

## Medical 1281

### Chapter 1281 Unbelievable Power (Part 3)

"Bai! Xiao! Brother Chun!"

Even though everyone was watching, shaken and filled with complex emotions, the Heavenly Dao Halo in Yan Xiaobao's Dantian Region was becoming more and more powerful. His nine spiritual oceans were rapidly turning gold, although this process evidently would take several days to complete. Once this happens, and they are entirely golden, it means... Yan Xiaobao has truly reached...

The establishment of the Heavenly Dao Foundation!!

So far, his cultivation base, his potential, and his longevity were all rising rapidly. Meanwhile, he could feel that something significant was happening in the Fallen Sword World. Even more surprising, for some reason, he had a feeling that beyond the current skies, there was an older, primordial heaven and earth, a profound ancient essence!

Moments later, this feeling vanished. Initially, Yan Xiaobao was on the brink of catching Song Que, exploiting his weaknesses to kill him. But once Song Que smashed the jade, destroying the energy nodes, everything in the Fallen Sword World changed!

A loud cracking sound echoed, as loud as thunder. Huge fissures appeared, spreading across the sky and land. Mountains started collapsing, plains splitting apart. Everything began to crumble.

The disciples present were completely shaken.

The entire world was collapsing!

"This is bad! What's happening!?"

"Heavens! Don't tell me the Fallen Sword World is going to collapse!?!?"

Meanwhile, outside the Fallen Sword Abyss, Snake Master, Ouyang Jie, and the elders from the Deep Flow Sect and Wanliu Sect were all sitting cross-legged in meditation. There was still a month remaining before the Holy Land would open. Suddenly, as they gazed at the Giant Sword, their faces flickered.

They could see enormous cracks spreading across its surface!

"What is happening?!"

"The Fallen Sword is breaking apart!!"

"Damn it, we can't even get in!" All of them were in shock, almost unable to believe the Giant Sword would indeed collapse!

They even attempted to enter, but it was impossible.

All four of them were thinking the same thing: "When the sword was discovered, the Clan Leaders of the four sects established teleportation formations. If the world collapses, they will be activated. However, we can't be sure if the disciples will be sent back to the parish or some other nearby place..."

Back in the Fallen Sword World, the ground continued to collapse. Meanwhile, four immense Spell formations appeared, and the power of teleportation erupted, spreading to all the disciples.

Because the disciples of different sects cultivated different techniques, their auras were different, thus, they were teleported out by different formations!

One by one, the disciples were enveloped by the power of the teleportation and then swept away. Yan Xiaobao was one of them. As he glanced around at the shocking disaster, he recalled Ouyang Jie's words and did nothing to resist the power.

In the blink of an eye, his vision darkened, and the power of teleportation pulled him away. However, at that moment, a small hand reached out, seemingly to stop him from leaving.

"Why don't you play with me, dear..." Yan Xiaobao's scalp tingled in fear, his eyes wide open. A pale hand reached out, belonging to a young girl in a white dress, a fierce, mysterious smile on her face.

Her long black hair covered her face, making her look even more terrifying than usual. An aura of death erupted from her, transforming into something resembling venomous snakes, attempting to bore into Yan Xiaobao's eyes, ears, nose, mouth, even through his pores.

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Chapter 1282: Heavenly Dao Halo

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However, just as the hand was about to touch him, his nine Spirit Seas erupted with a Heavenly Dao Halo, and the halo of death collapsed. The hissing snakes were wiped away, and the girl's hand withered, revealing dead skin and viscous drops of blood. It was unspeakably terrifying.

The girl let out a long, howling shriek that resonated through the air.

At the same time, the teleportation power around Yan Xiaobao exploded at full force, and he vanished from the Fallen Sword World.

After all the disciples of the four sects had left, the Fallen Sword World continued to collapse. But then something else happened. Massive, hazy gray mist surged forth, beginning to fill the world. It was laden with a halo of death and reeked of rot. Because of that decaying aura, even the four mighty teleportation formations crumbled into ruins.

In the blink of an eye, the entire world... became a Ghost Realm. Howls rose from within the fog. Clearly, all the banesouls that existed in this world were now beginning to awaken.

Strangely, the gigantic sword stopped its tottering collapse!

In the outside world, Ouyang Jie and the others saw the sword cease to sway and watched black mist begin to gush out. They exchanged frustrated looks. However, after a while, they attempted to enter the sword again, and this time, there was no problem.

When they went in, they could still sense a fading sacred halo.

"That aura..."

"Heavenstring energy!!! What an immense power!" Even as a flicker of shock flashed across their faces, a sinister young girl's voice rose from the mist below... It sounded bizarre and cruel, filling the entire world.

"Your disciples have already harvested the Heavenstring energy. From this day forth, this place shall be called... the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain. In the future, do not set foot here. Any who violate this decree will have their entire sect exterminated!"

With the sound, Ouyang Jie and the others coughed up mouthfuls of blood. As they were forcibly blasted out of the world, the voice crashed in their ears like thunder.

"Banespirit!!" they cried in horror. The pressure they felt surpassed the Nova Soul Stage. They trembled, their hearts filled with a shocking impact, and retreated at full speed while sending messages back to their sects.

"The Fallen Sword World has turned into the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain. Furthermore... one of the banesouls has awakened and become a banespirit!"

"The Heavenstring energy has been taken away? By whom? Which sect's disciple got it? Does that mean... someone has reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation!?!"

Even as they fled, the former Fallen Sword World, now the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain, was choked with fog. Standing within the mist was a girl in a white dress, holding an unskinned, shriveled Lei Shan in her hand. At first she gazed up at the sky, then lowered her eyes to stare at the tens of thousands of banesouls in the region. All of them... were bowing down to her!

No sound could be heard.

As for Lei Shan, his eyes were filled with inconceivable terror and agony.

Standing next to the girl in the white dress was a young, beautiful woman whose eyes were expressionless, like a puppet. She was... Gongsun Wan'er.

There was no poison on her, and no centipedes. The human-faced spider had turned into mist and vanished. She was now completely clean, utterly empty, inside and out...

"Oh, you don't want to play with me, darling..." the girl said, her voice sinister and strange. "Well, that's fine. I'll be able to leave this place soon, and then I can come find you. I'll show you how pretty this new dress of mine is." The girl chuckled, looking at Gongsun Wan'er.

The fact that the Fallen Sword World had transformed into the Nine Serenities Ghost Domain was a major event in the eastern lower reaches of the Cultivation World. What had once been a Heavenly Dao Foundation Holy Land was now a domain of horror!

Moreover, one of the banesouls had awakened, turning into a terrifying, sentient banespirit. Even the elders of the four sects were shaken by the thought.

However, there was nothing they could do about it. Although the matter affected the four sects to a certain extent, it was not a tremendous loss. Furthermore, it was a shared loss for all four. Shockingly, the girl's voice confirmed that the Heavenstring energy... had already been taken.

That meant someone had to have reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation.

"Who was it... which sect, which disciple obtained that immense energy!?"

"Damn it! If it was one of the other three sects, that means they'll have a disciple at the Heavenly Dao Foundation. We need to kill that person while they're still weak. If they reach Core Formation, they'll become a force that won't be easy to stop!"

