* \*tap\* Faint footsteps of heels echoed through the silent cavern as Calista walked through the hole, stepping into the bloody bath.

Her eyebrows raised in amusement as she glanced at Zhao Tian, who was standing amidst the pile of corpses.

A faint smile curled up at the corner of her lips "Well, I am surprised. I lost in admiring the Mother stone that I forgot about you... and this is what happened."

As she glanced at the corpses, she uttered with an amused smile "They were only one stage below you, yet you managed to beat every single one of them... even when they teamed up."

"For a level three Stellar Essence Stage cultivator, you seem powerful."

"And I can sense two elementals sparkling in the atmosphere. Lightning and Ice?"

She tilted her head and smiled "So, a genius. Care to join our 'Fallen Mandate'?"

"We welcome potential seeds like you and nurture them... Dual elementals, that's quite rare, you know?"

Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed 'Fallen Mandate? What is that organization?'

He slashed the sword and the blood splattered on the ground from his blade "I don't want to include myself in any organization."

Calista sighed, her smile twisting into one of mock regret "Then it is truly a shame."

As she spoke with a sigh, she slipped her hands into the pocket of her pants and retrieved two gloves from it.

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The wrist part on the gloves is embedded with tough metal scraps as she wore it on her hands.

"I want to kill you soon, but since you killed my members. Let me torture you."

She clenched her fist feeling the fabric of the gloves and glanced at Zhao Tian "Show me what you have, Genius."

Zhao Tian sighed in his heart as this was really a deadly battle 'She is on the same level as Shenyi, I guess. I am not sure... I can't see through her cultivation.'

'Arcane Enclave'

The space around Zhao Tian began to churn as he used his domain and Calista sensed that something was off with Zhao Tian's aura.

Her gaze narrowed and before she could make a move, her eyes shrank in shock and she instantly ducked, dodging the sword slash.

'Huh? When did he appear behind me?'

Dodging his slash, she twisted her hand and threw a punch directly aiming for his abdomen.

\*clank\* Zhao Tian turned the sword just in time and her knuckles hit the blade, as he parried the strike.

\*woosh\* The impact sent a powerful vibration down his arm, and he felt the sheer force of her punch pushing him back.

And in the next instant, he was blasted away in the air.

\*THOOOM\* He crashed into the rocky wall behind him, the force of the collision sending cracks spider-webbing out along the stone, shaking the whole cave for a second.

"Urgh!"

He gritted his teeth as he felt his back crushing against the wall and fell down to the floor.

'Even inside the domain, being slowed by time and crushed by my space energy... I barely managed to parry her punch.'

Calista licked her lips quite impressed that he actually survived her punch "That movement technique where you appeared behind me... and I felt like my body was slow."

"What was that?"

Her voice echoed through the cavern, and she began to walk toward him, her footsteps slow and deliberate.

"Oh, you poor thing," she cooed mockingly, her smile widening as she watched him struggle to rise. "Is that all the power you have?"

Calista's heels clicked softly as she moved closer, her footsteps almost mocking, as they echoed in the cavern.

Her piercing gaze stayed locked on Zhao Tian as he picked himself up, dust and debris slipping from his shoulders.

The faint glint of blood on his lips didn't go unnoticed by her, and her smirk grew a little wider, her dark eyes gleaming with a twisted sense of delight.

"You're resilient, I'll give you that. Most would already be begging for mercy after taking a hit like that."

Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed as he stood up 'She is a veteran... must have faced a lot of bigger fights with a lot of rich experience.'

'And seeing that she is using her gloves, I guess she is like Yu Hua.. a cultivator without an elemental power.'

'Hua honed her skills on the sword, and this woman has honed her skills on the fist.'

'A damn gorilla.'

Calista looked at him and asked "So, how about it? Do you want to join our Fallen Mandate?"

\*cough\* With a faint cough, he rubbed the blood with the back of his palm as he stored the sword back in his storage ring.

"Nah."

\*crack\* A dark energy oozed out of Zhao Tian's body as black lightning began to crackle around his body.

HUH?

Calista's eyes shrank in shock feeling the energy around him 'Darkness and lightning? Why is a human using darkness elemental? What is he?'

'Darkness is exclusive only for Eldritchfiends...'

A smile curled on Zhao Tian's lips 'No wonder Eldritchfiends are feared among Astral realm and High Stars.. even the first Honoured One couldn't eliminate that race.'

'This darkness elemental is more powerful than other basic elementals.'

\*flick\* With a tear in space, he appeared behind her and Calista reacted swiftly, throwing a punch toward his face.

A dark glint passed through his eyes and he quickly turned his neck as her fist grazed near his cheek.

Dark lightning condensed in his fist as he thrust his punch directly aiming for her left plank.

