

Martial Arts 251

Chapter 251: What is Meant to Come, Will Always Come

The road from Anshan City to Song Family Castle.

Two armored vehicles flanked a large truck in the middle, advancing rapidly.

The commotion they caused attracted many Fierce Beasts.

The timid ones fled at the sound, running away on all fours.

The braver ones stood their ground, watching the three vehicles pass by.

Some aggressive ones even charged directly at the convoy.

Every time this happened, two or three dark barrels protruded from the front and rear armored vehicles.

"Bang bang bang!"

"Bang bang bang!"

Flames burst from the muzzles.

The dull gunfire echoed across the wasteland.

The charging Fierce Beasts were either turned into riddled carcasses, lying in pools of blood.

Or they turned tail the moment they heard the gunfire.

Thus, the convoy proceeded smoothly and without incident.

"Are these damn beasts ever going to stop?"

The man driving the large truck in the middle grumbled impatiently.

"After so many runs, haven't you gotten used to this?"

The man in the passenger seat, arms crossed and reclining lazily on his chair, said, "These are just mid to low-level Fierce Beasts, be glad we haven't encountered any high-level ones."

"True enough."

Upon hearing this, Yan Junwei took one hand off the wheel, fetched a cigarette from the pack, lit it with a lighter, and exhaled a smoke ring. He cursed, "Damn it, I wonder when we'll finally stop doing this job."

"Who knows."

Beside him, Tian Country sighed, "We're among the weakest in the caravan, what can we do?"

The atmosphere in the truck suddenly grew silent.

Despite driving, these two were undeniably Mingjin Martial Artists.

They had no choice but to escort supplies.

Although the Fierce Beasts on the route from Anshan City to Song Family Castle were mostly mid to low-level, what if a high-level Fierce Beast showed up?

There were plenty of times in the past when convoys were wiped out by a single high-level Fierce Beast.

After that, the merchants decided it was best to have Entry Force Martial Artists handle transportation.

However, this didn't guarantee absolute safety. If they encountered a high-level Fierce Beast, it was still uncertain who would live and who would die.

Yan Junwei finished his cigarette, extinguished the butt, and curiously asked, "Old Tian, I heard things have been a bit chaotic in the trading company lately? Some veterans were killed?"

"You mean the masked archer from the Martial Arts Association?"

Tian Country replied.

"Yeah, that's him."

Yan Junwei nodded and inhaled sharply, "I heard that guy is fierce, took out seven or eight of our people, several of them were powerful Martial Artists. Old Tian, you're well-informed, is it true?"

"Absolutely."

Tian Country immediately sat up straight, shivering a bit as he said, "That guy kills one if he encounters one, two if he encounters two. Later on, others in the association were so scared that no one dared to bother him. I heard Lu Yang eventually brought in a Meridian Refining Martial Artist to deal with him."

"A Meridian Refining Martial Artist!"

Yan Junwei gasped.

To him, a powerful Martial Artist was already unattainable in this lifetime.

Meridian Refining Martial Artists were even beyond imagination.

"So, is that guy dead for sure now?"

"Not as simple as you think."

Tian Country shook his head and recounted the follow-up he had heard.

Yan Junwei was stunned and muttered after a while, "That guy's lucky. If not for their president showing up in time, he'd be dead, right?"

"Yeah."

Tian Country nodded, "But having offended the trading company, he can't hide forever. Sooner or later, he'll be caught."

"Exactly."

Yan Junwei nodded repeatedly.

Dare to kill someone from the trading company? Do they even know who's backing the company?

It's like setting up camp next to a dung pit, courting death.

By the way, didn't that Qin Ye, a Meridian Refining Realm expert, leave the city with Lord Guan yesterday morning? I wonder if he's back yet.

If not, what if that guy gets word and takes the chance to slip away?

"Never mind, that's Lu Yang's problem. I'm just a Mingjin Martial Artist. I'll focus on my job."

He shook his head.

Time slowly passed.

In the distance, the outline of Song Family Castle gradually appeared.

The two exchanged glances and simultaneously breathed a sigh of relief.

As they got closer, Tian Country's brow furrowed.

Last time they came, there were at least twenty or thirty guards on the walls and many more at the gate.

But today...

The guards on the wall were significantly fewer.

"Old Yan, don't you think there's something off about Song Family Castle today?"

"Off? What's off?"

Yan Junwei looked around, "Nothing seems off, looks the same as before, no?"

"Maybe I'm just overthinkin'?"

muttered Tian Country.

His inner unease, however, grew stronger.

The guards at the gate saw the convoy coming and quickly removed the barricades, allowing them to enter the city.

The three vehicles stopped, and soon, more than ten people emerged from the front and rear armored vehicles, all Muscle Refining Martial Artists, breathing in the fresh air deeply.

Yan Junwei and Tian Country also jumped off the truck.

They glanced around but didn't see any familiar faces.

"Where's your captain?"

Yan Junwei frowned, a bit displeased.

Not just a mere guard team captain, even Song Family Castle's Lord Song Hailong would greet him respectfully.

But today, they were already here, yet no one had come to welcome them?

And Lord Guan's brother wasn't here either?

"Please wait a moment, sirs. My master will be here shortly."

A young man in training clothes bowed deeply.

"Master?"

Yan Junwei and Tian Country exchanged glances.

The surrounding Muscle Refining Martial Artists also sensed the unusual atmosphere.

"Who's your master?"

Yan Junwei scrutinized the man.

"My master is the head of Gale Martial Arts Hall in the castle."

The man bowed, trembling.

These men were likely Entry Force Martial Artists, even his master would be deferential to them.

Most importantly, these people were from Anshan City!

The inevitable had arrived.

"No,"

Yan Junwei scowled, "I asked where your captain is, what does your master have to do with this? What, is little Gale Martial Arts Hall that important?"

"No, that's not what I meant."

Sweat poured off the man's forehead, his face pale, wanting to explain but unable to.

Just then, an elderly voice called from afar.

"Sirs, my disciple didn't mean that. Some things have happened..."

An elder in his fifties or sixties quickly approached, shielding the young man and smiling.

The young man finally relaxed, realizing his clothes were soaked with sweat in those brief moments.

"You..."

Yan Junwei was furious.

Why did everything feel so eerie today?

Was it that hard to find Cheng Lei?

Tian Country stopped him, narrowing his eyes at the elder, "Are you the head of Gale Martial Arts Hall? What do you mean by things have happened?"

"Yes, it's me. To be honest, Song Family Castle has undergone dramatic changes in just a few days. Let's go inside and discuss."

The elder gestured invitingly.

Despite appearing calm, he was extremely anxious.

"???"

Yan Junwei and Tian Country exchanged puzzled glances, and the latter nodded.

"Fine, let's go inside. I'd love to see what you're up to."

The three of them entered.

"Please sit."

The elder offered them the sofa and served tea, "Before we talk, please prepare yourselves."

"Get to the point."

Yan Junwei felt like throwing the tea in the elder's face.

Tian Country's frown deepened. He sensed something was off the moment they got here.

Considering the commotion earlier, anyone with status would have shown up already, but he hadn't seen anyone he knew.

The conclusion was obvious.

"Something happened?"

Bai Hong was stunned, then tears welled up, and he nodded silently.

"What! Something happened? What happened?"

Yan Junwei was shocked.

"Captain Guan, Captain Cheng, and even our Song Family Castle's Lord," Bai Hong glanced at them and said in a low voice, "they're all dead."

"Boom"

Yan Junwei and Tian Country were stunned, their minds echoing with those words.

Captain Guan?

That's Guan Dexi?

He's dead?

Not just him, but Cheng Lei and even Song Hailong were dead?

How is that possible!!!

They looked at each other, seeing the disbelief in each other's eyes.

"Sirs, I know it sounds unbelievable, but it's true."

Bai Hong smiled bitterly, "Captain Guan's body is preserved, intact. If you don't believe me, come see for yourselves."

"Fine, take us there!"

Tian Country jumped up, glaring at the elder, "If we find out you're lying, you know the consequences."

"How would I dare?"

Bai Hong smiled bitterly.

Cheng Lei and Song Hailong were insignificant.

Their deaths were actually beneficial to him.

But Guan Dexi shouldn't have died. He was the brother of an influential figure!

His death would shake Song Family Castle!

They headed to the basement, where Guan Dexi's body lay in an ice coffin.

Besides looking peaceful, there were no visible wounds on him.

Yan Junwei and Tian Country were shocked.

Guan Dexi was really dead!

How did he die? Who killed him?

Chapter 252: Is it a Coincidence?

The next moment, Yan Junwei turned his head to look at Bai Hong, his eyes filled with undisguised murderous intent.

"Don't act rashly."

Tian Guo shook his head at him and turned to Bai Hong, "Speak, what exactly happened? How did Captain Guan die? And what about the deaths of Cheng Lei and the others?"

Bai Hong let out a sigh of relief and hurriedly spilled everything he knew, like beans spilling from a bamboo tube.

The more they listened, the more shocked Yan Junwei and Tian Guo's expressions became.

"Are you saying that someone from a nearby small stronghold killed Captain Guan?" Yan Junwei looked like he didn't believe a word of it.

"Senior, I am not entirely clear on the specifics of the situation either."

Bai Hong's face contorted into an awkward smile, "This conclusion was reached after Castelan Song and Captain Cheng examined the scene and discussed it. I only learned about it after inquiring from many sources."

"Chen Family Stronghold, huh?"

Tian Guo noted the name and then asked, "And then? What happened after that?"

"The next morning, Castelan Song took all the guards from the fortress, even dragged along two cannons, and attacked the Chen Family Stronghold, intending to avenge Captain Guan."

"Hmph." Yan Junwei snorted coldly, "This Song Hailong thinks he's doing something grand. The people are dead, so what use is it to kill the enemies? Can that bring back Lord Guan's brother?"

"That was indeed Castelan Song's thinking. However, he never returned after he left."

"What!"

Yan Junwei's mouth hung open.

Tian Guo also looked shocked.

"Yes, seniors, you heard me right."

Bai Hong let out a deep sigh, "About thirty to forty people, including the Castelan and Captain Cheng, none of them came back."

The atmosphere instantly became deathly silent.

Yan Junwei and Tian Guo looked at each other, flabbergasted.

Are you kidding?

The Chen Family Stronghold, which sounds like a small stronghold with just two or three hundred people, can't be compared to a stronghold like the Song Family Castle with thousands of people.

Yet Song Hailong brought all his guards, and even two cannons... and still didn't conquer a small stronghold?

All their men died? Isn't that absurd?

"How do I know you aren't lying to us?"

Tian Guo sneered, "If I'm not mistaken, isn't the entire Song Family Castle under your control now? Could it be that you killed them and are playing the innocent with us?"

After hearing this, Yan Junwei's eyes again flashed with murderous intent.

If that were the case, the two of them killing this guy would be a great achievement.

"Seniors, for one, I had no enmity with the Castelan and the others, and I wouldn't dare to kill Captain Guan,

secondly, my strength wouldn't allow it. Though I am an Entry Force Martial Artist, my internal energy and blood have long decayed. Even if I fought to the death, I wouldn't necessarily be a match for Captain

Cheng. Besides, with so many of them, fully armed with weapons and cannons, how could I have killed them all? I'd be shot to pieces before I even got close."