"It's definitely our Blood Flow Sect. Hahaha! Now we have Patriarch Limitless... and another top-tier cultivator!"

The four elders immediately used transmission jade slabs to send the information back to their sects as quickly as possible.

At the same time, they tried to make contact with those disciples who had been teleported out of the Fallen Sword World. Unfortunately, they quickly discovered that the fluctuations caused by the teleportation made communication impossible.

Soon, the Blood Flow Sect, Deep Flow Sect, Spiritual Flow Sect, and Medicine Flow Sect were thrown into great upheaval. Even the Clan Leaders of the sects were shaken. Large numbers of Heavenly Dao Foundation Dharma Protectors and elders were dispatched. Even prime elders were sent out. No effort was spared in tracking down the disciples who had been teleported to random locations.

All they needed was to find a single disciple, and they should be able to obtain information about what had happened in the Fallen Sword World. Most importantly, everyone wanted to know... who had obtained that immense energy!

Chapter 1283 Heavenly Dao Halo (Part 2)

In the Spirit Sect, the Founder Clan Leader personally relayed orders that set countless Inner Sect disciples and Foundation elders into action. Even the Outer Sect disciples were summoned. They flew out from the South Shore and North Shore, spreading the mission to find the disciples rescued from the Fallen Sword Abyss.

Once they found one, they would report to the sect immediately.

The first located was not one of the many disciples from the Spirit Stream Sect, but one of the remaining five disciples of the Pill Stream Sect!

The Pill Stream Sect had dispatched 80 disciples into the Fallen Sword World, over ninety percent of whom were killed. Fortunately for the Pill Stream Sect, one of the five disciples who survived was teleported to a location outside the Pill Stream Sect itself.

When the Pill Stream Sect elders and sect leaders arrived, they found an extremely weakened disciple, his energy almost completely depleted. Fellow disciples immediately supported him, infusing him with their spiritual power so he could speak. Trembling, eyes flashing with fear, he weakly explained, "Dead.

They're all dead. Fang Lin was killed. Zhao Rou is dead too. All of them were wiped out by Bai Xiaochun from the Spirit Stream Sect!

"Yan Xiaobao... completed 9 Tideflows. He and Song Que contended for immense power, and... he reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation!"

The disciple's words utterly shook the Pill Stream Sect cultivators, even the elders and sect leaders. Gasps could be heard, eyes wide with disbelief.

"Heavenly Dao... Foundation established!?"

"Yan Xiaobao? Spirit Sect?!"

The sect leader's eyes flashed coldly as he said, "Send messages to all spies in the Soul Sect. Tell them to find Yan Xiaobao and kill him. Spare no effort!" The Pill Stream Sect ordered all spies to take action, hoping to be the first to find Bai Xiaochun. If they did, they wouldn't spare anything to kill him. As for the other three sects, they mobilized large forces to search for the currently missing disciples.

As all this happened, something else was occurring on the Eastwood Continent, in the forest-covered mountains not far from Eastwood City. Next to a particularly large tree, the air rippled with teleportation waves, and then Yan Xiaobao stumbled out.

He bent over and vomited the moment he arrived.

"What kind of teleportation was that!? I almost lost my pitiful little life in the process..." Yan Xiaobao's face was pale, gasping for breath. What he didn't know was that his past experiences with teleportation had been weakened in terms of teleportation power to make them as comfortable as possible. In contrast, the teleportation that pulled him out of the Fallen Sword Abyss was fully powered. All portals set by the four sects were like this. In moments of severe crisis, the most important thing was to teleport the target out as quickly as possible.

Such a forceful teleport would cause most people to lose consciousness.

After emptying his stomach, Yan Xiaobao felt a little better, though he still felt so dizzy that he saw stars. Leaning against a tree, he looked around and found himself unaware of his location. Based on Ouyang Jie's long explanations, he understood he could be anywhere.

"I should return to the Eastwood Continent," he thought while massaging his temples. Then, he recalled the little hand and the strange sound he heard before being teleported out, filling his heart with fear. Trembling, he decided never to return to the Fallen Sword Abyss.

Still trying to catch his breath, he sat on a nearby piece of wood, looking down at his tattered clothes. By now, they were so severely damaged and bloodstained they couldn't even be recognized as Spirit Sect robes. He wanted to change them, but unfortunately, he had no spares in his bag.

"The Fallen Sword Abyss was so brutal..." Remembering everything that had happened made his scalp tingle. Especially terrifying was that almost everyone seemed insane with the desire to kill him. Then there was the vicious, brutal battle with Song Que. In the end, he sighed.

"Why do cultivators always end up fighting and killing...?" Sighing, he examined his cultivation base and found his spiritual ocean gradually turning golden. So far, the process was about 30% complete.

"Hahaha! The Heavenly Dao Foundation is established!" He was so excited that he forgot the brutality of the Fallen Sword World. The thought of a 500-year lifespan made his eyes sparkle. He flicked his sleeve, raised his chin, and proudly declared: "I, Yan Xiaobao, truly am a perfect choice. Hahaha! Hahahaha!" After laughing loudly for a moment, he cleared his throat. "I think I should figure out my location."

Another thing he found interesting was that despite his cultivation base growing stronger, the aura it emitted grew weaker. It was almost as if, with his spiritual ocean ascending to the Heavenly Dao Foundation establishment level, all the pressure and energy they usually radiated were now concentrated internally.

Currently, anyone sensing his aura would place him at Qi Condensation's ninth level. As the process continued, he felt his cultivation base aura would eventually disappear entirely, and he would appear as a mortal. Only when this process was complete would he experience a heavenly, earth-shaking eruption of power.

"It should be complete in about two days," he thought excitedly. With that, he set aside the issue of his cultivation base. Next, he crafted a jade slip, attempting to send a message to the sect. Unfortunately, during the teleportation, the jade sliding plate was damaged. Though the teleportation energy was gradually dissipating, it seemed he could not contact the sect temporarily.

Feeling a bit upset, he activated the jade slip, then transformed into a beam of light, shooting into the sky and off into the distance.

It wasn't long before he realized that, with his current cultivation base strength, he could fly faster than before. He quickly exited the mountain range, and there, in the distance, he saw a sprawling city.

The city walls were magnificent, built with green bricks. Moreover, every brick seemed engraved with magic symbols forming spells.

The spell formations sent light flowing high into the sky, seemingly connecting the city with the heavens. Above could be seen a massive green vortex with occasional lightning dancing within.

There was also a pressure falling from above, limiting any cultivator's cultivation base entering the city, preventing them from flying.

This city was vast, capable of housing at least 10,000,000 people, with four large gates frequently crowded with floods of people.

In front of each city gate was a giant stele, beautifully inscribed in calligraphy, like dancing dragons and swirling phoenixes.

"Eastwood City!" Yan Xiaobao was stunned for a moment, then his eyes lit up.

This was the largest city within the territory controlled by the Spirit Stream Sect.

It was actually considered part of the Spirit Flow Sect, operated by ten of the most powerful cultivator clans on the Eastwood Continent. Its history dates back 10,000 years, serving as a home not only for cultivators but for mortals as well.

Besides the ten great cultivator clans, there was also a Spirit Stream Sect disciple stationed there as an official envoy responsible for maintaining peace among the clans.