Calista's eyes narrowed and she instantly moved her left elbow, blocking the punch.

\*crack\* His fist collided with her elbow and she felt his punch straining her bone as she was pushed back.

"Urgh!"

She took three steps back grasping her elbow and she felt an unbearable pain rippling through her whole body as the dark lightning passed through her entire body.

\*flick\* Zhao Tian didn't give her time to snap out of her surprise as he again teleported, throwing a punch at her chest.

\*crack\* His punch landed on her cleavage and she again felt the dark lightning shot through her body.

"AARGH!"

Chapter 545: Fight against the Gorilla [2]

\*crack\* Zhao Tian's punch landed on her cleavage and she again felt the dark lightning shot through her body.

"AARGH!" Calista let out a cry of agony, her face twisted with pain as she stumbled back.

But even as the pain wracked her body, she gritted her teeth, fighting to stay on her feet.

\*woosh\* Zhao Tian lunged forward again, the darkness and lightning swirling around him as he swung his fist toward her.

\*swish\* Calista retaliated, as she sidestepped his attack, her hand forming a blade as she struck at his ribs.

Her palm connected with his side, sending a sharp sting rippling through his torso, but Zhao Tian merely grinned through the pain, his dark aura intensifying.

Without missing a beat, Calista delivered a swift kick to his stomach, forcing him back.

Zhao Tian coughed, tasting his blood on his tongue, as he was again shot towards the wall in the cave. \*THOOM\*

'Damn it!'

Calista was totally confused by the whole situation right now 'Why the fuck is he using darkness elemental... and every time he approaches me, my body feels heavy and my movements are slow.'

Her black eyes narrowed as she looked at the young man who was again standing from the debris, blood seeping out of his torso, where she had sliced him just now.

Zhao Tian glanced down at his robes and a sigh escaped his lips 'The robes are hindering my movements...'

As he spoke, his fingers curled up in his robes and he tore it down from his body, revealing his toned muscles.

Calista grinned seeing his body and saw him wearing only boxers "What are you showing to a woman.. you sick pervert."

Zhao Tian didn't heed her words and looked down at his torso, where blood was gushing out through the deep wound.

\*flick\* The sword again appeared in his hand as he glanced at Calista 'Even with my domain, I am barely keeping up...'

\*woosh\* With a sudden burst of energy, he darted forward, his movements blurring as he closed the distance between them, his sword striking out in a deadly arc.

Calista's eyes narrowed and she quickly sidestepped, her gloved hand shooting out to grab the blade.

Her metal-enforced gloves sparked as they met the edge of his sword, and she twisted her grip, intending to wrench it from his hand.

But Zhao Tian was ready and he released the hilt just as her fingers closed around it, and with a swift movement, he slid low, using his momentum to bring his fist crashing into her side.

The shock of impact along with the dark flames this time, rippled through her body, and in the next instant, the flames consumed her clothes, burning them to cinders.

"Let me see them... how they jiggle."

\*clank\* The device in her clothes slipped down as she stood there butt naked, her perky red nipples adorning her well-toned meat buns on her chest.

And for a brief moment, she faltered, her guard dropping.

Taking advantage of this, Zhao Tian clenched his fist condensing dark lightning, before he sent it hurtling toward her chest.

\*thud\* The lightning fist strike hit her square in the cleavage and her breasts bounced, sending her flying back, her body crashing into the cavern wall with a resounding

boom

.

"Damn it!" She slumped momentarily, as she felt the pain radiating on her ribcage.

Calista pushed herself up, wiping a smear of blood from her lips, her expression darkening "You fucking pervert... assaulting a woman."

Looking at her bountiful chest and the small, tiny grass near her crotch, Zhao Tian smiled "It is not fair for only me to be half naked."

She looked at her breasts and the red bruise on her cleavage.

"Impressive... but playtime is over."

In a blur, she rushed forward, her speed blinding as she closed the gap between them.

Her hand shot out, gripping Zhao Tian by the throat, her fingers gripping like iron as they squeezed, lifting him off the ground.

"Urgh!" His vision blurred as the pressure on his neck increased, his airways tightening painfully.

"Did you really think you stood a chance against me?" she coldly uttered, her eyes gleaming with sadistic delight.

"I've broken warriors far stronger than you. I will kill you in the most horrible way for trying to assault me."

Zhao Tian struggled, his fingers clawing at her hand, his energy flickering as he fought for breath.

His eyes flickered in a gold light as he gripped her hand tightly and shattered the space fabric of her hand with his space energy.

What?

Calista was taken aback as she felt her hand go numb and saw the space fabric slowly breaking 'What is this?'

\*thrissh\* Zhao Tian shattered her hold, dropping to the ground as a wave of astral energy rushed out from his body, ice, and dark lightning converging in a violent storm around him.