Bai Hong wanted to cry but had no tears.

If he weren't burdened with family, he would have long fled this place of trouble.

"Is that so?"

Yan Junwei snorted coldly, though inwardly he also felt it was unlikely.

"So, it was the Chen Family Stronghold people that killed Song Hailong and his men?"

Tian Guo asked again.

"Well,"

Bai Hong looked troubled, "I'm not sure who did it. Earlier, I mustered the courage to check out the Chen Family Stronghold."

"Oh? What did you find?"

"The whole Chen Family Stronghold was already in ruins, likely bombed. I suspect it was the Castelan's doing. But what happened afterward, I am not sure. They all disappeared. Even their vehicles and cannons they took were gone."

Bai Hong wiped the sweat from his forehead, "I found it too strange and didn't dare to get too close. After a rough look, I came back and waited for officials from Anshan City to arrive and then explained everything. As soon as you two seniors arrived, someone informed me. You know the rest."

After hearing this, Yan Junwei and Tian Guo were baffled.

The Chen Family Stronghold had been bombed to ruins.

How could Song Hailong and his men disappear, then?

Their weapons and vehicles taken - evidently, someone had taken them.

Who took them?

Probably the same group who made Song Hailong and his men disappear.

"Alright, we've understood the situation. You wait outside, and don't come in without our permission," Tian Guo said coldly.

"Yes, yes."

Bai Hong nodded and bowed, then left to wait.

"Old Tian, what do you think about this?"

Yan Junwei looked outside, "Do you think that old fellow told the truth? Is he really innocent, and all of this is the work of the Chen Family Stronghold?"

Tian Guo pondered, "The old fellow probably doesn't have the guts to deceive us. Also, with his strength, he couldn't possibly wipe out the entire guard team."

"Hmm."

Yan Junwei nodded. Even a Transforming Force Martial Artist wouldn't survive a direct hit from a cannon shell.

"So, it's very likely that this is the doing of the Chen Family Stronghold?"

Pacing, Yan Junwei said, "Whether it's the death of Guan Dexi or the disappearance of Song Hailong and the others, they are related to the Chen Family Stronghold. Even if they didn't kill them, they are definitely involved."

"You're right."

Tian Guo nodded.

A small stronghold with merely two or three hundred people achieving this? It's likely they have some powerful backers.

"Old Tian, what do you think about going to the Chen Family Stronghold now? We might find some clues,"

Yan Junwei asked excitedly.

To be honest, they weren't overly concerned about Guan Dexi's death—it had little to do with them.

Reporting this to Lord Guan might even earn them some credit.

Better yet, if they could locate the culprits, all the better.

"Old Yan, I fear it's not as simple as it seems,"

Tian Guo said, his face resolute.

"What do you mean?"

Yan Junwei was puzzled.

The situation was indeed complex. That's why they needed to inspect the scene, right?

"Old Yan, do you remember Lord Guan leaving the city early yesterday with a group of Meridian Refining Realm Martial Artists?"

"Of course. The whole Anshan City knows that. What's the point?"

Yan Junwei responded without thinking.

"Don't you find the timing a bit coincidental?"

"!!!!"

Yan Junwei stood there, struck by a flash of realization.

Yes,

The timing was oddly coincidental.

Song Hailong attacked the Chen Family Stronghold early in the morning.

Lord Guan led his men out of Anshan City early in the morning.

Is it possible that both parties went to the same location?

It is possible.

Song Hailong could've informed Lord Guan at some point, whether sooner or later.

"It seems you guessed it too,"

Tian Guo took a deep breath and said, "Song Hailong and his team never returned. Their weapons and equipment are missing, indicating they face grave danger. Moreover, we haven't seen Lord Guan return yet, have we?"

Yan Junwei's eyes almost popped out. He swallowed hard and whispered, "Old Tian, are you suggesting even Lord Guan?"

Tian Guo shook his head, "I don't know. Maybe I'm overthinking. Lord Guan might have already returned, and we just don't know it."

"But his brother's body is still here?"

Yan Junwei was bewildered.

If Lord Guan had returned, he must be unaware of his brother's fate.

Otherwise, he would have retrieved the body long ago.

Tian Guo remained silent.

He thought of the worst possibility.

That is, Lord Guan also went to the Chen Family Stronghold and then met the same fate as Song Hailong and his men.

If so, this matter is too deep and not something a mere Mingjin Martial Artist like him could involve himself in.

"Old Yan, we better not go to the Chen Family Stronghold,"

he said sternly, "We should immediately inform Lu Yang and let him notify the higher-ups. If Lord Guan is indeed in trouble, only the City Lord can resolve this."

"The City Lord."

Yan Junwei's breath caught.

This situation is so serious?

The City Lord must intervene?

"Alright, alright."

Though stunned, he quickly took out his phone to find Lu Yang's number and dialed it.

"Beep, beep, beep..."

The phone rang.

Minutes passed, then the phone automatically hung up.

"No answer?"

Tian Guo was surprised.

"I'll try again."

Yan Junwei, frustrated, dialed again.

Still no answer.

"What's going on?"

Yan Junwei grew anxious.

He called twice more, but still no answer.

"Forget it. Let's just go back and report this to him in person," Tian Guo frowned.

"Huh?"

Yan Junwei was startled but nodded.

Indeed, such a serious matter requires a face-to-face explanation.

"What about the body?"

"Leave it here. Just in case, take the old man along. We'll let him explain to Lu Yang or the higher-ups."

"Okay."

Yan Junwei quickly agreed.

They stepped outside.

Bai Hong opened his mouth to say something but was cut off by Yan Junwei, "Our boss wants to see you. Come with us."

Bai Hong was taken aback but reluctantly agreed.

The three got into an off-road vehicle and drove out of the city, heading toward Anshan City.

The car was silent, except for their breathing.

Because they all knew, a storm was brewing.

Chapter 253: One Arrow, Thirty Times the Power

In the villa, Chen Fan looked at the skill bar on the panel.

[Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique: Completely Ignorant (0%)]

He moved his mind and added some experience points.

The skill level immediately increased by one-eightieth.

"Eighty points."

Chen Fan nodded secretly, increasing his expectations for the power of this archery technique by a few notches.

Because before this, [Basic Archery] level wasn't as high as it was now, when [Cloud-Piercing Arrow Technique] was raised to the beginner level, it only consumed forty points of experience points.

But for [Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique], it directly required twice that.

After adding the remaining experience points, Chen Fan immediately felt a slight warm flow through his arms.

"It seems to also enhance the strength attribute."

He thought to himself, looking at the skill bar.

[Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique: Initial Glimpse (0%), Trait: Strength of One Ox Level 1]

[Strength of One Ox: For every level the skill increases, the strength attribute permanently increases by 100 points]

"A thousand pounds."

Chen Fan muttered.

Compared to [Cloud-Piercing Arrow Technique]'s powerful trait, it was more than doubled.

strength attribute points may not seem much, but if this archery technique is raised to perfection, it can increase 500 strength attribute points.

For someone like him, whose current strength attribute exceeds 10,000 points, that's still a 5% increase.

It looks like not much, but don't forget, this is just a Meridian Refining Realm martial art, and it's one that focuses on weaponry.

If it's the same level of fist and kick martial arts, when perfected, this attribute boost could be close to 10%.

Learning seven or eight such techniques could almost double the basic attribute.

"Continue."

Chen Fan added another 160 experience points.

This time, in addition to the slight warm flow in his arms, there was also a flash of inspiration in his mind.

[Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique: Slight Achievement (0%), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 2, Arrow Shooting the Sky Level 1]

[Arrow Shooting the Sky: Active Skill, when activated, consumes 3,000 points of True Qi, doubling the range, and for every level increased, True Qi consumption reduces by 10%.]

"Doubling the range."

Chen Fan showed a contemplative expression.

The advantage of an archer is mainly their long range, allowing them to attack the enemy while staying out of their reach.

If the range is doubled, then the archer's deterrence on the battlefield will increase exponentially.

This active skill is quite powerful.

The only drawback is that as the skill level increases, the range does not increase further but instead reduces the True Qi consumption.

If raised to the perfection realm, it can reduce consumption by 40%, costing 1,800 points of True Qi for activation.

"Not bad, there should be more powerful skills to be unlocked later."

Chen Fan clenched his fist. After all, according to the introduction of this archery technique, it has the power to shoot down the sun.

After consuming 320 experience points, the skill level rose another notch.

Not unlocking any new traits did not surprise Chen Fan.

He added another 640 experience points without any new traits either.

"Only one last chance left."

Chen Fan took a deep breath.

He added 1,280 experience points at once, and almost instantly, a strange feeling surged in his heart.

[Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique: Perfection (No Upgrade), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 5, Arrow Shooting the Sky Level 4, Sun Arrow Level 1]

"It's here!"

Chen Fan immediately clicked on it.

[Sun Arrow: Active Skill, when activated, consumes 10,000 points of True Qi, increasing the power of the archery technique tenfold. For every level increased, True Qi consumption increases tenfold, and the power of the archery technique increases tenfold.]

"Ten times!"

Chen Fan was overjoyed.

Previously, even using 3,000 points of True Qi to perform the Cloud-Piercing Stone-Shattering Arrow couldn't instantly kill a Fire Scaly Pig.

Now, unlocking the Sun Arrow, he could definitely kill it with one shot!

He could even deal damage to a Commander-level Fierce Beast.

If he changed the bow in his hand to a better one...

Chen Fan didn't dare to think further.

He looked ahead at the activation condition, which is the consumption of 10,000 points of True Qi.

This condition is quite harsh. He suspected that this skill might not be prepared for Meridian Refining Martial Artists but likely for True Essence Realm Martial Artists to execute.

Additionally, there was another line of information.

This trait can continue to be upgraded.

A Level 2 Sun Arrow would increase the power of the archery technique hundredfold!

As a consequence, the True Qi amount required for activation would spike to 100,000 points.

"Unfortunately, my current Basic Archery level is still relatively low. Even if I enhance my internal True Qi to 100,000 points in a while, it won't be useful."

Chen Fan sighed slightly, feeling a bit regretful.

Still, the tenfold power Sun Arrow is already quite impressive for now.

The hundredfold power one will be unlocked eventually as he slowly increases the Basic Archery level.

"Spending less than 3,000 experience points in total to perfect the Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique, next will be the Flaming Arrow Technique's turn."

Chen Fan's gaze fell on the Flaming Arrow Technique.

He was curious about this archery technique that could transform the True Qi attribute and wanted to see what traits it would unlock as its proficiency level increased.

As usual, he tested the waters by adding one experience point to it.

Seeing the proficiency level increase by 1% and then stop moving.

"Hmm?"

Chen Fan was a bit surprised.

[Flaming Arrow Technique] consumed even more experience points than [Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique]?

This made his anticipation grow even more.

He added the remaining required experience points.

A slight warm flow passed through his arms again.

His strength increased by a small amount.

[Flaming Arrow Technique: Initial Glimpse (0%), Trait: Strength of One Ox Level 1]

Looking at the skill bar, Chen Fan found it amusing.

This was exactly like the beginner level of Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique but required twenty more experience points.

After some internal complaining, he added 200 experience points.