This was the precise location Du Lingfei had been sent to many years ago. Although she had only a Qi Condensation cultivation base, she represented the Foundation Elder also stationed there. The elder rarely showed himself, leaving most duties to Du Lingfei.

Her primary mission was to control the ten great clans.

"Sister Du was sent back here as an envoy. I haven't seen her in such a long time..." Yan Xiaobao's heart warmed at the thought of Du Lingfei, and he couldn't help picturing her both shy and angry simultaneously. "Hmm. I can't just walk in directly. I'll sneak in anonymously and check things out first. After so many years, I wonder if my boo has gone outside and found another man." Raising an eyebrow, he somersaulted into the air, shooting toward Eastwood City.[1]

As he approached, he could feel the restriction on flight taking effect.

"How annoying! I'm a Reputation Disciple! I'm the sect leader's junior brother. Eastwood City belongs to the Spirit Flow Sect, so it's my right! I can't believe I'm not allowed to fly!" Grumbling all the way, he descended to the ground and walked toward the city gate. There was a line, and he didn't feel like cutting in, so he went to the back. After a short while, he made his way up to the gate, where he paid a small Spirit Stone tax.

No one paid him any mind. The only thing they cared about was the Spirit Stones. Clearly, they were confident no one would cause any trouble.

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Chapter 1284: Luxury

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"Eastwood City is so grand! I can't believe they're still imposing a spirit stone tax!" Yan Xiaobao felt quite dissatisfied with the situation unfolding. Considering his status, he truly wore a face of disappointment. He coughed dryly, hands clasped behind his back, struggling at the doorway.

Upon entering, the sight of countless towering buildings left him breathless.

Everything was enormous! The roads were paved with limestone, each slab emitting spiritual energy. The buildings were adorned with gold and jade, engraved with dragons and phoenixes, utterly extraordinary.

Everything was decorated with beautiful pearls and spiritual stones. The magical glow was ubiquitous, creating an aura of luxury that almost physically struck Yan Xiaobao's face.

"This... this place..." He swallowed as he took in the beauty and opulence. Vehicles roamed back and forth in the streets, people were visible everywhere. He almost felt as though he existed in a different world.

As for the city's residents, they wore silk and satin, appearing incredibly impressive as they walked about. Regardless of their cultivation levels, they seemed very proud and lofty. Unlike mortals in small towns and villages, the mortals here didn't seem intimidated or deeply impressed by the cultivators around them.

As he passed by, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but be stunned by all that he saw. After all, he had grown up in a village and then spent all his time at the sect. He had never visited such a big city before.

Of course, considering how he surveyed the surroundings, he stood out from the crowd, the passing cultivators looking at him with disdainful expressions, treating him as a country bumpkin. Some noticed his clothes were torn and bloodstained, realizing he might be someone not to be provoked, they quickly cleared his path.

"I never imagined this place would be so incredible!" The more he saw, the more excited he became. The sheer extravagance of this place left him sighing, already trying to figure out how to have the sect transfer him here.

He continued to sigh, passing by a shop, suddenly rooted to the spot. It was a clothing store, filled with garments of various colors and styles, all beautifully tailored and embroidered. Even the lowest quality garments were meticulously crafted.

Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but think the clothes here were far better than anything back there. His eyes sparkling, he walked into the shop.

Inside were several individuals browsing the clothing selection. As soon as Yan Xiaobao entered, they glanced at him, smirking upon seeing his tattered robe. However, they could sense his Level 7 Qi Condensation aura, so they quickly looked away.

There was a young man in lavish attire, whose eyes widened upon seeing Yan Xiaobao. After a moment, before averting his gaze, a peculiar light could be seen in his eyes.

Meanwhile, a smiling storekeeper approached Yan Xiaobao and began showcasing the attire.

"This heavenly Sky Dragon Robe is made from geranium skin. After being treated with eighty-one medicinal plants, it was adorned by an embroidery master. Within it, a spell form lies hidden, capable of resisting all types of water-based magical techniques!

"Oh, the Thousand Leaf Coat is made from a thousand different types of Spirit Leaf. A secret magic is used for tailoring, and when you wear it, you'll be surrounded by the aroma of herbs and plants. Wearing it for some time, you'll naturally exude the scent of spiritual medicine.

"Oh, this one..."

Yan Xiaobao nodded, feeling clothes here and there, falling in love with everything he saw. Meanwhile, the young man in luxurious attire finally raised his head. He smiled and approached Yan Xiaobao, clasping his hands and bowing.

"Greetings, brother." To his surprise, Yan Xiaobao turned to look at the young man.

"I am your humble servant, Hou Yunqing," the young man said courteously, wearing a splendid smile. "I happen to be the owner of this little store. Brother, I can see you're an extraordinary person, a dragon among humans. If you see something you like, brother, just consider it on the house. Think of it as a gift between friends."

"Are you serious?!" Yan Xiaobao looked at Hou Yunqing, blinking.

"I absolutely mean it! Hou Yunqing never tells lies."

Yan Xiaobao responded with a sarcastic laugh. There was no reason to refuse a free gift, so he casually pointed at the Sky Dragon Robe.

The storekeeper looked at Hou Yunqing, smiled, and nodded. When he handed the heavenly robe to Yan Xiaobao, the storekeeper shrugged in disbelief. Yan Xiaobao donned it and immediately appeared completely different from before.

Hou Yunqing laughed heartily, saying, "Brother, the Sky Dragon Robe is absolutely fitting on you. It looks as though it was custom-made for you! You certainly know how to pick clothes for yourself!"

"You think so too?" Yan Xiaobao replied, smoothing the robe. He was elated and couldn't help but think the clothes back at the sect seemed too shabby. He had fallen in love with this new world filled with luxury and sensory delights.

Hou Xiaoping was so astonished at Yan Xiaobao's response that he didn't know what to say next. In the end, he cleared his throat and changed the subject.

Chapter 1285 Luxury (Part 2)

"Brother, tonight there is a banquet held in Eastwood City. Du Lingfei, the envoy from Spirit Stream Sect, has reached the end of her commission and will return to her sect, so a grand banquet is being held in her honor. If you have nothing else to do, brother, why not come here? It will be fun."

Yan Xiaobao smiled, looked at Hou Yunqing, and then expressed his agreement.

Hou Yunqing knew he was being a bit forward but wanted to seize the golden opportunity without time for a better strategy. He smiled and led Yan Xiaobao out of the shop and into the street.

As they walked out, Yan Xiaobao noticed eight bodyguards trailing them, all at the fifth level of Qi Condensation. They were rogue cultivators, but clearly skilled assassins, emitting a powerful killing aura.

Hou Yunqing glanced at Yan Xiaobao from the corner of his eye and said, "You know, the envoy from Spirit Creek Sect, Du Lingfei, is as beautiful as an immortal. Her cultivation base is not only very high but she is also very beautiful. In fact, she is one of the top ten goddesses in the Eastwood Continent. As the envoy here, the ten clans have kept perfectly harmonious relations. No issues have occurred. She has expertly handled her duties."

This was the first time Yan Xiaobao heard about Du Lingfei's affairs in Eastwood City and was instantly captivated. "She sounds incredible!"