The cavern trembled as ice spread in intricate patterns across the walls, and dark lightning arced wildly around his body illuminating the dark space with a fierce, radiant glow.

Calista shielded her eyes, but her lips curled into a grin, unfazed "What kind of powers are you hiding.. you sicko?"

"You fucking gorilla..."

\*woosh\* \*thud\*

They clashed again, their movements drifted like a blur as they traded blow after blow.

Calista landed a powerful punch to his jaw, and his head snapped back, blood spraying from his lip.

His vision blurred momentarily, but he pushed through, throwing a brutal uppercut that caught her on the chin, sending her staggering back.

Panting, Zhao Tian wiped his mouth, his body was covered in bruises, blood dripping from numerous cuts as his dark energy flickered like a struggling flame.

"Ahh fuck, this is frustrating... your physique is powerful and how are you keeping up with me, fucker?"

She clenched her fists, dark bruises marking her arms and chest from his relentless attacks. "I'll make you regret ever wielding that cursed darkness power."

With that, she lunged forward, her fists glowing with a fierce, bright energy as she punched straight toward him.

\*flick\* Zhao Tian dodged to the side, but her fist grazed his shoulder, the energy scorching his skin.  
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Gritting his teeth, he retaliated with a spinning kick, his foot connecting with her side and sending her sprawling.

Calista rolled down on the floor, dust sticking to her skin and instantly stood up, brushing the dust from her breasts.

Zhao Tian glanced down at her chest jiggling, and the woman clicked her tongue in disgust "Bastard..."

Chapter 546: Fight against the Gorilla [3]

\*THOOMM\* Zhao Tian's back slammed against the wall, the force of impact sending cracks webbing through the stone as dust and debris rained down around him.

His body sagged against the rough surface, blood trickling from fresh cuts that dotted his skin.

Bruises and welts were already ripping along his arms and torso, and the metallic tang of blood filled his mouth as he coughed.

"Haa..."

Letting out a sigh, he licked the blood from his lips as he glanced at Calista who was dashing towards him entering his domain, though the effect was subtle... it barely hindered her speed, just enough for him to track her.

As she entered his domain, Zhao Tian watched her body getting slower 'As I thought...'

\*woosh\* As she swung her fist, he raised his elbow to block her punch but in the next instant, she stopped her punch and used her right knee, landing a jab at his torso.

'Ah, shit!'

\*crack\* Her knee broke through his rib cage and he was again blasted to the wall.

\*thoom\* His eyes blurred for a second as his back smashed into the wall 'Now that I recall it...'

'The first time, I felt my space energy improve was during the Earth's ascension to high star.'

\*thud\* He landed on the floor on his feet, his legs wobbly but he was like in a trance as his mind kept thinking 'That was when.. I was cornered in a pinch situation.'

\*flick\* Gritting her teeth, Calista's body blurred for a second as she appeared beside Zhao Tian and grabbed his neck, throwing him on the ground.

\*thoom\* His body was beaten to the ground, but his eyes were zoned out, thoughts swirling in his mind 'That moment... I was cornered and pressured by that golden eye in the sky.'

Calista appeared near him and raised her leg, giving a powerful kick to his torso, sending him flying into the air.

Zhao Tian's body spun rapidly in the air as he was again thrown to the walls and he thought in his mind 'Yeah.. and the second time, was in rupture.'

As Zhao Tian stood up, Calista saw that his eyes were not clear and he was zoning out "Did I hit too hard that you lost your mind?"

Zhao Tian's whole body trembled in pain as he struggled to even stand 'Yeah.. another life-threatening situation.'

'Was it desperation?'

'Will to survive?'

'My physique's ability to adapt?'

'Instinct?'

'Ohh, if I die my wives will be sad?'

'Which was it?'

'I don't know...'

'But in life-threatening situations like this... my brain works faster?'

Seeing him zoning out, Calista clicked her tongue and her gaze sharpened as she hurled to him, her fingers joined to create a spearhead-like shape.

\*sleesh\* With no hesitation, she thrust his hand right through his chest and he felt the sensation of her fingers tearing through the skin, ripping his heart as blood splashed through his back.

"Guhhh!"

Zhao Tian's gaze trembled as the blood spilled on his eyes, mixing with the white sclera 'Another life-threatening situation...'

'Think.'

'Comprehend.'

'Feel it...'

His eyes rolled downward as his bloodshot eyes looked into her dark black eyes "You should have gone for the head."

A sudden yellow glow emanated in his body and Calista felt her hand inside his chest being crushed by his mushy muscles.

'W-What? Is he using light energy to heal his wounds?'

Zhao Tian suddenly grabbed her hand and gripped her wrist tightly, his fingers digging into her skin as he slowly pulled her arm from his chest. "You put a nice hole in me."