In an instant, a strange feeling arose from within.

[Flaming Arrow Technique: Slight Achievement (0%), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 2, Fire Fiend Level 1]

"Fire Fiend?"

Chen Fan's eyes lit up.

He didn't expect to unlock a trait related to the Fire Attribute True Qi so quickly.

[Fire Fiend: Active Skill, when activated, consumes 3,000 points of True Qi, converting the practitioner's internal True Qi into Fire Attribute True Qi, infusing it into the arrow. When the arrow hits the enemy, the Fire Attribute True Qi invades the enemy's body and explodes, causing massive fire attribute damage. For every level increased, True Qi consumption and explosion power both increase by onefold.]

"Invading and exploding inside the enemy's body."

Chen Fan frowned slightly.

This effect was quite strong!

After all, the fierce beasts' defenses are mainly on their exterior, like scales or tough skins and muscles, but their internal defenses are not as strong.

With the same 3,000 points of True Qi, a Cloud-Piercing Stone-Shattering Arrow could only severely injure a Fire Scaly Pig.

But activating Fire Fiend, the arrow might not even break through the opponent's scales, yet the Fire Attribute True Qi carried by the arrow could invade the opponent's body upon contact.

Directly exploding and killing the opponent from the inside.

This move would also be effective against human martial artists, including Awakeners, especially those with defensive measures. After all, they could only block the arrows but hardly guard against the True Qi.

"If raised to the perfection realm, the explosion power could be increased to fourfold. When given a chance, I want to verify its power; it shouldn't be much less than the tenfold power Sun Arrow."

Chen Fan murmured.

After all, the Level 4 Fire Fiend consumes 12,000 points of True Qi per shot, 2,000 points more than the Sun Arrow at Level 1.

His gaze fell on the skill.

This was only the small success realm. If it unlocks another trait later, it would be even more beneficial.

Another 400 experience points invested did not unlock any new traits.

"The third trait should unlock at the perfection realm."

Chen Fan thought, continuously adding experience points, directly raising this archery technique to the perfection realm.

Just as he expected.

A strange feeling surged in his heart.

[Flaming Arrow Technique: Perfection (No Upgrade), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 5, Fire Fiend Level 4, Flaming Arrow Level 1]

[Flaming Arrow: Active Skill, when activated, consumes 30,000 points of True Qi, converting it to Fire Attribute True Qi, coating it on the arrow, causing massive fire attribute damage to the enemy. For every level increased, True Qi consumption and power both increase by onefold.]

"30,000 points of True Qi..."

Chen Fan took a deep breath.

This consumption is too terrifying!

Not to mention an average Meridian Refining Martial Artist, even the top tier ones might still find it challenging.

As for the power.

The description wasn't specific, only describing it as enormous.

But if calculated by True Qi consumption, Sun Arrow Level 1, with tenfold power, consumes 10,000 points of True Qi.

Flaming Arrow consumes 30,000 points of True Qi, so its power should also be three times that of the Sun Arrow.

That's 30 times the power of a regular arrow!

"No wonder it requires more experience points than the Sun-Shooting Arrow Technique."

When the Hundredfold Sun Arrow isn't unlocked yet, the Flaming Arrow can serve as a final trump card.

Of course, provided that his internal True Qi exceeds 30,000 points, otherwise it would be just wishful thinking.

"One final archery technique to go."

Chen Fan showed a smile on his face.

Honestly, the previous two archery techniques are already sufficient for use.

But as the saying goes, it's never wrong to have more skills.

Moreover, this third one is an archery technique that can attack the opponent's Divine Soul, which has much greater range than regular spiritual attacks.

[Divine Arrow Technique: Completely Ignorant (0%)]

After spending one experience point, the skill level increased by one-two hundred fortieth.

"So it requires 300 experience points to reach the beginner level? Indeed, martial arts related to the Spirit attribute have a higher difficulty."

Chen Fan thought.

Fortunately, over ten thousand experience points are just a drop in the bucket for him now.

After adding the remaining required experience points.

Chen Fan was surprised to find that not only did his strength increase slightly, but his spiritual power also seemed to grow stronger.

"Could it be that this archery technique has the effect of enhancing spiritual power as well?"

Chapter 254: City Lord of Anshan City

Anshan City, mountaintop villa.

This is the highest and most luxurious place in the city.

The area alone covers tens of thousands of square meters, with facilities such as swimming pools and golf courses complete.

On top of the three-story villa, several military helicopters are even parked.

The inside of the villa is even more magnificent, like a palace.

At this moment, several women with hot figures and scantily dressed are playing in the pool outside the villa, occasionally casting flirtatious glances at the two men on the shore.

"Brother Yan, your days are truly carefree and enviable."

On the shore, a man with a buzz cut lying on a lounge chair looked at the women in the pool and laughed, "With a city under your control and beauties in your arms, tsk tsk tsk."

"Brother Du's words truly flatter me."

The man beside him smiled and shook his head, "If Brother Du wants such days, isn't it just a matter of a single thought? If Brother Du wants my position as City Lord, one word, and I'll hand it over directly."

Du Hao was taken aback for a moment, then laughed heartily, gave a thumbs up, and said, "Brother Yan, you have quite the guts, but I don't have that thought for now."

Yan Ming's smile deepened upon hearing this.

But what he said earlier was not just polite words.

If the other party truly wanted it, he could give it up, because he could gain more compared to losing a city lord position.

"Brother Du."

As he spoke, a cigarette box appeared in his hand, from which he drew a cigar and handed it over.

After the other party took it, he snapped his right fingers, and the cigar lit up instantly.

"Hahaha," Du Hao laughed when he saw this, "Brother Yan's control over flame superpower is getting higher and higher. I'm afraid it won't take long before you catch up with Lord Yan Monarch."

"Brother Du flatters me. Lord Yan Monarch is undoubtedly an A-level Awakened, while I am merely a C-level Awakened. How could I be worthy of comparison?"

After saying that, Yan Ming also lit one for himself.

"Brother Yan, don't all A-level Awakened grow up from C-level? Take it slow."

Du Hao slowly exhaled a smoke ring, turned his head, and asked, "Brother Yan, you invited me over this time, saying there was good news. I wonder what it is?"

Yan Ming smiled and asked, "I wonder if Brother Du would like a Celestial God Fruit?"

"Celestial God Fruit!"

Du Hao's expression changed, and a burning look appeared in his eyes.

The Celestial God Fruit can significantly increase the Spiritual Power of Awakened, especially for C-level and below, its effect is even more pronounced.

Many C-level Awakened have broken through to B-level thanks to this thing.

However, this thing is extremely precious, sold at 50,000 points each in the Association, and even for him, it is not easy to buy one.

"Could it be that Brother Yan?"

"That's right."

Yan Ming smiled, "I know the location of a Celestial God Tree."

Du Hao's breath immediately quickened, his body leaned forward, and his eyes stared straight at the other party.

Knowing the location of a Celestial God Tree.

Wouldn't that mean there's information about Celestial God Fruits?

After a moment, he took a deep breath, lay back in his chair, and said, "Brother Yan has such good news to tell me, there must be some conditions, right?"

"Brother Du overthinks it," Yan Ming smiled, "That Celestial God Tree is in a forest full of Fierce Beasts. With just a few of us here, it would be difficult to pick the Celestial God Fruits, so I specially invited Brother Du to lend us a hand."

To tell the truth, there are more than ten Celestial God Fruits on that tree. If we manage to pick them all, Brother Du can take three."

"Three!"

Du Hao was shocked.

One Celestial God Fruit is 50,000 points, three make 150,000 points!

Even for him, that's not a small sum.

Yan Ming sending out such a large gift, only a fool would think he has no ulterior motive.

"Brother Yan, given our relationship, is there a need to be so indirect?" He looked at the other party calmly, "Tell me, what exactly do you want me to do?"

Yan Ming smiled and said, "Actually, it's a small favor I'd like to ask of Brother Du."

Du Hao didn't say anything.

"I would like to ask Brother Du to put in a good word for me in front of the Jiulong City Lord." Yan Ming said with a fawning smile.

"Oh?"

Du Hao showed a hint of surprise on his face, "Brother Yan wants to come to Jiulong City?"

"Yes."

Yan Ming sighed lightly, "People aim high, water flows low. Jiulong City is one of the top mid-sized cities in Yan Country. Naturally, I want to go, but my strength is what it is,

C-level Awakened might be someone in Anshan City, but in Jiulong City, they are as common as cows, so I would like to ask Brother Du to put in a good word with the City Lord to get me a good position."

Du Hao's lips curled as he looked at him, "Brother Yan, have you truly thought this through? Although the bigger the city, the more opportunities, and you might even meet some big shot and achieve great success, to be honest, going to Jiulong City won't be as carefree as here."

"I understand Brother Du's good intentions, but I've thought it through. I wonder if Brother Du can?"

He smiled like a blooming flower.

"Alright."

Du Hao nodded, "Since you've made up your mind, I won't persuade you further. But staying in a small city does indeed have little future."

"Yes."

Yan Ming smiled and nodded.

In fact, his strength was already comparable to a B-level Awakened, he just hadn't done the promotion task.

For him, Anshan City was getting a bit small, it's better to move to a mid-sized city, or even a large city, for greater development and opportunities to meet more powerful figures. These are all chances.

Moreover, another reason drove him to do this.

That is the impending Beast Tide that will break out again soon.

At first, it doesn't seem like much; hasn't there been Beast Tides in the past few years?

But this time is different from any other, according to Meng Xue, it could very likely be a re-enactment of the incident ten years ago.

Those three Beast Emperor-level Fierce Beasts might make a move again!

Let alone them, even any low-level Commander-level Fierce Beast would be enough to raze a small city like Anshan City.

Instead of ending up with nothing, or even dying here, it's better to plan ahead and find a way out early.

"What about the Celestial God Fruits?" Du Hao asked with a slight smile.

"In two days, the Celestial God Fruits will mature, and then, Brother Du can wait here for our good news." Yan Ming said with a smile.

"Good."

Du Hao was overjoyed immediately, picked up his wine glass, and said, "Then let me first wish Brother Yan a speedy success."

As the two were about to clink glasses, a sound of footsteps was heard.

A man with wheat-colored skin and a burly figure walked over.

Yan Ming's eyes squinted immediately.

If it wasn't something extremely important, Fang Yun would never have come to disturb him.

"Brother Du, excuse me for a moment. I'll be back soon." he said apologetically.

"Brother Yan, go ahead. Business matters." Du Hao responded with a smile.

"Alright."

Yan Ming gestured to the women in the pool, then stood up and walked to the man.

"What happened?"

"Brother Yan," Fang Yun said, "Guan Dehua seems to be in trouble."

"What?"

Yan Ming was shocked and glanced at the pool.

Seeing Du Hao surrounded by a flock of beauties having a great time, he turned back and lowered his voice, saying:

"What's going on? Where is he now?"

"No idea, he's been missing since he left early yesterday morning, not answering his phone, and the people who went with him are also unaccounted for. I felt something was wrong until a few people came over just now..."

Fang Yun briefly explained the situation.

Yan Ming's face grew more serious, "Where are those people now?"

"They're in the villa. I brought them all over. They don't seem to be lying."

"What a waste."

Yan Ming cursed.