"Oh, she's incredible, alright. Very incredible! Famous young individuals from cultivation tribes all over Eastwood Continent strive to capture her favor. But in my view, no tribe is worthy of her. Only a few within the Spiritual Flow Sect itself are deemed worthy. To be honest, there's really only one person good enough for her!" Hou Yunqing sighed.

"Who is that?!" Yan Xiaobao asked, blinking.

"Oh, he's a rare choice in the Spirit Sect, a type only seen once every 10,000 years. He's a prestigious disciple and the younger brother of the sect leader. His name resonates across the North Shore and South Shore of the Spiritual Flow Sect, popular among countless disciples. His name is... Yan Xiaobao!" Hou Yunqing's expression was awe-inspiring, though he seemed to struggle to suppress his enthusiasm. As for the bodyguards, they had peculiar expressions on their faces. They had been working for Hou Yunqing for years, but this was the first time hearing him speak that way. They couldn't help but look at Yan Xiaobao, curiosity gnawing at their hearts.

Yan Xiaobao coughed dryly. Appearing very thoughtful, he said, "You're right, Yan Xiaobao is indeed extraordinary."

Then he gave Hou Yunqing another mysterious smile.

Hou Yunqing either did not notice Yan Xiaobao's pensive demeanor or pretended not to.

"Extraordinary?" He continued excitedly. "He's more than that. He's a real choice, a superstar, the one all female disciples in the Spiritual Flow Sect want as their Daoist partner. As for male disciples, they all

wish to be his friend. He's the gemstone of the Spirit Stream Sect. I've even heard that after establishing in the Holy Land, he reached the Earthstring Foundation.

"A person like that is like a full moon in the dark night. All anyone can do is look up in amazement. Sadly, my own potential is average. Otherwise, I would search for him, offering to be his lifelong follower, ready at all times, and at all hours of the day."

At this point, Bai Xiaochun almost blushed. However, Hou Yunqing seemed truly caught up in excitement, and Yan Xiaobao did not want to interrupt him. Therefore, he allowed him to continue speaking in this manner for a while, even occasionally giving him an encouraging look.

Hou Yunqing kept it up all the way to the banquet, using fresh and elaborate ways to praise Yan Xiaobao the entire time. Occasionally, he was at a loss for words, but Yan Xiaobao's encouraging expression spurred him on, and he racked his brains to think of more. The uninterrupted conversation was quite exhausting...

As Yan Xiaobao and Hou Yunqing approached the banquet, a large group of disciples and elders from the Spirit Creek Sect were scouring the Eastwood Continent. Their primary goal was tracking down those disciples who were transported out of the Fallen Sword Abyss to find out what had actually happened.

When a group of inner sect disciples happened to find a disciple knocked out during the transportation, they wandered along the edge of the forest. They quickly revived him.

The first words from his mouth were enough to shock all the rescuers.

"Uncle Yan Xiaobao has reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation!!"

These words shook the listeners to their hearts like lightning. Everyone was breathless. It was earth-shaking news so, without the slightest hesitation, they sent the information back to the sect.

Soon, more and more disciples who were transported out of the Fallen Sword Abyss appeared. Additionally, the messages sent back to the sect were all the same.

Yan Xiaobao has reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation!

He incited desperation in the hearts of the disciples from the other three sects. He slaughtered Zhao Rou and Fang Lin from the Pill Sect, severely wounded Nine-Isles, successfully seized all of Song Que's energy, and ascended to the Heavenly Dao Foundation!

Some even said he killed Lei Shan from the deep Spirit Sect.

As the information flowed, a massive commotion was triggered in the Spirit Sect. Elders, seven Peak Lords, the sect leader... everyone was stunned, yet simultaneously elated. Earlier, they were anxious and uncertain about which sect someone from the Heavenly Dao Foundation would come from. In fact, many were convinced it would be someone from the Blood Flow Sect.

There were even some words sent to spies in the Blood Flow Sect, attempting to have certain disciples there killed.

But now, everyone was shaken to discover that the one who reached the Heavenly Dao Foundation... actually came from the Spiritual Flow Sect. That was... Yan Xiaobao!

Li Qinghou and the sect leader rejoiced together. The main elder was completely shaken. Next, the entire sect was mobilized to complete a mission.

"Find Yan Xiaobao. If you do, send information back to the sect immediately. Protect him and escort him home!"

Meanwhile, the Spiritual Flow Sect locked down all disciples suspected of espionage. They were well aware that once the other three sects found out what had happened, they would stop at nothing to try to kill Yan Xiaobao!

The cultivation tribes closely related to the Spirit Sect made it essentially impossible for words not to spread. Soon, everyone caught on to what had happened. Clan Leaders from various clans were completely shaken. With bloodshot eyes, they sent their clansmen in all directions, trying to find Yan Xiaobao.

After all, they knew he could be transported to anywhere within Eastwood Continent.

If they were lucky and he was transported to their territory, and they found him first, they could invite him to visit their clan personally. Considering he is now a cultivator of the Heavenly Dao Foundation, that alone is a great honor.

Some of their clan members might have the chance to establish a friendship with him, which would greatly benefit the clan.

However, more tempting than that is the possibility that Yan Xiaobao might take a liking to a female clan member and make her his Daoist partner. If that happens, even the sect leader would be unable to do anything about it.

"Send everyone out. Find him! Yan Xiaobao might have been transported to our territory!"

As the cultivation families dispatched people to search, Yan Xiaobao and Hou Yunqing finally arrived at the banquet.

It was situated in a vast estate covering over ten acres of land. The walls were lavishly adorned, the grounds dotted with pine trees and ornamental rocks. Near the central area, there stood pavilions and a three-tier pagoda that almost resembled a palace. Decorated with dragons and phoenixes, it was both elegant and exquisite, yet obviously very expensive.

Clamor could be heard, servants hurrying back and forth bringing various exquisite wines and fresh fruits to the elegant retreat guests.

More than a hundred guests attended, of all ages, men and women. Some sat alone, others in groups of three to five.

Guards were stationed at the main entrance, and a servant cheerfully greeted newcomers. For those he didn't recognize, he would accept their invitation card, note their arrival, then usher them inside.

Hou Yunqing was respectfully greeted by the servant upon entering and escorted inside. Yan Xiaobao, walking alongside, observed the banquet with curiosity. This was his first time attending such an affair.

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Chapter 1286 Musclemans

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The first thing he saw was a muscular man in the distance, laughing and chatting with a young, beautiful woman, both heading towards Hou Yunqing. The man wore a long violet robe, clearly expensive. His face shone with a healthy glow, and rings adorned every finger. Seven or eight jade pendants could be seen on him; he looked like a wealthy playboy. The young woman's makeup made her look young and innocent. However, something about her suggested she was a paid courtesan, diminishing her allure. Overall, she was very pretty.

The burly man smiled and quickly led Hou Yunqing to a nearby table. "Brother Yunqing, I've been waiting for you. Come on, sit with me."

Only when Hou Yunqing apologized to Yan Xiaobao did the burly man finally notice him.

"You must be new," he said with a smile. "But you're still a guest. Any friend of Yunqing is a friend of mine. I'm Li Youdao. This banquet is held by my Li family in honor of Envoy Ling Fei. It's a bit hurried, so things aren't as planned as they should be. Forgive me if anything is lacking." Looking quite pleased with himself, he pulled Hou Yunqing and Yan Xiaobao to the table, where they all sat down. The young woman Jingjing sat quietly beside Li Youdao, looking very lovely and dignified.