Calista gritted her teeth as he pulled her right hand from his chest, her hand drenched with his blood.

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She hurriedly twisted her left hand giving him a punch but Zhao Tian deftly dodged that punch and turned his body, landing a swift kick on her face.

\*thud\* Her neck snapped to the left as she took some steps back and the dark energy surged from his kick, shocking her system.

"Haaa..." Taking a deep breath, she waved her hand, her hand dripping with his blood.

"Why don't you just die already?"

Calista muttered as she looked at the wound on his chest closing because of light energy 'Fuck this shit.. I got caught up in this.'

'Such a genius, with four elementals and the forbidden darkness. He is already matching up to me when he is two stages below me.'

'Huff.. Danger. Future threat... I need to exterminate him here.'

Her eyes glinted as she gripped her fist 'That artifact is a one-time use. I can't use it on this puny brat.'

\*flick\* She saw his nonchalant face and stretched her arms, her breasts jiggling with her body movements.

\*flick\* Without another word, she dashed to him and Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed 'Condense the space energy... and reduce the radius.'

His 'Arcane Enclave' was modified as the radius shrunk from 10 meters to 5 meters, but the space energy condensed in this short radius doubled.

As soon as she stepped into the domain, Zhao Tian saw her body moving at a slower rate than last time 'Welcome to my world, you damn gorilla.'

She threw a punch at his face, this time aiming for the head.

Zhao Tian could see through her moves and dodged to the left as he took a sharp dagger from his storage ring, slashing to her neck.

Hwa-

Calista's eyes shrank in shock and she barely made it in time as she raised her hand, taking the stab on her shoulder.

"Arghhhh!"

\*sqauch\* The dagger thrust through her skin, tearing her muscle as he pushed the dagger even deeper.

And without giving her a second to rest, he threw a fist to her face as his knuckles connected with her mouth.

\*THOOM\* She was blasted into the wall, her body crackling with dark lightning surging through her veins.

"URGH!!!"

She growled in utter pain and her face grimaced as she raised her gaze looking at Zhao Tian, whose body was crackling with dark lightning.

A smile stretched across his lips "Kill me more... so I can improve."

Chapter 547: Fight against the Gorilla [4]

Zhao Tian staggered, his body battered and bruised, as he barely managed to stay on his feet.

Blood dripped steadily from deep cuts across his arms and legs, pooling beneath him as his breath came in gasps.

\*woosh\* Calista's body blurred as she quickly raised her leg, giving a roundabout kick to his chest, blasting him off to the ground.

"Urgh!"

\*thoom\* His body was smashed to the ground as he rolled on the floor, his whole body aching in pain.

Despite the pain, Zhao Tian stood up, his mind reeling in thought as he licked the blood on his lips 'I am not even using light energy now... pushing my body to the brink, forcing myself to improve in a life threatening situation.'

'Fuck.. am I turning into a masochist?'

As he raised his gaze, blood dribbled down his face and saw the smirk on Calista's face "As I thought, you brat..."

"I have heard that even though light energy is rare, to heal big injuries... it will consume a lot of energy."

"That's why you are not healing your injuries now, right?."

Zhao Tian spat the blood seeping on his mouth and replied "Shut up, you gorilla."

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The only reason he is not healing is to push his body to the limits...

\*swoosh\* Clicking her tongue, she leaped forward, her fists wreathed in astral energy, and he barely managed to parry the blow, his arm trembling from the impact.

His eyes trembled momentarily, but he forced himself to stay focused.

Zhao Tian countered as dark lightning crackled from his fists and he launched a powerful punch aimed at her torso.

*\*flick\** Calista twisted aside at the last second, but the lightning grazed her, leaving a scorch mark on her shoulder.

She snarled, eyes narrowing in frustration. "You're persistent, but that's not enough to defeat me!"

Before he could respond, Calista slipped inside his guard, delivering a rapid sequence of punches and kicks that Zhao Tian struggled to deflect.

*\*thoom\** One punch landed squarely on his ribs, shattering bone with a sickening crunch.

"Argh!" He grunted in pain, stumbling back, but Calista gave him no time to recover.

*\*thud\** She followed up with a brutal kick to his chest, sending him crashing against the cavern floors.

"Fuck... she broke my left arm." Zhao Tian gasped, blood dripping from his mouth as he pushed himself off the floor.

His left arm dangled uselessly, pain lancing through him with every movement.

Calista grinned, noticing his weakened state, and pressed her advantage, lunging forward with blinding speed.

Zhao Tian raised his remaining good arm, barely managing to block her punch, but she quickly followed up with an elbow strike that connected with his jaw, snapping his head to the side.

His world spun, but he shook it off and turned his arm, delivering a punch, his arm crackling with dark energy.