Just two days before departure, and Guan Dehua had an accident.

It's not that the plan couldn't go on without Guan Dehua; after all, with his current strength, he wasn't afraid of any Elite-level Fierce Beast resembling the Fire Scaly Pig.

But it would definitely be much more troublesome.

"By the way, Brother Yan, there's one more thing."

Fang Yun hesitated.

"Another bad news?"

Yan Ming frowned.

Fang Yun nodded.

"Go ahead, it won't make a difference now."

"The business firm had an incident."

Fang Yun said softly, "Someone entered the firm in broad daylight, killing several Martial Artists. The officer Lu Yang is missing, possibly taken by the assailant, likely dead."

"What!"

Yan Ming felt a surge of anger.

Frankly speaking, if it weren't for Guan Dehua being somewhat useful, he really wouldn't bother with his fate.

But the business firm being hit, that was a direct slap in his face!

Who didn't know that the firm had him, Yan Ming, behind it?

"Do we know who did it?"

He repressed his anger and asked.

Fang Yun shook his head, "No one saw the perpetrator, but from the scene, it should be a Meridian Refining Martial Artist using a sword."

"Meridian Refining Martial Artist?"

Yan Ming laughed in anger, a mere Meridian Refining Martial Artist dared to pull such a stunt on his turf.

Did they really think he was made of mud?

"Let's go inside first."

With that, he walked forward.

At this moment, in the first-floor living room.

Several figures stood on the carpet, trembling.

Yan Junwei, Tian Guo, and Bai Hong from Song Family Castle were among them.

Besides them, there were two or three others, their faces pale.

Until a sound of footsteps was heard.

Their bodies shook, and they simultaneously looked up.

Two men were walking towards them.

"City, City Lord!"

"Greetings, City Lord!"

"City Lord!"

With a thud, they knelt down.

In their eyes, Awakened were already beings to look up to, let alone the City Lord of Anshan City, who even Awakened within the city had to revere.

Chapter 255: They Are All Useless!

"Speak, what is going on?"

Yan Ming looked at these people expressionlessly, his gaze as if he were looking at a few reptiles.

"Repeat what you just said." Fang Yun spoke: "If your words differ from before, be careful of your worthless lives."

"Yes, yes, yes."

The few of them exchanged glances, quickly nodding and recounting the sequence of events like spilling beans from a bamboo tube.

After finishing, Yan Junwei and Tian Guo exchanged glances, their eyes showing some anticipation.

As expected, they saw the City Lord himself.

Should they not receive some rewards? Like top-grade Qi Blood Pills, which even powerful Martial Artists are entitled to in the merchant houses.

With the identity of the City Lord, giving each person one bottle would be too stingy. At least, it should be two or three bottles for each.

It would be even better if there were some other rewards.

Bai Hong's heart felt like fifteen buckets drawing water, up and down unpredictably.

He genuinely didn't want to get involved in this matter, but in the martial world, sometimes one can't help themselves.

He could only hope that the City Lord of Anshan City would let him leave safely later.

As for the two or three people from the merchant house, their faces were deathly pale, heads lowered, not daring to make any sound.

Since Lu Yang got into trouble at the association, these few persons were clueless.

Their dereliction of duty would certainly be on their heads.

Of course, if they found the culprit, their fate might be the same as the few bodies on the ground.

Thinking of this, it was perhaps better not to have discovered anything.

Yan Ming frowned deeply after listening.

It was the same as what Fang Yun said previously, just with many more details.

Overall, it seemed that yesterday morning, Guan Dehua hurriedly left the city with his men, likely because he received Song Hailong's call about his brother's death, thus hastily going for revenge.

Both parties went to that Chen Family Stronghold.

In the end, all dozens of well-armed people, including several Meridian Refining Martial Artists and even a C-level Awakened, went missing.

"Hahaha."

At this thought, he suddenly burst into laughter.

Yan Junwei and Tian Guo were so frightened they almost collapsed.

What's so funny here? Shouldn't he be furious?

"Useless, all useless! So many people can't even handle a small stronghold!"

Yan Ming abruptly ceased his laughter, his eyes showing a sharp look, staring at a few people: "And you too, a bunch of useless! I've fed you for so many years, given you elixirs that even those in the Martial Arts Association can't get, and this is how you repay me?"

Yan Junwei, Tian Guo, and a few others were stunned, not reacting when a blaze suddenly engulfed them, and in almost no time, the flames swallowed them whole, bringing excruciating pain like a tidal wave.

"Ah! Mercy! Mercy!"

"City Lord!"

"Mercy!"

The few of them screamed heart-wrenchingly, begging for mercy.

Yan Junwei and Tian Guo found it utterly unbelievable.

They thought reporting such crucial information would earn the City Lord's reward.

As it turned out, the other party was not moved at all and treated them as worthless trash.

Yan Ming slightly curled his lips, seemingly enjoying the scene.

Beside him, Fang Yun acted as if he hadn't seen anything, his expression normal.

After tens of seconds, they turned into charred corpses, emitting thick smoke.

"Brother Yan, what's next?"

Fang Yun finally asked.

"Look for Meng Xue."

Yan Ming said coldly: "Check where Guan Dehua went and who dared to slap my face."

"Alright."

Fang Yun nodded and followed.

Undoubtedly, this matter was quite mysterious.

However, the truth couldn't be hidden from that person's eyes.

Just hope that Guan Dehua is still alive.

...

[Divine Arrow Technique: Initial Glimpse (0%), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 1, Gathering Spirit Level 1]

Seeing the unlocked traits, Chen Fan's face showed a smile.

Two hundred and forty experience points were well spent.

Each level-up increases power by 100 points, and spirit attributes by 30%.

His spirit attributes now almost reached thirty hundred thousand points.

Not to mention a 30% increase, even 10% would be significant.

"Perfect Divine Arrow, Gathering Spirit Level 5, traits stack together, will spirit power exceed a million?"

Chen Fan's eyes lit up.

A million spirit power can keep Celestial Response active for over ten seconds.

This alone made the arrow technique worth learning.

"Continue, there must be stronger traits later."

Chen Fan added four hundred eighty experience points.

The spirit power in his mind grew even stronger.

[Divine Arrow Technique: Slight Achievement (0%), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 2, Gathering Spirit Level 2]

No new traits unlocked.

Chen Fan thought again and consumed nearly a thousand experience points, this time gained a memory.

[Divine Arrow Technique: Entering the Hall (0%), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 3, Gathering Spirit Level 3, Tracking Arrow Level 1]

"Tracking Arrow?"

Chen Fan was a bit surprised.

[Tracking Arrow: Active Skill, consumes 1000 True Qi Value, 500 spirit power. Once activated, a single arrow can sense the enemy's breath and track for attacks. Each skill level increases the number of tracking arrows by one.]

After watching for a while, he found it quite interesting.

This trait didn't enhance the arrow's power.

And Level 1 only allows shooting one tracking arrow. Even if the technique reaches perfection, it can only shoot three at a time.

The advantage is that it's a guided arrow that can track, turn, and hit the opponent from various strange angles.

But using such arrows is somewhat impractical.

If they could stack with the Sun-Shooting Arrow or Flaming Arrow, it would be different.

Its effect would be like a guided missile.

"I wonder if more traits can be unlocked later?" Chen Fan pondered.

His intuition told him there should be.

Unlocking these three traits doesn't seem to capture the essence of this arrow technique.

Consuming nearly six thousand experience points again, [Divine Arrow Technique] finally reached the Perfection Realm.

[Divine Arrow Technique: Perfection (cannot be upgraded), Traits: Strength of One Ox Level 5, Gathering Spirit Level 5, Tracking Arrow Level 3, Divine Arrow Level 1]

[Divine Arrow: Active Skill, activated with a minimum of ten thousand spirit power. It visualizes spirit power into arrows, causing double the mental damage to the opponent's divine soul. Every skill level upgrades the damage by one fold.]

After reading, Chen Fan took a deep breath.

This Divine Arrow didn't need physical arrows.

Precisely speaking, it didn't need real-world arrows as it visualizes the practitioner's mental power into arrows, like sword beams or saber qi, but clearly harder.

This aspect is highly impressive.

And highly practical too.

Firstly, the power, twice the mental damage means his ten thousand spirit power arrow causes twenty thousand spiritual damage.

By comparison, Soul-Annihilating Finger only deals single mental damage.

Secondly, its attack range is much bigger.

Soul-Annihilating Finger's range is about a hundred meters, weakening if further.

And Divine Arrow's range depends on the bow's range, extending as far as the bow reaches.

If paired with the Sun-Shooting Arrow's Arrow Shooting the Sky trait, the range doubles again.

Chen Fan felt these traits should work together.

Because the visualized mental arrow is still an arrow.

To be safe, he should test it later.

For now, three arrow techniques reached the Perfection Realm.

Even with the same bow, his combat power has increased by more than twice.

Facing the Fire Scaly Pig again, he has multiple ways to kill it.

But first, there's an important issue, True Qi.

It's like a game's blue bar, without it, powerful skills can't be used.

Chen Fan glanced at the remaining experience points, over 320,000.

"Lots of experience points left; learn some pill formulas first to avoid running out later when other skills need too much experience."

He had four True Qi Pill formulas, two for top grade, one for top-grade, and one for Celestial grade.

Chen Fan thought and started from the least likely to produce top-grade True Qi Pills, going from easy to difficult.

Once all four alchemy reached the perfection realm, then combine them.

"Wonder how the effect will be."

Chen Fan's eyes showed some anticipation, then focused on the skill bar.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Gu Jun): Completely Ignorant (0%)]

He added one point, the skill level increased by 0.4%.

"So high?"

Chen Fan widened his eyes in surprise.

The Awakened Association's top-grade Qi Blood Pill beginner level needed only 150 experience points.

True Qi Pill Alchemy beginner level required 400 points, more than twice!

"Not good?"

He looked at the other three alchemies, especially the Celestial-grade Qi Blood Pill one.

The beginner level must need over a thousand points?

Even the highly skilled Awakened Association people couldn't perfect this alchemy and create Celestial-grade True Qi Pills.

He focused again, adding the remaining three hundred points at once.

A flash of insight in his mind.

[True Qi Pill: Initial Glimpse (0%), Traits: Pill Formation Level 1, Low Grade]

Same traits as Qi Blood Pill Alchemy beginner, but the probability may differ.

Chen Fan took a deep breath and began adding points.

Chapter 256: True Qi Pill Fusion

[Pill Formation: Each level up of the skill increases the success rate by ten percent]

[Low Grade: True Qi Pills refined are one hundred percent low grade]

After reading the descriptions of the two traits, Chen Fan gave a bitter smile.

It was indeed as he had expected.

At Level 1, the Pill Formation trait only had a miserable ten percent success rate.

In other words, when refining a batch of True Qi Pills, out of ten pills, only about one would be a successful product.

This was the theoretical value.

In reality, there was a high probability of refining several batches of True Qi Pills and not getting a single successful pill...

A ten percent probability was really too low.

In contrast, the description of the Low Grade trait was still acceptable.

"Even if it's raised to the Perfection Realm, the success rate is only fifty percent, which means five successful pills out of a batch of ten."

Chen Fan shook his head.

This probability couldn't be considered low, but it wasn't particularly high either.