Li Youdao said, "Things were really too rushed." "The only drink I could get is this spirit alcohol, brewed from level-1 advanced spiritual medicine. If I had more time, I surely could have procured some brewed from second-level advanced spiritual medicine." He sighed, yet couldn't hide the pride on his face. He had been in a secret competition with Hou Yunqing for years, and finally, he had the chance to put him in his place.

At that moment, the young woman sitting beside Li Youdao began to speak.

"Youdao," she said flirtatiously, "don't be so modest! It's rare to find another family on the Eastwood continent that would brew spirit alcohol from level-1 advanced spiritual medicine to entertain so many people. Even a small glass can sell for hundreds of Spirit Stones!"

Her flattery was music to Li Youdao's ears.

"Ah, what are hundreds of Spirit Stones?" he said. "It's just spirit alcohol. Come on, Yunqing. You and your friend must try this stuff. It's hard to find anywhere in Eastwood City." With that, he waved for the servant to fill Yunqing's and Yan Xiaobao's glasses.

Hou Yunqing looked a bit awkward. Despite his family's great wealth, he had only ever tried spirits brewed from level-1 advanced spiritual medicine. After hesitating for a while, he forced a bitter smile and took a sip.

Yan Xiaobao curiously looked at the wine. After sniffing it, he couldn't help but feel disappointed; clearly, the impurity content was very high.

Li Youdao seemed satisfied with Hou Yunqing's reaction, but upon seeing the expression on Yan Xiaobao's face, he was displeased. Looking him up and down, he decided that not only would he put Hou Yunqing in his place, but also crush his friend at the same time.

"Brother, are you dissatisfied? Ah, don't worry. The banquet we threw for Goddess Ling Fei was a bit rushed, but we still managed to get some rare food. I heard Goddess Ling Fei is always talking about missing the Spirit Sect. Therefore, the Li family spent a lot of money raising some Elf-tailed Chickens to remind her of her home.

"Men! Serve the Spirit Tail Chicken!" he laughed heartily, waving a hand, and a servant rushed over with a golden plate. On it was a fully roasted Spirit Tail Chicken!

The plate itself looked quite expensive, and as for the tricolor spiritual tails, their arrangement was very artistic. The chicken was roasted into dark amber color, appearing quite unusual. Clearly, it had just come out of the oven, bringing a wonderful aroma to the area. Quite a few other guests looked on in shock.

"Spirit Tail Chicken!? Wow, the Li family is truly wealthy!"

"Every table has Spirit Tail Chicken? Look, these clearly didn't grow around here. Where did they come from!?"

Hearing the reactions of those seated nearby, Yan Xiaobao blinked in surprise. "Isn't that just a Spirit Tail Chicken?"

Without a word, the beautiful young woman sitting beside Li Youdao snarkily said, "Prince Yunqing, your friend really knows how to speak out loud. Is this not merely a spirit-tail chicken? It makes him think he's had a lot."

Li Youdao looked sternly at the young woman, as if he disagreed with her tone. However, the truth is that he felt Yan Xiaobao was trying to be a big show-off. Internally, he began to feel irritable, but outwardly he made a polite explanation.

"Friend, I'm afraid you don't understand. These Spirit Tail Chickens are not ordinary in any way. They weren't raised by my Li family; they come from the Soul Sect!

"More specifically, they come from the South Shore of the Spiritual Sect!" Though his words were spoken softly, many in the area heard them, and soon, gasps arose.

Even Hou Yunqing couldn't help but admire Li Youdao's wealth.

Li Youdao was very pleased with Hou Yunqing's and the crowd's reactions. He felt proud of himself and continued to provide further explanation.

"Spirit Tail Chickens from the South Shore of the Spiritual Sect are rarely started. However, several years ago, a bandit named Chicken-Thieving Fiend caused a sharp decline in production. Nowadays, Spirit Tail Chickens from the South Shore can only be obtained at auctions, and their price is extremely high. They are easily identifiable with green bones and beautiful tail feathers. They look completely different from other types of chickens.

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"However," he lamented, "thanks to that despicable Chicken Stealing Demon and his mad massacre, the South Shore Spirit Tail Chicken is almost extinct!" Then he continued to curse and insult the Chicken Stealing Demon. His female companion joined in, until all the surrounding guests echoed their sentiments.

In response to everyone's condemnation of the Chicken Stealing Demon, Yan Xiaobao awkwardly cleared his throat.

It was at this moment that a group of newcomers rushed in, a group of handsome elite tribe members from cultivation families gathered around a young woman. She wore a long white robe, like a blooming lotus, with the most beautiful skin, her long hair bound with a silver hairpin. She walked gently adorned with pearls and jewels. The starlight in her eyes made her look even more beautiful.

Unfortunately, her delicate beauty was somewhat marred by her frown; clearly, she was concerned with some important matters. However, as she conversed quietly with a young man escorting her, she tried her best to put on a smile.

Though the young man tried to hide it, the passion in his eyes was visible when he listened to her.

That young woman was Du Lingfei.

She immediately became the focus of all attention. Moreover, there was something about her, some energy or power that compelled everyone in her presence to bow.

No matter how many people gathered around her, Yan Xiaobao immediately noticed her. Initially, he nearly appeared to be in a daze. They hadn't seen each other for years, yet she seemed more familiar than ever. However, she was more beautiful than before. There was something nobler about her, perhaps from wielding power for a long time.

She was clearly different from the kind of rude and unruly beauty during their first encounter. Over time, the old version of Du Lingfei and this updated, more beautiful version slowly merged together.

Yan Xiaobao had parted ways during their time, and so had she. Due to her subtle control over Eastwood City affairs, cultivation families lived in harmony, something most outsiders found incredible.

"Goddess Ling Fei..." Li Youdao said, his eyes sparkling with admiration. He was somewhat attracted to her the first time he saw her. However, it was her clever manipulation of the cultivation tribes that made him completely enamored.

The courtesan sitting next to him paled in comparison, and she knew it. Faced with the powerful Du Lingfei, she had no choice but to bow her head.

At this moment, Hou Yunqing leaned towards Yan Xiaobao and whispered, "Goddess Ling Fei arrived in Eastwood City without a word. I remember she often gazed toward the Spiritual Flow Sect, pondering something. Who would have thought she would accomplish so much for herself? Past envoys had never completed everything she possessed. She maintained peace between the clans, bringing unprecedented harmony.

"It's said that some clan leaders were deeply impressed and persuaded the Spiritual Flow Sect to repeatedly update her Envoy Committee."

Just when Li Youdao gazed at her with twinkling eyes, Hou Yunqing complained to Yan Xiaobao about Du Lingfei listening to the young man beside her. Just as she was about to take a step forward, her gaze passed through the crowd and fell on Li Youdao's table.

Her eyes widened, a tremor of disbelief surged through her. Suddenly, it seemed everyone around her disappeared, leaving only one person in her world.

She gasped, starting to walk towards the table. Everyone was shocked to see her do this, especially Li Youdao, who trembled as he stood.