Calista dodged but misjudged his momentum, and his fist collided with her shoulder, sending a surge of dark energy through her body.

"ARGHH!" She cried out as she stumbled back, momentarily disoriented.

As Zhao Tian again punched her, she sidestepped his fist, catching his arm with a twisted smile.

Before he could react, she pulled his arm with a brutal twist, and with a sickening \*rip\*, Zhao Tian's left arm tore from his shoulder.

Pain exploded in his mind as he stumbled back, blood pouring from the gruesome wound.

He barely managed to stay on his feet, his vision swimming from the shock and pain as his world seemed to narrow, every heartbeat pounding in his ears.

\*flick\* Faint golden energy flickered around his body...

--Inside his mind some beautiful voices echoes which he can't hear

"No... Vester is once again overclocking..."

"This will be the second time."

"This time, it is not intense... so he won't awaken his bloodline."

"His dark energy..."

"Wait... no, its disappearing."

....

The faint golden energy around Zhao Tian disappeared, and he instantly understood what this energy is.

'Ahh... I was close to bringing that energy... I gained back during the coup attempt in Zhenzhu...'

He still remembers the silver armor and the sword...

That's when he met his mother for the first time.

'Fuck it, it hurts... I should make pain killer pills the next time. Now then, I should kill this gorilla soon and leave.'

Ice energy swirled around his left shoulder as it closed the injury of the missing arm, stopping the blood loss.

\*thud\* Calista threw his torn arm aside as she had a smirk on her face "So, genius... what are you going to do now? It will consume a lot of energy to heal that arm."

Ignoring the excruciating pain, Zhao Tian centered himself, feeling the dark lightning within him surge stronger than ever.

'It's time to step up the gear...'

\*feen\* His domain expanded, filling the cavern with oppressive energy as he stepped forward, a cold glint passing through his eyes.

"H-Huh?"

Calista was startled by the sudden energy pressing her body and she felt her legs trembling.

'M-My body feels heavy....'

\*flick\* She barely had time to react as Zhao Tian appeared before her, his remaining arm coated in dark lightning.

\*thoom\* He delivered a powerful punch to her chest, sending her staggering back as she coughed a mouthful of blood "Guaargh!"

She countered, slashing at him with her claws, but he twisted just in time, deflecting her strike and landing a knee to her abdomen.

"Argh! You fucking bastard."

Looking at her bountiful body filled with bruises and injuries, Zhao Tian smiled "See, how beautiful I have made you..."

\*flick\* She spun on her heel, as she stretched her leg, giving a high kick to his face, but Zhao Tian steadily grabbed her foot.

He raised his own leg delivering a powerful kick to her face, snapping her jaw to the left as she twisted on the air falling to the floor.

"Arghhh!"

'W-Why does his attack feel so heavy and powerful than before?'

Zhao Tian looked at his bloodied right hand 'Adding space energy to my attacks... hmm, good improvement.'

As he thought, he glanced at Calista 'Now, time for pay back...'

Calista hurriedly stood up and took a fight posture, however, at this time \*THOOOOOMMMM\*

The whole cave shook for a second as a scream echoed through the surroundings "WHERE IS MY DISCIPLE?!"

Chapter 548: Where is my disciple?

\*THOOOOOMMMM\*

The ground quaked violently, sending cracks racing along the cave walls as a scream echoed through the surroundings: "WHERE IS MY DISCIPLE?!"

Huh?

Zhao Tian was startled to hear Yao Jing's voice ringing from outside.

Calista's gaze narrowed and she turned her gaze to the large stone door "Someone breached our gates?"

\*THOOM\*

The cave shook again as debris and dust began to fly in the air..

\*CRACK\* \*BOOM\* The enormous stone door was blasted to pieces as the crumbles of the door hurled through the air.

Amidst the spiraling dust, Yao Jing walked in, her body oozing out with a fiery red aura.

However, seeing Zhao Tian's face, her cold face disappeared as a smile stretched on her lips, relief flooding her heart "T-"

\*gasp\* Her breath caught on her throat and her smile froze as she looked at his body filled with bruises and his left hand was gone as he was barely standing there.

A cold glint passed through her eyes as she turned her gaze to Calista who was standing there naked.

Sensing Yao Jing's aura, Calista's body tensed up in nervousness 'She is powerful.. Is she his Master?'

Huh? What?

As she blinked her eyes, she felt her world turning upside down and her face smashed onto the floor. \*thoom\*

"Guaargh!"

Her eyes rolled upside down because of the sheer impact as blood gushed out of her nose and mouth.

'W-What?'

Before she could think any further, she felt her body flying in the air and her back brutally crashed against the cavern walls. \*boom\*

"ARGHHH!!" A pained growl escaped her lips, her mind completely blacked out as she fell to the floor, dust, and debris sticking to her wounds.