No wonder Meridian Refining Martial Artists in the association could only buy middle-lower grade True Qi Pills.

Because even the supply of middle-lower grade True Qi Pills was not plentiful.

He felt a bit of relief in his heart, luckily, this alchemy skill was the worst of the four pill formulas he had, and it would get better from here.

With a thought, he added another 800 experience points.

The skill level of alchemy improved by another stage.

[True Qi Pill: Slight Achievement (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 2, Middle-Lower Grade]

[Middle-Lower Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have an eighty percent chance of being low grade, and a twenty percent chance of being middle grade]

Chen Fan clicked his tongue.

The Middle-Lower Grade trait for Qi Blood Pills at least had a thirty to forty percent chance of being middle grade.

For True Qi Pills, it was only twenty percent.

He consumed 1600 experience points.

[True Qi Pill: Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 3, Pseudo-Middle Grade]

"???"

Seeing this newly appeared trait, Chen Fan's mouth opened slightly.

Pseudo-Middle Grade?

[Pseudo-Middle Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have a sixty percent chance of being low grade, and a forty percent chance of being middle grade]

"So that's how it is."

After reading the explanation clearly, Chen Fan laughed wryly.

No wonder it wasn't considered middle grade; the probability of middle-grade pills appearing hadn't even reached half, only forty percent.

The success rate of refining products had been raised to thirty percent.

Chen Fan calculated; at this level, refining True Qi Pills generally yielded only three successful pills per batch.

According to the description of Pseudo-Middle Grade, the ratio of low to middle grade was six to four.

Out of three pills, two would be low-grade True Qi Pills worth 200,000 contribution points each, and one would be a middle-grade True Qi Pill worth 300,000 contribution points,

while the cost of the ingredients was 200,000 contribution points, yielding more than double the profit, making it viable to sustain oneself.

"Not easy at all."

Chen Fan sighed.

Reaching the beginner level might not be difficult for an average alchemist.

But achieving the Small Success Realm was not so simple, even for exceptionally talented individuals, it took one to three years.

During this period, there was basically no profit.

After all, the success rate was only twenty percent, yielding only two successful pills per batch.

The probability of them being low-grade was as high as eighty percent. Excluding labor and electricity costs, it just broke even.

If luck was superb, and one pill turned out to be middle grade, one could double the profit, but having both as middle grade was nearly impossible.

In the long run, profit was possible but minimal. Only by raising alchemy to the Entering the Hall level could one achieve stable earnings.

If it could be raised to Great Success, or even Perfection, a large amount of money would be at one's feet, ready to be picked up with a slight bend.

"Continue."

Chen Fan invested 3200 experience points.

Seeing the new trait in the skill bar, he breathed a sigh of relief.

[True Qi Pill: Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 4, Middle Grade]

[Middle Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have a sixty percent chance of being middle grade, and a forty percent chance of being low grade]

Yes, the "pseudo" was removed from Pseudo-Middle Grade, and the probability of middle-grade True Qi Pills had risen to sixty percent.

According to the current calculation of a forty percent success rate, out of four True Qi Pills, at least two would be middle grade, worth 600,000 contribution points.

The other two, considered low grade, would still be worth 200,000 contribution points, covering the cost of a batch, and yielding a profit of 600,000 contribution points.

In the long term, the actual profit could be around 700,000 contribution points.

"The next skill level is Perfection."

Chen Fan took a deep breath.

At Perfection, there would be a probability of obtaining top-grade True Qi Pills.

After consuming 6400 experience points, the alchemy skill finally reached the Perfection Realm.

[True Qi Pill: Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 5, Middle-Upper Grade]

[Middle-Upper Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have a seventy percent chance of being middle grade, a ten percent chance of being top grade, and a twenty percent chance of being low grade]

"A ten percent probability."

Chen Fan smiled bitterly.

This probability was too low.

Because even at the Perfection Realm, the success rate was only fifty percent.

If a batch of True Qi Pills was successfully refined, the probability of getting top-grade pills would be halved again, possibly being only five percent...

However, the price of top-grade True Qi Pills was set at 1,200,000 contribution points each.

Obtaining one would be a huge profit!

"This is the cheapest pill formula, worth 500 points, it's still reasonable. Next, it's time for the Martial Arts Association's one."

Chen Fan said to himself.

The Martial Arts Association's one was modified, with a probability of top-grade True Qi Pills exceeding twenty percent.

With fusion, the probability would be even higher.

[True Qi Pill (Martial Arts Association): Completely Ignorant (0%)]

Chen Fan routinely added one experience point.

The skill level increased by one percent.

"Good."

Chen Fan breathed a sigh of relief, thinking it might double, requiring 800 experience points even to reach beginner level.

A flash of inspiration crossed his mind.

[True Qi Pill (Martial Arts Association): Initial Glimpse (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 1, Low Grade]

The same two traits, this time, Chen Fan felt a little bit of anticipation.

[Pill Formation: Each level up of the skill increases the success rate by ten percent]

"Hmm?"

Seeing the description of the Pill Formation trait, Chen Fan was stunned.

So, the success rate was still ten percent, without improvement?

He checked it twice again.

Indeed, it was ten percent.

"Wasn't it supposed to be modified? Why hasn't the success rate changed? Could it be?"

He looked at the next trait.

[Low Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have an eighty percent chance of being low grade and a twenty percent chance of being middle grade]

"No wonder."

Chen Fan showed a look of realization.

After carefully reading it, one had to admit that the alchemists in the Martial Arts Association were quite competent.

Even at the beginner level, there was a chance to refine middle-grade True Qi Pills, though the probability was incredibly low.

However, it was a good start.

With a thought, he added 1200 experience points.

[True Qi Pill (Martial Arts Association): Slight Achievement (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 2, Middle-Lower Grade]

Still the same Middle-Lower Grade trait.

Chen Fan clicked it open.

[Middle-Lower Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have a sixty percent chance of being low grade, and a forty percent chance of being middle grade]

Compared to the previous pill formula, the probability of low-grade pills decreased by twenty percent, while the probability of middle-grade pills increased by twenty percent.

"It seems at the Small Success Realm, there's no worry about losing money."

Chen Fan murmured.

Though a batch of True Qi Pills had only two successful pills.

The probability for low and middle grade was sixty percent to forty percent, almost one to one.

This meant that the two True Qi Pills might both be low grade, one low grade and one middle grade, or both middle grade.

The first scenario breaks even, the second earns a small profit, and the third earns a big profit!

Apparently, the modifications were quite successful.

"It seems that the probability for middle grade pills will be quite high later on, possibly eliminating the probability of low-grade True Qi Pills altogether."

Thinking this, Chen Fan added 2400 more experience points.

[True Qi Pill (Martial Arts Association): Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 3, Middle Grade]

[Middle Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have an eighty percent chance of being middle grade, and a twenty percent chance of being low grade]

As expected, the probability of middle-grade True Qi Pills increased to eighty percent.

With a thirty percent success rate, almost all refined True Qi Pills were now middle-grade Qi Blood Pills.

"It seems reaching Great Success means being able to refine top-grade True Qi Pills."

Chen Fan smiled; guessing the approximate level, he simply elevated the alchemy skill to Perfection in one go.

After investing around 13,000 experience points,

[True Qi Pill (Martial Arts Association): Perfection (Cannot be upgraded further), Trait: Pill Formation Level 5, Middle-Upper Grade]

[Middle-Upper Grade: Refined True Qi Pills have a seventy-five percent chance of being middle grade, and a twenty-five percent chance of being top grade]

"Two and a half percent?"

Seeing the trait description, Chen Fan's eyes widened.

He hadn't thought there'd be such an outcome...

But the pill formula indeed mentioned that if this alchemy skill reached Perfection, the probability of top-grade True Qi Pills appearing would be between twenty and thirty percent.

So, the probability was accurate.

"It seems that increasing the probability of top-grade True Qi Pills isn't easy; enhancing the skill level from one to two and a half percent took a lot of effort."

Chen Fan remarked.

A piece of information appeared in his mind.

[Detected that two True Qi Pill alchemy skills are at Perfection, would you like to merge them?]

Of course, Chen Fan chose yes.

The two alchemy skills merged into specks of light, slowly fusing together, ultimately forming a new line of text.

[Nameless True Qi Pill Refining Skill: Pinnacle of Attainments (Non-upgradable), Trait: Pill Formation Level 6, Middle-Upper Grade]

Chen Fan felt a bit nervous.

He was unsure about the exact descriptions of the traits after merging?

Not to mention, with the Pill Formation trait at Level 6, the success rate must be above sixty percent, right?

Chapter 257: Skill Level, Shocking and Outrageous!

He clicked on the first trait.

[Pill Formation: Every level of skill enhancement increases the pill formation probability by 10%]

"So it really is 60%?"

Chen Fan was half-smiling, half-crying.

He thought it could exceed 60%, maybe around 70%.

So after the fusion, the probability of forming pills did not improve.

The 10% increase was due to the level increase in this alchemy skill.

"Never mind, at least it improved by 10%, right?"

Chen Fan comforted himself.

Don't underestimate this 10%. It means an extra pill per furnace, the more he refines, the greater the benefits.

"Next is."

Chen Fan's eyes fell on the second trait, thinking that the probability of getting Top-grade True Qi Pills should improve, right?

[Middle-Upper Grade: Out of the refined True Qi Pills, there is a 50% probability of Middle-Grade pills and a 50% probability of Top Grade pills]

"50%!"

Chen Fan's lips curled up.

Unexpectedly, the probability of Top-grade True Qi Pills has doubled!

Based on the current pill formation probability, refining a batch of True Qi Pills would yield six True Qi Pills!

Three pills being Middle-Grade, valued at 900,000 contribution points.

Three pills being Top Grade, valued at 3,600,000 contribution points.

Total, 4,500,000!

And the cost was only about 200,000 contribution points, over twenty times the profit!

Chen Fan smiled. This was just the beginning.

As for this alchemy

Chen Fan pondered, a smile on his lips.

Maybe he could sell it to the association like the Qi Blood Pill formula, to earn commissions. This way, he would have a continuous income of contribution points to buy medicinal herbs.

And also, it could enhance the strength of martial artists within the association.

"Let's continue learning the new pill formula then."

Chen Fan looked at his experience points, dropping from 320,000 to around 280,000.

Judging by these two alchemy skills, the experience point consumption for the next two would definitely be higher.

But nearly 300,000 experience points should be enough.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Completely Ignorant (0%)]

This alchemy skill is quite remarkable. According to the introduction, if the skill level reaches the Perfection Realm, there is a chance to refine Top-grade True Qi Pills.

Chen Fan rubbed his hands in anticipation, adding some experience points.

The skill level immediately increased by one thousandth.

"One thousand points, still acceptable."

Chen Fan immediately added the remaining experience points.

In an instant, the skill bar changed.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Initial Glimpse (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 1, Low Grade]

[Pill Formation: Every level of skill enhancement increases the pill formation probability by 15%]

[Low Grade: Out of refined pills, 70% are Low Grade, and 30% are Middle Grade]

"The pill formation probability increased to 15%, a 50% increase, meaning the Perfection Realm would have a 75% pill formation rate."

Chen Fan frowned slightly.

Increasing the pill formation probability is naturally a good thing.