"Sh-she's actually coming to see me!!!" His thoughts began to whirl, his heart began to pump crazily. He couldn't stop the joy from filling his face, and he immediately started walking towards her.

"Goddess Ling Fei..." he said. Just as he prepared to say more, Du Lingfei walked past without even sparing him a glance. His jaw dropped; he stiffly watched over his shoulder as Du Lingfei paused in front of the table, specifically looking at one person.

"Yan Xiaobao, you're here..." Her gaze was tantalizing as she stood there. Her eyes were beautiful, like shining satellites, each person looking at her couldn't stop their hearts from filling with passion.

The moment she mentioned Yan Xiaobao's name, the hustle and bustle of the banquet turned to complete silence. Trembling, people began to turn their heads to look at Yan Xiaobao.

Everyone knew Yan Xiaobao was a Reputation Disciple of the Spiritual Flow Sect and the Sect Leader's younger brother. The latest news was that he had recently gone to a Foundation Holy Land.

"Yes, I'm here," he said with a smile. Suddenly, he recalled the moment they escaped the Luochen in the cave, how she sat by the fire, her face pale, yet so beautiful.

Hou Yunqing's face showed a hint of surprise. He took a few steps back, stumbling in the process, pointing with his finger, raising his voice as loudly as possible. "You-you... you're Yan Xiaobao!?!?"

It was at the same moment that people from various cultivation tribes began pulling out jade slips from their collections, as news arrived from their tribes.

In an instant, the surprise that had just grasped their hearts turned into a shock wave. People began to gasp, looking at Yan Xiaobao, their minds dazed.

All various jade slips contained similar information.

"Yan Xiaobao has arrived at the Heavenly Dao Foundation! Any tribe members who meet him should show the utmost respect. Immediately notify the tribe and receive a generous reward!!" Yan Xiaobao looked around at the vast numbers of cultivation family members, contemplating how glorious this situation was. From the expression of utter shock on Hou Yunqing's face, it seemed he had just realized the astonishing identity of the person he was associating with. Although Yan Xiaobao found his behavior somewhat despicable, it still felt good to receive such treatment.

He dryly coughed, patted Hou Yunqing's shoulder and said, "Well, that's enough of this act. Your big brother Hou Yunfei told me about you not so long ago."

Hou Yunqing stood up, looking a bit embarrassed. The truth was, due to his position in the Hou Family, he recognized Yan Xiaobao the moment he stepped into the shop. The Hou Clan had long spread the news about Yan Xiaobao within the tribe.

Hou Yunqing knew that his clan siblings and Yan Xiaobao were on good terms, and he himself hoped to somehow befriend him, but never had. When the opportunity suddenly appeared to approach an important figure like Yan Xiaobao, he had to strike while the iron was hot. Of course, when flattering someone, the best thing is not to be too direct. That way, the flattered person feels more comfortable.

That's why things played out the way they did on their way to the banquet... Actually, Hou Yunqing was prepared for Yan Xiaobao to see through his trick. In fact, Yan Xiaobao's mysterious smile along the way led Hou Yunqing to reach such a conclusion. However, that didn't stop him from continuing to flatter as much as possible.

Yan Xiaobao looked at Du Lingfei, who glanced back at him. However, there was no time to sit and reminisce. People from cultivation tribes immediately began gathering around Yan Xiaobao, offering formal greetings in tones of extreme respect, each one warmer than the last.

When Du Lingfei saw so many people seizing the opportunity to greet Yan Xiaobao, and how he stood proudly with hands clasped behind his back, she couldn't help but smile, recalling everything that happened when being pursued by the Luo Chen Clan.

Mixed emotions quickly swirled in her eyes, and she sighed. However, even in the midst of her sigh, her expression suddenly flickered, and she stepped forward to stand beside Yan Xiaobao.

The moment she stepped up, Yan Xiaobao sensed something and looked up. Not far in the sky, three beams of light approached at high speed.

Three cultivators came into view, two men and a woman. All these people were filled with intent to kill, and shockingly, they were all cultivators established by the Foundation.

"Prepare to die, Yan Xiaobao!" As they closed in on the area, they fell into a triangular formation, then launched a powerful attack, not only bursting with annihilating force but also contained a toxic black mist.

Forming a dark cloud, within it could be seen a Flying Sword, a drum, and a war axe. These three were powerful magic items directly targeting Yan Xiaobao.

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The surrounding cultivators from different tribes felt shocked and began to tremble in fear. When they sensed the establishment of three Foundation Establishment cultivation bases, they shouted in panic.

"Foundation Establishment!!"

Yan Xiaobao's expression flickered. His hair stood on end as a deadly crisis swept over him. His eyes widened, his mind recalling the Fallen Sword World, and the flight from the Luo Chen Clan. The familiar sense of proud complacency was replaced by steely determination.

"You people... want to kill me?" His eyes began to shine with light. It would be easy to dodge the attacks released by these three assassins, but countless innocent bystanders and Du Lingfei were present. Furthermore, everyone around him was at the Qi Condensation stage, while the three assassins were...

Foundation Establishment experts!!

They were just in the Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment stage, but their cultivation bases seemed close to the early Foundation Establishment stage!

As Yan Xiaobao stood in front of Du Lingfei, his eyes were already filled with bloodshot veins, looking much like he did when facing the Luo Chen Clan. He neither dodged nor ran. He lifted his right hand, and dazzling golden light radiated from his entire body. The power of the Essence Sea and Heavenly Dao Foundation exploded, making Yan Xiaobao appear much larger than he actually was!

Suddenly, a massive ethereal hand appeared in front of him, golden-yellow, shooting forward to block the incoming attack!

Shockingly, he single-handedly stopped the combined attack of three Mortal-Dao Foundation Establishment cultivators!

Du Lingfei stood there, stunned, watching Yan Xiaobao's back. It was almost like the world around her had disappeared, making her once again chased by the Luo Chen Clan.

She seemed conflicted, and at that moment, her right hand, inside her sleeve, suddenly became a bit blurred. Moments later, it returned to normal, looking as beautiful and delicate as usual.

All this takes some time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes for a spark to fly from a flintstone. With a wave of his hand to counterattack, a massive booming sound erupted, shattering the dark clouds released by the three assassins like a huge mountain peak.

As the booming echoes resonated, the ground beneath Yan Xiaobao's feet cracked and shattered. Everyone within thirty meters of him staggered, some coughing up blood. However, no one died.

Directly protected by Yan Xiaobao, Du Lingfei was completely unharmed. However, all tables, decorative stones, and pine trees in the area were utterly destroyed.

The black clouds collapsed, sending the flying swords, drums, and war axes skidding aside.

The three assassins were evidently stunned by Yan Xiaobao, who blocked their offensive with a single palm strike. Just as they were about to launch another attack, Yan Xiaobao's voice echoed, full of anger, "You're courting death!"

Without a moment of hesitation, he shot into the air toward the group of three.

One of the men attempted to retreat but was too slow. Assisted by his wings, Yan Xiaobao appeared in front of him almost the same moment he took off, two fingers lashing out with throat-crushing power. His fingers instantly landed on the man's neck.

A series of popping sounds rang out, the man's eyes going wide. As Yan Xiaobao tossed him aside, blood gushed from his torn throat, preventing the other two from reclaiming their flying swords and war axes.