Zhao Tian let out a soft sigh and sat on the floor, seeing Yao Jing smashing Calista across the cave like a rag doll.

"How dare you..."

Crimson fire radiated from Yao Jing's body, emitting intense heat as she looked down at Calista who was trying to get up.

Calista slowly pulled herself up and her body wobbled, struggling to stay conscious and her vision was totally blurred.

She shook her head, trying to gain some clarity but it was useless and she felt her blood trickling down from her head.

'W-What the hell just happened?' she gasped, her mind racing to comprehend the overwhelming power she was facing.

'I-i need to use that... if not I will die.'

She quickly used her storage ring and took out a glowing purple lantern "Die!"

As she infused her astral energy inside the artifact it glowed in a purple ominous light and Yao Jing's eyes narrowed 'That artifact feels... death.'

\*flick\* She disappeared from her place and grasped Calista's head, smashing it on the floor.  
\*thoom\*

"Argh!! \*cough\* \*cough\*" The artifact stumbled from her hand as it rolled down on the floor before she could fully use it and the flickering purplish light disappeared.

Yao Jing's face was nonchalant as she pressed her foot on Calista's chest, crushing her ribcage.

"GAAAARRGH!! HAARGHHHH!!!!"

Calista convoluted in pain feeling the horrific weight on her chest and Yao Jing leaned down grabbing both of her arms which were twitching.

Clasping her hands tightly, Yao Jing pulled them with brute strength and her muscles tore as she ripped both of her hands from her body.

\*squeach\* Calista's eyes shrank in pain as she felt her arms being ripped apart and struggled on the ground like a worm.

"ARGH!!"

"Shut up bitch, you did the same to my disciple..." Yao Jing stomped her foot on Calista's face, shutting her down as she was screaming way too hard.

Looking at the horror, Zhao Tian was surprised and glanced at the cold look on Yao Jing's face 'Is she really just an alchemist...?'

Throwing the two hands away, Yao Jing turned to look at Zhao Tian who was sitting on the ground with a tired sigh.

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"Tian'er, do you want to torture this woman too?"

Hearing her casual tone, Zhao Tian shook his head and Yao Jing frowned slightly "Ok then."

\*woosh\* Crimson flames erupted from her body as it spread around Calista, scorching her body.

"GUARGH- muff"

As she began to scream again, Yao Jing pressed her foot harder on her face, smashing her skull.

Calista's eyes trembled in horror, her eyes blinded by the crimson flames and soon, the flames fully consumed her.

\*thrish\* The flames scorched her into ashes as they turned into dust and fell on the floor.

Yao Jing hurriedly approached Zhao Tian and kneeled beside him, quickly taking high-grade healing pills from her storage ring.

"Tian'er..."

Her voice softened as she tried to push the pill into his lips but Zhao Tian refused the pill and shook his head.

In the next instant, yellow energy radiated around Zhao Tian's body and Yao Jing's eyes trembled in utter shock.

"Y-You have light elemental, Tian'er.. but it will consume a lot of energy to heal the hand. So, here.. eat the pill."

Zhao Tian shook his head and smiled faintly, as the muscles and tendons with bone tissues began to heal.

Quickly his left arm healed completely and he clenched his palm, again feeling his hand "Haa..."

A soft sigh escaped Yao Jing's lips as she hugged him in her arms "Sorry Tian'er.. I was late."

Zhao Tian closed his eyes softly feeling her warmth "No... it was my mistake."

Retracting the hug a little, she glanced around at the corpses of the workers and the blood on the floor "You fought very well.. I am surprised, you fought against that woman and injured her to that degree."

She raised her hand rubbing the small bruises and blood stains from his cheek "She is two stages above you, you know?"

Zhao Tian let out a weak chuckle as he replied "Just know that your disciple is a genius..."

A slight frown crept over her face as she spoke "And Tian, I can feel different elemental energies from your body... and a hint of darkness."

"What even happened here?"

Chapter 549: Alchemy Exploration [9]

A slight frown crept over Yao Jing's face as she spoke "And Tian, I can feel different elemental energies from your body... and a hint of darkness."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed and he smoothly replied "The elementals energies are mine... I have affinities to Ice, lightning, fire and light."

W-WHAT?

Yao Jing's heart skipped a beat in shock and her words stammered "Y-You have affinities to four elementals?"

A soft sigh escaped his lips "Mhm... and the darkness is from that woman. She was using some kind of artifact that exuded darkness and used it on me."

Yao Jing snapped out of her shock and her gaze narrowed as she turned to look at the purple lantern "I see... she also tried to use that weird artifact on me."

She turned her gaze to Zhao Tian and brushed his hair which was sticking on the blood on his face "I didn't know... you have affinities to four elementals, Tian'er."