But, even for this pill formula, is there no way to increase the pill formation probability to 100%?

He looked towards the Low Grade trait.

This trait was much more powerful.

Even at the beginner level, there is a considerable chance to refine Middle-grade True Qi Pills.

"Continue to enhance."

Chen Fan's thoughts moved, and he added 2,000 experience points to the alchemy skill.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Slight Achievement (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 2, Middle Grade]

[Middle Grade: Out of the refined pills, 50% would be Middle Grade, 40% Low Grade, and 10% Top Grade]

"Well, even Top-grade True Qi Pills are showing up."

Chen Fan's eyes brightened.

To know, this is just the Small Success Realm!

The Martial Arts Association's improved pill formula only produces Top-grade True Qi Pills at the Great Success Realm.

Such a huge difference.

He added another 4,000 experience points.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 3, Middle-Upper Grade]

[Middle-Upper Grade: Out of the refined pills, 70% are Middle Grade, and 30% are Top Grade]

Top-grade True Qi Pill probability increased to 30%, thrice as much as the previous level!

Chen Fan's thoughts moved, and he added 8,000 experience points.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Great Success (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 4, Top Grade]

[Top Grade: Out of the refined pills, 50% are Top Grade, 40% are Middle Grade, and 10% Top-quality Grade]

"Top-quality True Qi Pills!"

Chen Fan exclaimed.

Unexpectedly, just at the Great Success Realm, Top-quality True Qi Pills were unlocked.

"It seems, at the Perfection Realm, the probability of Top-quality True Qi Pills would be at least 20-30%."

Chen Fan smiled slightly.

He looked at the previously fused Chen's Alchemy Skill.

Compared to this alchemy skill, his Chen's Alchemy Skill just had 10% less probability of Top-quality True Qi Pills.

This was a good thing.

Because this meant the gap between these two alchemy skills wasn't that large.

This would result in a significant enhancement when fused.

The next moment, he consumed a total of 16,000 experience points.

The alchemy skill reached the Perfection Realm!

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Zhao He): Entering the Hall (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 4, Fake Top Grade]

[Fake Top Grade: Out of refined pills, 70% are Top Grade, and 30% Top-quality Grade]

"Fake Top Grade..."

Chen Fan smiled wryly.

Thankfully, as he predicted, the probability of Top-quality True Qi Pills increased to 30%.

So then...

Chen Fan looked at the fusion information in his mind and chose 'Yes' again.

[Chen's True Qi Pill: Pinnacle of Attainments (No further enhancement possible), Trait: Pill Formation Level 6, Top Grade]

"Still Pinnacle of Attainments?"

Chen Fan mumbled, he thought it might improve the maximum skill level.

After all, with a higher ceiling, each trait would also increase by one level.

But without the hint, nothing could be done.

He looked at the two traits of this skill.

[Pill Formation: Every level of skill enhancement increases the pill formation probability by 15%]

[Top Grade: Out of refined pills, 50% would be Top Grade, and 50% Top-quality Grade]

"Very good."

Chen Fan nodded, satisfied.

The pill formation probability was still 15%, but with the level increase.

The pill formation probability now reached 90%! Close to 100%.

And the Top Grade trait also meant that as long as a pill formed, it would either be Top Grade or Top-quality Grade!

"There's still one last one."

Chen Fan didn't stay long on this newly fused alchemy skill because even so, it was still a semi-finished product.

Just one step away from becoming perfect.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Qiao Mu): Completely Ignorant (0%)]

Chen Fan's eyes fell on this alchemy skill capable of refining Heaven-grade True Qi Pills,

He added some experience points,

The skill level slowly increased by 3,000th.

"3,000 points."

Chen Fan took a deep breath.

As expected of the alchemy skill capable of refining Heaven-grade True Qi Pills, the experience points needed for the entry level already matched the third skill level of the previous alchemy skill.

Even so, he still poured the experience points into it.

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Qiao Mu): Initial Glimpse (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 1, Low Grade]

Chen Fan quickly clicked on the first trait.

[Pill Formation: Every level of skill enhancement increases the pill formation probability by 18%]

"18%?"

Chen Fan was stunned.

So if it's Perfection Realm, isn't that 90%?

Even this alchemy skill can't achieve a 100% True Qi Pill formation rate?

He let out a breath.

He looked at his Chen's Alchemy Skill.

Luckily, he still had a 90% probability alchemy skill.

Integrating both will surely achieve a 100% pill formation rate.

"Not easy..."

He sighed, looking at the next trait,

[Low Grade: Out of refined pills, 60% are Low Grade, 30% Middle Grade, and 10% Top Grade]

"At entry level, there is a chance of Top-grade True Qi Pills already?"

Chen Fan was slightly surprised.

Considering the experience points consumed, it made sense.

However, since the pill formation rate was less than 20%, refining a Top-grade True Qi Pill was almost impossible.

"Let's max it out directly."

Chen Fan spoke,

Pouring the rest of the experience points into the skill repeatedly.

With the first 3,000 points consumption, totaling 93,000 points!

Chen Fan looked at the remaining less than 190,000 experience points, feeling a bit painful.

This alchemy skill indeed consumed a lot of experience points.

Chen Fan looked at the skill bar,

[True Qi Pill Alchemy (Qiao Mu): Perfection (0%), Trait: Pill Formation Level 5, True Top Grade]

[True Top Grade: Out of refined pills, 70% are Top-quality Grade, and 30% are Heaven-grade]

"30%!"

Chen Fan was extremely excited,

He initially thought it would be like the Qi Blood Pill Alchemy Skill with just a 10% Heaven-grade probability.

But it was 30%!

Ninety thousand experience points were worth it!

And, it could still be fused.

[Detected that two True Qi Pill Alchemy Skills are at the Perfection Realm, fuse them?]

Chen Fan looked at the message in his mind, took a deep breath, and clicked 'Yes.'

Two alchemy skills turned into golden dots, fusing together, and soon, a new line of text appeared in the skill bar.

[Chen's Alchemy Skill: Awe-inspiring (Cannot be enhanced), Trait: Pill Formation Level 7, True Top Grade]

"Awe-inspiring!"

Chen Fan immediately noticed these four words.

This was an enhancement in the skill level limit!

After Perfection is Pinnacle of Attainments, and after Pinnacle of Attainments, it was Awe-inspiring.

So, is there a new skill level after Awe-inspiring?

"No, this isn't the concern right now."

Chen Fan was excited, looking at the two traits.

Even with a Level 1 trait's 1.5% pill formation chance, a Level 7 Pill Formation trait exceeded a 100% pill formation rate.

And what about the other trait?

Chen Fan wondered, like the Qi Blood Pill Alchemy skill, was there just a 10% Heaven-grade probability?

It couldn't be, right?

For Qi Blood Pill, he fused only two pill formulas.

For True Qi Pill, he fused a total of four!

Chapter 258: Protective True Qi!

[True Top Grade: The quality of the refined elixir has a 30% probability of being Celestial Grade, and a 70% probability of being Top Grade]

"Thirty percent probability!"

Chen Fan clenched his fists in excitement.

At first glance, it seems a bit low, but it's really not.

Compared to the True Top Grade trait of the Qi Blood Pill, the True Qi Pill's trait increases the Celestial Grade probability by threefold!

It exceeded his expectations.

"Even the people at the Awakened Association probably can't produce True Qi Pills of this quality, right?"

Chen Fan took out his phone, entered the association's mall, and found the elixir section.

On the other hand, he also wanted to check the price of the Top-grade True Qi Pill.

After all, the Martial Arts Association's sales list doesn't even have Top-grade True Qi Pills, let alone the Top-tier ones.

Low-grade True Qi Pill, 10 points.

Middle-grade True Qi Pill, 30 points.

Top-grade True Qi Pill, 120 points.

The pricing is no different from that in the Martial Arts Association.

Chen Fan took a deep breath and continued to search further. He quickly found the Top-grade True Qi Pill.

Price: 480 points.

"480 points," Chen Fan thought to himself.

Looking at it this way, one Top-grade True Qi Pill provides at least four times, maybe even five times the Potential Points of a Top-grade pill.

Roughly calculated, one Low-grade True Qi Pill provides 100,000 points.

The price of the Middle-grade True Qi Pill is three times that of the Low-grade, so it provides at least 300,000 points.

The Top-grade True Qi Pill's price is four times that of the Middle-grade, hence a Top-grade True Qi Pill provides at least 1.2 million points.

And the Top-grade Qi Blood Pill, based on this foundation, enhances by four times. One pill can provide nearly five million Potential Points!

So a Celestial Grade Qi Blood Pill can easily surpass ten million points?

In this way, the massive amount of Potential Points required to open the Chong Meridian is not so daunting.

Chen Fan couldn't help but feel excited at this thought.

He looked further down, still not finding any mention of Celestial Grade True Qi Pills.

Clearly, he would only know the specific effects once he refined the elixir himself.

He put the phone aside, his gaze falling on the Skill Bar.

Even if all were Top-grade True Qi Pills, refining a batch would provide around 50 million Experience Points.

Clearing the remaining meridians could just be a matter of refining dozens or even hundreds of batches of pills.

Entering the True Essence Realm would also be a breeze.

"I heard that in the True Essence Realm, one must open up a Sea of Qi within the body, transforming True Qi into True Essence. The True Qi Pill is extremely important in this process. Maybe by then, I can find a way to increase the probability of Celestial Grade True Qi Pills by a few more percent. After that,"

Chen Fan glanced at the Experience Points,

still had 180-190 thousand points left.

"Let's start with the Golden Bell Shield first."

Enhancing the Golden Bell Shield to the 9th Floor would unlock the Vajra Indestructible Divine Skill.

Next would be the Thousand Forms Divine Skill and Ten Thousand Palm Divine Skill. Reaching Great Success in these two would unlock the Dragon Elephant Wisdom Skill.

Since the Ten Thousand Palm Divine Skill is already a Fist and Kick Martial Art, there was no need to learn other Fist and Kick Martial Arts for now.

Bring Windward Slash to perfection, and the remaining Experience Points could be spent on Inner Power Heart Method.

After all, for a Meridian Refining Martial Artist, the more True Qi within, the stronger the power.

He looked at the Skill Bar,

[Golden Bell Shield: Completely Ignorant (0%)]

According to the cultivation technique description, this martial art has twelve levels in total.

Compared to Thirteen Grand Protectors' Cross Training, the Golden Bell Shield is internally and externally balanced, enhancing not only the physical defense but also the True Qi within, causing rebound effects from the attacks of opponents.

If the practitioner has ample True Qi, they could, in battles, rely on the rebound force to shatter the opponent's internal organs without even striking—absolutely domineering!

It can be said that Thirteen Grand Protectors' Cross Training is just a child in front of this martial art.

But!

The Golden Bell Shield has two significant weaknesses.

First, the Cultivation Gate.

The Cultivation Gate means no matter how one practices, there will always be a part of the body that True Qi cannot reach, making it the weak point.

Compared to other areas, this spot's defense is very weak and generally cannot withstand a full-force strike from a master of the same realm.

Once the Cultivation Gate is discovered and struck, the practitioner could be severely injured or even killed on the spot.

Second, it is afraid of acupoint-sealing techniques, such as the Seventy-Two Acupoint Hand Techniques.