When the man's body exploded into fragments, blood and flesh flew in all directions, creating a hot wave. Meanwhile, Yan Xiaobao turned and shot through the Blood Cloud, his expression vicious beyond compare.

Due to the Luochen Clan, the aura of killing intent now burst out from him, seen when he slaughtered countless enemies in the Fallen Sword Abyss. He... went out to kill!

The surviving man and woman were both Foundation Establishment cultivators, but at that moment, their scalps tingled in fear. The show of power from Yan Xiaobao was completely beyond their expectations.

"So this is the power of a Heavenly Dao Foundation..." With bitter expressions, they turned to flee. Since they couldn't kill Yan Xiaobao, their only thought was to escape. However, Yan Xiaobao didn't allow that to happen.

Almost at the moment they took flight, Yan Xiaobao, his eyes more bloodshot than ever, accelerated. The full power of his Foundation Establishment cultivation base erupted alongside the Waterswamp Kingdom. The sky darkened, a shocking pressure descended, causing the two fleeing assassins to tremble in fear.

Then, as Yan Xiaobao's wings flapped, he accelerated towards the man, leaving images behind him. As the man tried to defend himself, his face fell, realizing he couldn't move faster than a punch thrown by someone who had broken through the first Death Chains.

The punch exploded like thunder, striking the man's chest with indescribable power. His eyes burst, followed by his organs, bones, flesh, and blood all exploding in every direction.

The last assassin was the woman. She shrieked in terror, attempting to escape, even managing to cover about 300 meters. But then, Yan Xiaobao turned around, his right forefinger flicked.

"Purple Qi... Great Cauldron Summoning!"

Boundless purple aura swirled in the air around the woman, rapidly transforming into a massive violet cauldron.

Then, Yan Xiaobao clenched his fist!

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The violet cauldron shattered, causing a massive explosion that immediately engulfed the woman.

In the blink of an eye, her body and soul were killed!

Silence reigned. Everyone in the area was shocked and in awe of Yan Xiaobao. Although they had all heard of the mighty Heavenly Dao Foundation, none had expected the foundation's assassin to not only fail to defeat him, but to be killed by him as easily as flipping a hand!

Even as everyone struggled to breathe, Du Lingfei's expression became intense, and she said, "How did these three get in? I can't believe Eastwood City's great magic formation is inactive. Immediately investigate the records and see which clan is responsible. As the official envoy of this city, I demand an explanation!

"The Cultivation Tribes shall conduct a thorough search of the entire city: interrogate anyone who seems suspicious. These three might not be the only assassins here!"

Around the same time, several beams of light appeared above. Now that the cultivation families knew Yan Xiaobao was in the city, the Clan Leader and other leaders appeared.

When the Clan Leaders saw the bloody scene below, their expressions flickered. Then they heard Du Lingfei's words, and their own murderous intent began to rage. One of the Clan Leaders suddenly looked sick because he realized his family had been in charge of maintaining the magic formation for the past few months.

"Daoist Bai, Goddess Du: The Li family will surely investigate this matter. Let the sun and moon bear witness that we are the loyal and true Spiritual Sect! That night, Eastwood City went under martial law. All cultivation families launched operations to conduct a thorough investigation across the city. As for Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, they disappeared into the night.

Du Lingfei explained to Bai Xiaochun that her assignment was almost over, and returning early to the sect wouldn't be a bad thing. Therefore, she would accompany him on the way back.

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It was late at night. Stars twinkled in the sky, the moon stood tall. Yan Xiaobao and Du Lingfei sat atop the mountain, gazing at the stars. Du Lingfei appeared more beautiful than usual under the starlight. She smiled at Yan Xiaobao, as he recounted events that had occurred over the years.

"You wouldn't believe it, hush. On the South Shore, they actually threw stones at me. Man, that hurt a lot..."

"I didn't mean to find that path in the 10,000 Snakes Valley! I just thought the snakes looked a bit cute..."

"When you get back to the sect, hush, you must tell me if you see that damn rabbit!"

"The guys from the North Shore are total bullies. When I was sent to the North Shore, I was alone, poor. I struggled with my tail between my legs, fearing to offend anyone, but they still wouldn't let me out of trouble..." As he recounted his stories of the Spiritual Sect, Du Lingfei occasionally comforted him, sometimes even laughing. Her praise and surprised expressions made Yan Xiaobao try even harder.

She protested the nickname "hush," more than once, but it did no good. In fact, the more she protested, the more he used it.

"Hush, hush, hush...."

At last, she just shook her head and sighed.

Eventually, they found a cave where they settled down for the night. Yan Xiaobao sat cross-legged to meditate, and after some time, a gentle breeze rose. Strangely, Yan Xiaobao didn't notice the breeze at all.

Du Lingfei opened her eyes and looked at Yan Xiaobao, her eyes filled with excited emotion. After a while, she stood up and walked out of the cave, looking up at the bright moon. A wisp of hair blew in the wind, and she reached out to tuck it behind her ear.

However, when her fingers reached the hair, they went straight through it. Du Lingfei looked at her shimmering index finger, the complexity in her eyes deepened. After clenching her fist, the finger became solid again, and she tucked the stray hair away.

"Not much time..."

Some time passed. Feeling melancholy, Du Lingfei walked back into the cave and looked at Yan Xiaobao sitting there quietly. Careful not to wake him, she sat beside him and rested her head on his shoulder. After closing her eyes, she smiled.

The time they traveled together passed. Three days went by, which didn't seem long to Yan Xiaobao. He imagined what it would be like to return to the sect as an expert of the Heavenly Dao Foundation, and how he would become the center of all attention. Every time he thought about it, he felt more excited.

Du Lingfei wanted to slow the journey, but when she saw how excited he was, she simply smiled and held her tongue. On the third day, Yan Xiaobao's foundation base stabilized, and they were very close to the Spiritual Flow Sect.

Late in the third night, when they were only a day's journey from the Spiritual Flow Sect, Du Lingfei suggested they take a break. They found a cave, and Yan Xiaobao started to recount his terrifying experiences in the Fallen Sword World. As he talked, he began to feel tired, and before he realized what was happening, he had fallen asleep.

Everything was quiet, with the only sound being the crackling and hissing of the small fire they had built. Inside the cave, the flames cast dancing shadows, while outside, it was pitch black. All was calm.

Du Lingfei stared at the fire for a while, then looked at the sleeping Yan Xiaobao, thinking back to the past with gentle eyes. Up to this moment, she hadn't noticed her body, which started to flicker and become translucent.

After a long time, she sighed. To give Yan Xiaobao a profound look, she stood up and trembled slightly. At this point, she noticed his mouth curling into a smile as he slept. Clearly, he was having some kind of wonderful dream.

Leaning down, she softly kissed his lips, then turned and walked out of the cave, determination spreading across her face.

As she appeared, the air rippled, and nine shadowy figures emerged. They were all mysterious and strange, even eerie, as they stood there, the air around them flickering.

Unexpectedly, all nine clasped their hands and deeply bowed to Du Lingfei. From the respect they showed, they were almost like servants.

One of the shadowy figures stepped forward, speaking in a sharp voice that seemed to echo from ancient times. "Young Female Clan Leader, your assigned mission to us is complete. All 11 are here."