Zhao Tian just stayed silent and hugged her while she gently patted her head.

Raising her head, she again took a look at the large machines and bunches of mined High Astral stones.

"I didn't know there was a Astral mine within this forest... They tried to kill you, because you found their Astral mine?"

Zhao Tian gave a faint nod "Yeah... I fell into the crack created by an earthquake in the past, because of a sudden landslide."

"And when I walked in... I found myself in this Astral Mine."

He pointed at the large hole he has created and began explaining what happened.

After hearing his explanation, Yao Jing's gaze narrowed "An astral mine with Mother Stone.... this might cause problems."

"We should return to the Sect and report this soon."

Yao Jing stood up and slashed her hand as chaotic flames erupted from her body covering all of the dead bodies there, soon burning them to ashes.

As she was burning them, Zhao Tian stood up and walked to the purple lantern Calista was trying to use.

Taking the purple lantern in his hands, his eyes narrowed "This artifact indeed feels quite weird."

As he took it in his hand, the blood stain on his hand rubbed the artifact, and suddenly a rush of information entered his mind.

He blinked his eyes in surprise "Lantern of Eternal rest. A one time use artifact which can instant kill anyone and trap their soul inside it."

"Basically a container that can store a soul... Interesting."

He stored the lantern in his storage ring as it may help him in the future or he can use it on Eleanor, who was inside his artifact now.

As Yao Jing was burning those corpses, the flashbacks of the past surfaced to her mind, and she closed her eyes 'How long has it been since I took a life...'

'I even promised the Sect master that I wouldn't kill anyone...'

Her eyelashes quivered as she heard the distant voices of the soldiers screaming as she burned them alive, extracting their life essence.

"Master..."

Hearing Zhao Tian's voice, she snapped out of her thoughts and turned her head.

She reached out placing her hands on his shoulders as she spoke, her voice laced with concern "Why are you walking? Rest..."

Zhao Tian shook his head with a smile "I am okay..."

However, Yao Jing was not buying it and turned her back to him as she crouched down slightly "Come on, hop on my back.. I will carry you."

Eh?

Seeing this, Zhao Tian hurriedly shook his head "No, you don't need to. I am alright."

Yao Jing glanced at him from over her shoulder, her lips curling into a knowing smile and there was a glint of amusement in her gaze, but it was tempered by genuine care.

"You don't have to be embarrassed," she said, her voice teasing but gentle.

"You carried me on your back once, remember? I still owe you for that. It's only fair that I repay the favor now."

"I don't think that's the same thing," he muttered with a dry smile on his lips.

Yao Jing wasn't having any of it and straightened slightly, her hands on her hips as she turned to face him fully. "Tian'er, stop being stubborn and just get on. You're not fooling anyone by acting tough."

Her words left no room for argument, and Zhao Tian sighed in resignation. He knew her well enough to understand there was no winning against her when she was this determined. Your journey continues on [MVL](#)

Reluctantly, he stepped closer, his movements awkward and hesitant.

With a small hop, he settled onto her back, his arms instinctively wrapping around her neck for support.

Yao Jing's hands gripped his thighs firmly, securing him in place as she straightened to her full height.

As they started moving, Zhao Tian could feel his face heating up as a faint flush crept across his cheeks, and he turned his head to the side, trying to avoid meeting her gaze.

"This is really embarrassing," he muttered under his breath, his voice barely above a whisper.

Yao Jing chuckled softly, "Oh, come on. It's not that bad. Besides," she added with a smirk, "you carried me without complaining. Can't you let me do the same for you just this once?"

Zhao Tian's lips twitched, but he couldn't bring himself to argue further.

Instead, he tightened his grip slightly around her neck, as she continued her walk around 'I am not doing this again.'

...

Looking at the large diamond like stone embedded on the ceiling, Yao Jing frowned "Hmm.. it is indeed a Mother stone, we should report this to the Sect master."

"The Great Tianhe forest is a public property and anyone can come and go.. so no one can gain ownership over this mine."

"So, this will definitely spark wars among Dynasties and Sects, trying to get this mine."

"However, seems like this organization sneaked here and has been mining astral stones."

"Tian'er, did you find out which organization is that?"

Zhao Tian who was on her back, nodded his head "Hm, she called its as 'Fallen Mandate.'"

Chapter 550: Alchemy Exploration [10]

Nodding his head, Zhao Tian replied "Hm, she called it as 'Fallen Mandate.'"

Huh?

Yao Jing was startled to hear the name and her eyes squinted in thought "That organization? It's dangerous."

Zhao Tian got curious and moved his face closer to hers "You know about that organization?"

Turning her head to look at him, Yao Jing gave a nod "Hm, they are the most dangerous organization in High Stars... they are more notorious than Space pirates."

"They are like the people who control the High Stars from the underworld... though I heard their influence reaches till the Astral Realm."