From the description earlier, it's clear that the Golden Bell Shield heavily relies on the practitioner's True Qi.

Once the acupoints are sealed, disrupting the flow of True Qi, the defensive effect is greatly compromised.

However, this doesn't mean that knowing the acupoint-sealing technique would break this skill.

It just means that facing a martial artist with profound Inner Strength and acupoint-sealing skills would be disadvantageous to the one practicing the Golden Bell Shield.

The outcome of a battle is the result of many factors combined.

If the martial artist proficient in acupoint-sealing has average body techniques, the outcome is uncertain.

Despite these two flaws, it doesn't prevent the Golden Bell Shield from being a first-class defensive martial art.

Top-level Martial Arts, the Vajra Indestructible Divine Skill, has no such flaws.

Once the Vajra Indestructible Body is achieved, it becomes invulnerable to weapons, impervious to water and fire, immune to poison, and requires no rest.

In front of this martial art, the Golden Bell Shield is just a child.

"Let's begin."

Chen Fan's eyes gleamed with anticipation.

He prioritized enhancing the Golden Bell Shield due to its ability to not only boost defense but also enhance the practitioner's internal True Qi.

As usual, he added a little Experience Points first.

The Skill Level increased by one-eightieth.

"Eighty points, not too much."

Chen Fan muttered, adding the remaining 79 points.

A flash of insight crossed his mind, and a piece of information appeared in his brain.

He also felt an aura of True Qi circulating on the surface of his body, as if forming a protective shield.

He was a bit stunned and looked quickly.

[Golden Bell Shield: 1st Floor (0%), Trait: Protective True Qi Level 1]

"Protective True Qi?"

Chen Fan clicked on it.

[Protective True Qi: Passive Skill, each level enhances physical defense by 50%. This passive skill activates only when the practitioner's True Qi exceeds 100 points.]

"Is that so?"

Chen Fan's eyes widened in surprise.

He thought it would be like the Thirteen Grand Protectors' Cross Training, with attributes similar to invulnerability. Instead, it was Protective True Qi. Although it was passive, activating it required certain conditions.

Practitioner's True Qi must exceed 100 points.

In other words, even if the practitioner enhances the martial art to the first level, without sufficient True Qi, this trait cannot be activated.

However, 100 points of True Qi is just a matter of opening one meridian for a Meridian Refining Martial Artist.

While it is difficult to open the Eight Extraordinary Meridians, opening the first one is quite easy.

Apart from this requirement, the Protective True Qi is still very powerful.

Once activated, it directly enhances physical defense by 50%, almost twice as strong as invulnerability.

Bear in mind, this is just the first level.

The Golden Bell Shield has twelve levels in total, capable of enhancing physical defense by sixfold.

10,000 Physical Attribute points could be considered as 70,000.

This is just the first trait unlocked at the first level.

Of course, this also leads to two drawbacks.

The first is the fear of Jie Meridian blockage. Once the True Qi is blocked and unable to flow, how can the True Qi protect the body?

The second is also very evident.

Behind the left calf, there's a palm-sized area where, although True Qi circulates, it is much weaker compared to other areas.

"This is probably the so-called Cultivation Gate."

Chen Fan's eyes grew serious.

A bit helpless too.

Hopefully, as cultivation deepens, the Cultivation Gate will shrink.

Though the spot is hidden, a palm-sized area is still too much.

He added another point of Experience Points,

This time, the Skill Level rose by 160 points, doubling the increase.

"160 points for the second level..."

Chen Fan calculated and found that at this rate,

the third level would require 320 points, the fourth level 640 points... the eighth level would reach 10,000 points.

The ninth level, 20,000 points.

At this stage, about forty to fifty thousand points are needed, just right to fulfill the Vajra Indestructible Divine Skill's requirement.

If choosing to continue upgrading, the cost would be exponentially higher.

10,000 points for the 10th level, 40,000 points.

80,000 points for the 11th level.

The final level, the 12th, 160,000 points!

Chen Fan took a deep breath. His remaining Experience Points could only advance to around the 11th level.

And if done,

Other martial arts could not expect to be fully enhanced.

"Let's go up to the ninth level first."

Chen Fan made up his mind and added more than a hundred remaining points.

The Protective True Qi around his body grew stronger.

Moreover, the True Qi in his body also increased.

Chen Fan's eyes sparkled.

"Could it be that an attribute of increasing internal True Qi has appeared?"

He checked it quickly.

[Golden Bell Shield: 2nd Floor (0%), Trait: Protective True Qi Level 2, Qi Storage Level 1]

"Qi Storage? Not Qi Cultivation?"

Chen Fan's mouth gaped slightly.

Feeling the change in his internal True Qi, he found that he had gained sixty or seventy strands of True Qi!

If it were a Qi Cultivation trait, it wouldn't be so much.

"So."

Chen Fan swallowed.

This Qi Storage trait, as a trait that enhances True Qi, is more effective than Qi Cultivation?

He clicked to view.

[Qi Storage: Each skill level increases True Qi by 20%]

"Twenty percent!"

Chen Fan couldn't help but exclaim.

It should be known that the Inner Power Heart Methods cultivated earlier, specifically increasing the practitioner's True Qi, had an effect of only 10%.

As a Body Refining Martial Art, the Golden Bell Shield's effect in increasing internal True Qi surpasses the former.

No wonder it's a first-class martial art.

Chapter 259: Rebound!

In order to confirm, Chen Fan's gaze moved up, falling on the True Qi bar.

True Qi: 5195/3056 (+70%)

Sure enough, the True Qi bonus in parentheses had increased from the previous 50% to 70%.

The True Qi suddenly gained sixty to seventy strands, equivalent to unclogging several acupuncture points.

"An additional 20% True Qi boost."

Chen Fan was ecstatic.

Because this was just the beginning.

If it increased to the 9th Floor, that would be the Qi Storage Traits at Level 8, capable of boosting the True Qi value by an additional 1.6 times.

Based on his current 3000 points of Primordial True Qi,

by then, the total amount of True Qi in his body could reach around 9500 points, just short of the ten thousand point mark, just shy of unleashing the tenfold power of the Sun-Shooting Arrow.

If it reached the 10th Floor, it would definitely exceed ten thousand True Qi points.

Of course, the Sun-Shooting Arrow can only be used once, after which the True Qi in the body would be virtually exhausted, potentially draining even the Protective True Qi.

"I'm afraid the Qi Storage Traits might not be the one that boosts True Qi the most."

Chen Fan thought to himself.

Perhaps, there's an attribute that increases a martial artist's internal True Qi by 30% for each level.

This is probably one of the differences between top-level Heart Methods and ordinary Heart Methods.

"Let's continue, hoping to unlock stronger traits next."

Chen Fan clenched his fist.

The experience points consumed last time was 160 points,

this time, he directly added 320 points.

The True Qi in his body strengthened by two points again, and the Protective True Qi on his skin also became thicker.

The True Qi at the Cultivation Gate increased a lot, approximately matching the effect of the 2nd Floor in other areas.

Size, however, did not change, remaining the size of a palm.

"It seems the defensive effect is similar to the previous layer's effect, which is still acceptable."

Chen Fan murmured, eyeing the Skill Bar.

[Golden Bell Shield: 3rd Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 3, Qi Storage Level 2]

He hadn't unlocked any new traits.

He was already mentally prepared.

Qi Storage Level 2, the extra True Qi bonus had reached 40%.

His gaze fell on Protective True Qi, he thought for a moment and opened it to take a look.

[Protective True Qi: Passive Skill, increases physical defense by 50% for each level. Current level: 3, providing an additional 1.5 times defense. Additionally, it only activates when the practitioner's internal True Qi exceeds 500 points]

"Indeed."

Chen Fan squinted.

While the defensive effect of Protective True Qi increased, so did the activation requirements.

Without other Martial Arts Heart Method bonuses,

the practitioner's internal Primordial True Qi must reach roughly 360 points.

Compared to the Level 1 requirement, it's an increase of over threefold.

"I'm afraid the requirements will get even higher next."

Chen Fan thought, but fortunately, with his abundant True Qi, it was unlikely he would face the awkward situation of reaching a realm but being unable to activate it.

Of course, if he used a killing technique, it might be a different story.

"I still need to practice more Heart Methods."

Chen Fan sighed, adding another 640 experience points.

This time, no new traits appeared either.

After a glance, Chen Fan continued to add points.

This time, the cost of experience points reached 1280 points.

At the same time, he felt a slight change in the form of the Protective True Qi flowing over his skin.

Originally smooth like a protective shield,

now, it had some spikes.

"Could it be?"

A thought flashed in Chen Fan's mind as he looked at the Skill Bar.

[Golden Bell Shield: 5th Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 5, Qi Storage Level 4, Rebound Level 1]

"Rebound!"

Chen Fan exclaimed.

It was just as he thought.

The spikes that appeared in the True Qi form were exactly like a porcupine's, capable of inflicting harm on opponents.

[Rebound: Passive Skill, when receiving close combat attacks, returns 10% of the received damage to the opponent. Each level increases Rebound damage by 10%. Actively activate: consumes 1% of the body's True Qi per second, reflecting 10% of the total Qi as damage to the opponent during close combat attacks. Each level increases True Qi consumption by one fold and Rebound damage by 10%.]

"Both active and passive?"

Chen Fan was taken aback.

This was beyond his expectations.

He studied it carefully again, starting with the passive effect.

It's easy to understand, during close combat, it could return 10% of the damage to the opponent?

For each level gained, the damage returned increases by 10%.

In other words, if Rebound was at Level 2, the damage received from opponent attacks could reflect 20% back to them.

At Level 9, it would have a 40% reflection effect.

At the Level 12 Perfection, the effect is 70%!

The key point is that this trait doesn't consume True Qi, aside from the activation requirements of Protective True Qi.

And the effect when actively activated is even more astonishing!

Similarly reflecting attacks, but returning it as 10% of one's total True Qi as damage.

Yes, not 10% of the opponent's attack, but 10% of one's total internal True Qi,

implying that if the practitioner's internal True Qi is abundant, an interesting situation can occur.

That is, the opponent might use only one hundred strands of True Qi to attack, yet suffer a rebound damage of a thousand strands of True Qi...

Such enormous True Qi could surpass the opponent's internal True Qi total, exhausting all remaining True Qi, leaving no defense.

The outcome would be dire.

Additionally, the upgrades significantly increase the effect.

For Rebound at Level 2,

actively activated, it consumes 2% of True Qi per second.

But the damage reflected would already be 20% of the total True Qi.

Similarly, at Level 9, Rebound damage could reach 50% of the total internal True Qi!

However, the price is the consumption of 5% True Qi per second, which means after just twenty seconds, the practitioner's True Qi would be exhausted.

Even if there's more True Qi, it's useless because the consumption is based on a percentage.

If it were Rebound at Level 10, actively activated, the duration would only be a mere ten seconds.

As a trade-off, the reflected damage would be terrifying, equaling 100% of the practitioner's internal True Qi!

"It's a pity it can only be raised to the 12th Floor."

Chen Fan sighed.

The 12th Floor means the Rebound trait can be boosted to Level 7 at most.

To go higher, one must break the limit of the Golden Bell Shield.

As it stands, this is an extremely difficult task.