Then, he waved his hand, causing eleven severed heads to tumble out. Each head had a face twisted into expressions of horror and disbelief.

Shockingly, these were spies who had infiltrated Eastwood City with the intention to assassinate Yan Xiaobao.

Du Lingfei ignored the severed heads and the nine shadowy figures. Turning around, she looked at the sleeping Yan Xiaobao.

"Everything about me in the Spiritual Sect is false," she whispered, eyes sparkling as if tears flowed out. "The only real thing was when the Luo Chen Clan chased us."

"My mission is complete, but for some reason, I'm not happy. I hope you can forgive me... I'm sorry, Yan Xiaobao." As tears splashed onto her cheeks, they rolled down her face, turning to ash, drifting into the wind.

One of the shadowy figures clasped his hands respectfully and said, "Young Female Clan Leader, the mortal body created for you by the clan leader will not last much longer. He sent us here to escort you. Madam, will you come?"

Du Lingfei continued to look at Yan Xiaobao for a long time, then gently nodded. She looked exhausted. Finally, she turned to leave. As she did, her body slowly faded, turning to smoke. The nine shadowy figures vanished as well...

As for the eleven severed heads, they dissolved into ash.

At dawn the next morning, as the first rays of sunlight shone into the cave, Yan Xiaobao squinted, peering through bleary eyes.

"I'm thirsty, hush..." he said, yawning. He was a bit surprised; since beginning cultivation, he found he didn't need to sleep often, yet he had just slept for a very long time. Rubbing his eyes, he stood up and looked around for Du Lingfei.

Not seeing her, he didn't think much of it. Walking out of the cave, he gazed at the rising sun, then lazily stretched.

"I must have worn myself out lately. Man, that was a great night's sleep." At this moment, he felt more energetic than ever, as if a boundless life force echoed from within him. His nine spiritual oceans had always been golden, and he was fully and completely in the stage of the Heavenly Dao Foundation's establishment.

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Chapter 1290 Heavenly Dao Halo

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His aura no longer focused inward. With each breath he took, he could almost hear waves crashing within his spiritual ocean.

He felt much better now than before, and decided to go into meditation, both to familiarize himself with his Heavenly Dao Foundation and Heavenly Dao Halo, and also to wait for Du Lingfei.

Two hours passed, and Du Lingfei still hadn't come back. Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes, feeling a bit nervous.

"She still isn't back?" he thought. He took out a transmission jade and sent her a message, but it was like throwing a stone into the sea. There was simply no response at all.

"What happened?!" He leaped to his feet and immediately began searching the area. By evening he had been all over the place, but hadn't found the slightest trace... Du Lingfei... had vanished!

At that point, he was consumed by anxiety and felt that something bad must have happened. His face was ashen, his eyes bloodshot, and he expanded his search range.

"Where are you, Lingfei!?"

"Du Lingfei, where are you?!?!"

"Du Lingfei..." For four days straight he searched, everywhere he could think of. Soon his hair was disheveled and he looked like he'd grown thin. And yet, Du Lingfei was nowhere to be found.

"Did I say something wrong, Lingfei? Why are you hiding from me? Tell me!"

"Du Lingfei, come out, wherever you are!"

"What happened!?"

By now he was practically driven mad by anxiety. In the end, he returned to the cave where he had last seen her and searched the entire place with a fine-toothed comb. Unfortunately, the result was the same as before.

He wasn't sure why, but his heart hurt. It felt as if someone had torn it to shreds, a feeling unlike anything he had ever experienced. His hands clutched tightly at his belly as he recalled how he had fallen asleep for no apparent reason, and then his heart suddenly sank. Eventually, a blankness appeared in his eyes.

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The fact that Yan Xiaobao had been gone so long without returning caused the sect to send out more people to look for him. Hou Yunfei, like the other important disciples from the North and South Shores, led a team. Even Li Qinghou helped.

When they finally found him, he was sitting outside that cave, his eyes bloodshot, his face haggard. He looked utterly heartsick.

When Li Qinghou saw him, a pang of pain stabbed his heart and he asked, "Xiao Chun, what happened?!"

Yan Xiaobao trembled. His eyes empty, he turned to look at Li Qinghou and whispered, "Uncle Li, Du Lingfei... is gone." As he was escorted back to the Spiritual Sect, Yan Xiaobao remained silent. From time to time he would look back over his shoulder in the direction of the cave where Du Lingfei had disappeared.

Li Qinghou ordered the Spirit Creek Sect and the Cultivation Tribes to search for Du Lingfei. However, not a single clue appeared. It was as if she had vanished into thin air.

This strange turn of events was even taken seriously by the upper echelons of the Spiritual Sect's leadership.

Because of Du Lingfei's disappearance, Yan Xiaobao lost all excitement upon reaching the Heavenly Dao Foundation.

The sect held a grand ceremony, and Yan Xiaobao's name gradually became known throughout the cultivation world of the downstream eastern region. News of the violent struggle for the massive energy

in the Fallen Sword World spread, and soon people were saying that Yan Xiaobao had surpassed Master Wu Xian.

However, Yan Xiaobao didn't really care about any of that.

He received enormous rewards from the sect, and when other disciples looked at him, their eyes shone with respect. Even the main elders and Clan Leaders gazed at him with admiration. Yet inside, he was filled with disappointment.

At the grand ceremony held by the sect, Yan Xiaobao revealed the corpses of the disciples who had perished in the Fallen Sword World. Everything fell silent. The Peak Lords and the Sect Leader looked on in grief, as did the elders of Daoseed Mountain.

After the ceremony ended, many people realized that Yan Xiaobao seemed much quieter than before. It was as though he had forgotten things like glory and pride. People would often see him alone on Fragrant Cloud Peak, looking lost.

He was like a different person, and many disciples close to him found it frightening.

Brussel ran over from the North Shore. Clearly able to sense Yan Xiaobao's dark mood, he simply sat beside him to keep him company.

Fatty Zhang came several times, but never knew what to say, and could only sit there sighing. Hou Yunfei also visited him, keeping him company in silence.

Hou Xiaomei came to comfort him, as if to remind him that even if Du Lingfei was gone, she was still there.

"Big Bro Xiao Chun, I won't disappear..."

Xu Baocai brought lots of rumors. For example, Gongsun Wan'er had gone missing, but her soul lamp hadn't gone out. Her elder brother Gongsun Yun was frantically searching for her, but had never been able to find her.

Xu Baocai had spoken with all the disciples who returned from the three Foundation Holy Lands, and compiled all the information into a comprehensive report. He had also obtained information from other sects about all the electors.

"Uncle Bai, you might not have heard. While you were in the Fallen Sword World, one of the chosen Gods suddenly rose up with an original spirit hollow. He was a miraculous disciple from Pill Stream Sect!

"His name is Lin Mu, and in the trial he proved himself a true dark horse. The character 'Mu' in his name is the same character as in the word 'tomb'! He actually mastered Pill Stream Sect's most powerful Magic, the Primeval Medicinal Daoseed Incantation! Only later did many of the Pill Stream Sect disciples realize that he had secretly been planting Daoseeds in them. In the end, he reached the Earthstring Foundation with eight Tideflows!"