"That even their main branch is in Astral Realm."

Upon hearing this, Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed and Yao Jing spoke "We need to report this as quickly as possible... but we have already ventured hundreds of kilometers in this forest."

"So, going back now without finding the herb will waste our time. let's search for another week."

"If we do not find that herb by then, we can return and report this to the Sect master."

Zhao Tian nodded his head agreeing to her idea "Okay."

They walked back through the stone door, reaching outside as the cold night wind blew their faces.

Hugging her neck closely, Zhao Tian asked "So, how did you find me?"

Yao Jing rolled her eyes as she continued her walk "I prepared the tent and was waiting for you.. but seeing that you are not returning even after an hour."

"I quickly began to search for you and I heard loud sounds from here.. so I came here."

"And I sensed your presence inside the door, so I rushed in."

Zhao Tian nodded his head "I see..."

Yao Jing caressed her cheek with his and asked, "So, what were you doing with that woman naked? And you are also in boxers... Did she try to assault you?"

Hearing this, Zhao Tian smiled dryly and replied "Something like that."

Yao Jing let out a sigh "But I am very impressed with you, you were holding your ground against a powerful cultivator who is two stages above you."

Her green eyes wavered, a flicker of doubt crossing them and she hesitated before speaking again. "And you have four elemental affinities... Such a genius with unparalleled potential and great combat prowess."

She paused, her lips pressing together briefly, before continuing. "If the Sect Master came to know about this, she might even take you in as her disciple. Someone like you..." She trailed off, the words lodging in her throat.

Turning her gaze to Zhao Tian, she forced herself to meet his eyes, "I think you would be better off with the Wing Masters. They could train you in combat and help you unleash your full potential."

She took a deep breath, her lips parting as she struggled to voice what she had been thinking for a while. "Are you... really okay with me being your Master? I can't train you to fight. All I know is alchemy."

The words tasted bitter in her mouth, but she pushed forward, determined to be honest. "Maybe we should... break our master-disciple relationship. What do you think, Tian'er?"

Her voice faltered slightly, and she glanced away, unable to fully meet his gaze. "Staying with me will hinder your progression, and you would be better off under someone who can shape you into the cultivator you're meant to be."

Zhao Tian let out a soft chuckle "At first, I became your disciple only for some credits."

His hands around her neck tightened softly "But now... after spending time with you, I think I like being with you."

"And if I became the disciple of some other wing master.. they would always train me, burden me with expectations... I will lose my freedom."

"But with you Yao Jing... I am comfortable."

H-huh?

Yao Jing's eyes trembled as a pink blush spread across her cheeks and her heart began to race in her chest, each beat loud enough that she wondered if he could hear it.

"Huh?"

But suddenly she burst out laughing, her melodious laugh mingling with the cold night "Bahahahahaha, that felt like a love confession..."

"You made my heart skip a beat, my cute disciple."

Zhao Tian smiled dryly and replied "Don't make it weird... idiot."

A large smile stretched on Yao Jing's lips as she laughed genuinely, her worries dissipating after hearing his answer "You are very cute, my disciple. Hehehehe!"

However, at this time, Zhao Tian suddenly remembered something "Wait, the woman."

Hm? Yao Jing was surprised and turned her head "Hm? Who?"

Zhao Tian's gaze narrowed "The one I saved at the cave.. let's go to the cave."

"Eh? Which cave..."

He pointed towards a side and uttered "That side.. probably."

"Wait, what is happening?"

"Just go there."

"Okay, Sir."

...

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Huh? Entering the cave, Zhao Tian glanced around in confusion "Where did she go?"

Yao Jing who was walking beside him was confused "Which woman, Tian'er..."

He turned to her and replied, "I saw an injured woman when I was passing by this cave. so I healed her and placed her here."

"Seems like she woke up and left the cave."

Yao Jing raised an eyebrow and asked in a teasing tone "Are you sure you really saw a woman? Or were you imagining things?"

--

With a shake of his head, Zhao Tian took an orange feather from his storage ring and showed it to her "There was an Ember raven with her, and after healing her.. it gave me this feather."

Hm? Yao Jing reached out and took the feather in her hand, looking at it keenly "It is indeed real.. and it is unusual for an Ember Raven to be in snow mountains like this."

"Hm.. the Ember raven must be that woman's tamed beast. So you were telling the truth."

A soft sigh escaped his lips "Seems like she left.. well, forget about it."

He looked down at the bruises, and dust on his body and he was only wearing boxers "I will go and wash my body."

Yao Jing sighed softly "Don't go lost again.. return to the tent properly..."

"Yeah.. yeah..."

As he walked out of the cave she looked at his back and her eyes softened as a gentle smile spread across her lips.

"Idiot disciple."