In comparison, another method is simpler, which is to increase the total internal True Qi.

Thinking of this, Chen Fan couldn't help but laugh and cry.

At this realm, everything is related to the amount of True Qi.

With abundant internal True Qi, even without making a move, one could cause significant harm to opponents.

Of course, whether passive or active, there is a flaw.

It only rebounds close combat attacks, if the opponent uses long-range attacks, the rebound won't work.

But this doesn't detract from the strength of the Rebound trait at all.

Especially in one-on-many situations or during a beast tide.

With strong Protective True Qi and the Rebound trait activated, he could rush into the beast tide.

Not even needing to strike, as the fierce beasts would attack on their own.

Then, touching them would injure them, being close would result in death.

"I wonder what traits will unlock next."

Chen Fan was filled with anticipation.

This time, he consumed 2560 experience points.

[Golden Bell Shield: 6th Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 6, Qi Storage Level 5, Rebound Level 2]

The 6th Floor did not unlock new traits.

Chen Fan invested another 5120 experience points.

The Protective True Qi on his skin strengthened once more, and to his surprise, the Cultivation Gate on his right leg, initially palm-sized, became fist-sized!

This change brought him immense joy.

The 7th Floor, finally the Cultivation Gate had changed.

It wasn't easy.

[Golden Bell Shield: 7th Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 7, Qi Storage Level 6, Rebound Level 3, Supplement Level 1]

[Supplement: Each upgrade level, the Cultivation Gate size reduces by half]

"No wonder it changed from palm-sized to fist-sized."

Chen Fan realized.

With this trait, each floor's Cultivation Gate reduces in size by half from the previous floor.

At higher floors, maybe it will be as small as a fingernail or even a soybean-sized dot?

Of course, this Cultivation Gate cannot disappear, even if the Golden Bell Shield is cultivated to a hundred floors, it won't vanish.

"If it's fingernail-sized, it's still manageable."

Chen Fan thought.

Firstly, it would be hard for others to know where his Cultivation Gate is.

Secondly, even if they knew, breaking through it wouldn't be easy, because normally, people would defend it heavily.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the defense at the Cultivation Gate is equivalent to the defense of the previous floor for the entire body; for example at the 9th Floor, the physical defense elsewhere would be 4.5 times, while at the Cultivation Gate, it would still be 4 times, not as fragile as one might imagine.

"Just two more levels to the 9th Floor, then I'll see if it's worth continuing."

Chen Fan said, adding over ten thousand experience points.

Feeling a pinch of pain.

Because from now on, it would take at least twenty thousand experience points to start.

[Golden Bell Shield: 8th Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 8, Qi Storage Level 7, Rebound Level 4, Supplement Level 2]

The 8th Floor.

The fist-sized Cultivation Gate reduced by half again, becoming smaller than a cup lid.

The extra True Qi boost reached 1.4 times.

Rebound's effect also reached 40%.

While the activation requirement of Protective True Qi reached three thousand points.

Chen Fan glanced at it, then continued to enhance.

Consuming twenty thousand experience, the Golden Bell Shield finally reached the 9th Floor.

A strange feeling surged through his heart.

Chen Fan revealed a trace of joy on his face, clearly having unlocked a new trait.

[Golden Bell Shield: 9th Floor (0%), Traits: Protective True Qi Level 9, Qi Storage Level 8, Rebound Level 5, Supplement Level 3, Rejuvenation Level 1]

"Rejuvenation?"

Chen Fan scratched his head.

This trait seems like a recovery skill?

Chapter 260: He Will Come to Find You

Anshan City, a villa on the eastern peak.

Compared to other villas, the guards here are ten times stronger.

There are more than ten fully armed guards patrolling back and forth, not to mention those hidden in covert spots.

From afar, a middle-aged man was walking alone toward the villa.

Suddenly, a man's voice came from the nearby air.

"Chairman Gao, Meng Xue's state won't hold much longer, right?"

"Yes."

Gao Jinming sighed and said, "But Guan Dehua hasn't returned for a long time; it's likely something happened. If we don't figure this out, the consequences could be endless."

The air instantly fell silent.

Gao Jinming arrived at the villa's entrance, where a few guards stationed saluted him with deep respect in their eyes.

"Is that Chairman Gao? The top leader of Anshan City Awakened Association?"

"Chairman Gao hasn't been here for a long time, has he? Could something serious have happened?"

"Lord Gao must be here to see someone inside. Once he goes in, I need to report this to the City Lord quickly."

Gao Jinming gave a meaningful look to the guard planning to report and walked straight inside.

Indeed, his superpower is Mind Reading.

No matter what the other person says, their inner thoughts can never be hidden from him.

Even when facing an Awakener, this superpower remains effective.

Of course, if the other's Spiritual Power far exceeds his, using Mind Reading wouldn't reveal their thoughts and might even alert the person.

Because this superpower leans towards support, Gao Jinming isn't hugely recognized in Anshan City. His position is high, so general Awakeners don't dare offend him.

"Lord Gao."

A short-haired, capable-looking woman approached him.

"Is Meng Xue inside?"

Gao Jinming asked with a smile that felt like a spring breeze.

The short-haired woman nodded repeatedly, looking honored, "Yes, Lord Gao, please follow me."

"Hmm."

Gao Jinming nodded and looked at the air beside him.

The short-haired woman went upstairs and stopped at a bedroom door, raising her hand to knock.

"Lord Meng, Lord Gao is here."

She then directly turned the door lock and opened the door.

Clearly, she called the person inside "Lord" with no true respect in her heart.

Inside, an elderly woman with white hair faced the window, seemingly unaware of what was happening around her.

"You may leave now."

Gao Jinming nodded at the short-haired woman and stepped into the room, closing the door.

The room was luxuriously decorated, filled with various appliances, and every piece of furniture was impeccably clean.

"Meng Xue,"

Gao Jinming slowly walked to the window and said, "If it weren't for the special circumstances this time, I truly wouldn't want to come to you."

"Really?"

At that moment, Meng Xue turned her face, revealing a heavily wrinkled visage.

Speaking, she gave an impression of air slipping through her words.

Upon closer inspection, most of her teeth were gone.

"You can leave now, can't you?"

She glanced intentionally beside him.

He Changshu's expression turned unnatural.

He could deceive many, but not the person before him.

Gao Jinming's face grew serious, "This time the situation is extraordinary; Guan Dehua has gone missing."

Saying so, he locked his gaze at Meng Xue's eyes.

Meng Xue also stared right back, her face revealing a smile while thinking:

"Is that so? That's fantastic; I was hoping something happened to him."

Gao Jinming's eyebrows furrowed.

His Mind Reading for those unaware works tremendously.

But for those aware of his superpower, it's easy to guard against it.

Feeling a bit helpless, he changed angles, "Meng Xue, do you remember the Celestial God Tree you found two years ago?"

"Now, the Celestial God Fruits on that tree are ripe, numerous, with over ten in total. Initially, we planned to give you two after acquiring them.

By consuming those two Celestial God Fruits, your Spiritual Power would surge. Perhaps, you could awaken again and gain substantial Life Force, no longer being like this."

"Are you that kind-hearted?"

Meng Xue laughed.

"Whether they are, I don't know, but I will fight for you."

Gao Jinming said, raising his hand, "If you don't believe me, I swear by the heavens."

"Forget it."

Meng Xue shook her head.

Two years ago, she might have been deceived by this man.

But having suffered so much, she knew exactly who he was.

Gao Jinming's face showed embarrassment; he coughed lightly and said:

"But this time, there's been an accident. Guan Dehua is missing. You know, without his help and his Meridian Refining Martial Artists drawing fire, it's hard for us to get the Celestial God Fruits.

So, I'd like your help in finding Guan Dehua, to understand what happened."

Meng Xue remained unmoved.

Time ticked by.

Gao Jinming sighed, "Meng Xue, Guan Dehua's disappearance won't be concealed long. Soon, Yan Ming will hear about it, and he's not as temperate as I am.

If you know anything, tell us now, hmm?"

"He already knows."

Meng Xue suddenly said.

"What?"

Gao Jinming froze.

Before he could react, two figures appeared in the room.

"Yan Ming? Fang Yun?"

He widened his eyes, surprised.

"Chairman Gao?"

Fang Yun also exclaimed, "Why are you here?"

Yan Ming squinted at Gao Jinming.

Or rather, he sensed another's presence.

As the association's chairman, Gao Jinming's combat abilities among C-level Awakeners aren't top-tier.

But he has a loyal subordinate — He Changshu.

His superpower is Invisibility and known as a Martial Arts expert, making one wary.

Gao Jinming glanced at Meng Xue and smiled wryly, "Seems we're here for the same matter."

With those words, the room turned silent.

Their eyes collectively fixed on Meng Xue.

"Seems you anticipated my arrival."

Yan Ming's face darkened, "You must know my purpose. Tell me, what happened to Guan Dehua? Who targeted my business?"

"!!!"

Gao Jinming reacted indifferently initially but widened his eyes at the latter part.

The business was attacked?

Really?

Someone dared challenge Yan Ming?

Even Gao Jinming couldn't gauge Yan Ming's strength and avoided provoking him.

The room fell silent once more,

A minute passed,

Three minutes passed,

Yan Ming's face turned ominous, voice chilling, "Meng Xue, listen up, I won't waste time here. I'll give you one more minute. If you keep playing dead, don't blame me for hurting you."

"Meng Xue, speak up. This is pointless."

Gao Jinming sighed.

As said, it's better if he asked.

With Yan Ming, patience is scarce.

Let alone the business incident; Yan Ming, already furious.

Meng Xue's silence?

Yan Ming has a hundred ways to make her talk.

"Do you really want to know?"

Meng Xue turned, staring at Yan Ming's eyes.

"What do you think?"

Yan Ming's heart surged with killing intent.

Years made controlling Meng Xue harder; sometimes, force was unavoidable, annoying him.

If he went to Jiulong City, taking Meng Xue posed risks.

Besides, Meng Xue, aged and frail, had little use left.

Better to kill her before leaving to avoid future troubles.

"You come to me, but it's unnecessary."

"What do you mean?"

Fang Yun frowned.

"The person you're looking for is coming."

"What?"

Upon hearing this, the other four's faces showed shock.

"Coming here?"

Gao Jinming asked incredulously.

Meng Xue nodded, "Soon, within three minutes, but I can't probe further, given my state."

Gao Jinming and Fang Yun looked at Yan Ming.

Her words concealed two pieces of information.

First, the missing Guan Dehua and the business attack are by one person?

Second, this person dares come here? Insane?

No one would dare do such normally.

Seems likely a lie.

"Meng Xue," Fang Yun coldly said, "We lack time for jokes. These events, explain immediately. Our patience is limited."

Meng Xue shook her head, "I've said, I can't do more. You'll know truth or lies in three minutes."

"You!"

Fang Yun growled.

"Fine."

Yan Ming raised a hand, stopping Fang Yun.

He eyed Meng Xue, coldly laughing, "I believe your words. We'll wait three minutes. If things don't happen as said, don't blame me."

He, like the others, didn't believe her.

This place is Anshan City's strongest!

With a functioning brain, no one would risk coming here.

Least of all the perpetrator.

If three minutes passed with no event.

Then, well!