

## Medical 181

### Chapter 181 - 176 Shock

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When he saw the boy, Yan Xiaobao was taken aback, but he quickly adjusted his smile. Who would have guessed that Lan Feng was actually a ten-year-old boy.

Although Yan Xiaobao was shocked, this world was already full of surprises, and after witnessing the recent display, he no longer felt astonished.

"Idiot," Lan Feng said loudly while observing Yan Xiaobao. He was displeased, feeling that Yan Xiaobao was mocking his current form. "You have a baby's body, and I also had to reduce my consciousness; otherwise, our bodies would have been torn apart by an explosion of my spiritual energy," he explained.

Lan Feng walked straight up to Yan Xiaobao, not giving him any time to respond. He extended his hand and drew a long cut across his palm with his finger. Instead of blood, a silvery liquid oozed out slowly. Yan Xiaobao understood his intent clearly and mimicked the gesture. He reached out to clasp Lan Feng's hands, allowing the liquid to merge.

A sound much louder than it should have been echoed throughout his body, resonating in his Dantian Cave. "You hold my soul, and I hold yours. By the ancient soul contract, we are now one and the same, until death parts us or our goals are achieved."

After these words, a tremendous energy surged into Yan Xiaobao's hand, circling his entire awareness several times before retreating back into Lan Feng's palm. As it left, Yan Xiaobao felt that parts of his consciousness had returned to him, making him feel whole again. It was a strange sensation, as he had never realized he had felt incomplete before.

Once the power faded, Yan Xiaobao felt soreness throughout his body, as if he had overexerted himself physically. He was utterly exhausted. As Lan Feng sat down and leaned against the cave wall, he also appeared drained. Yan Xiaobao joined him and sat beside him. Then he closed his eyes.

"So... do I have to redo eight months of grueling work?" he sighed, looking at his now-empty cave. Lan Feng, hearing the exhaustion in Yan Xiaobao's voice, chuckled softly. "No, rest will bring it back. But you

do need to continue refining every day. After all, we need you to grow stronger." Yan Xiaobao slowly nodded in agreement. If eight months of hard work had truly been erased, it would have been devastating.

Lan Feng looked at Yan Xiaobao with a smile. The "soul contract" had caused some changes to Yan Xiaobao's appearance, but Lan Feng felt there was no need to tell him just yet, as he noticed his consciousness growing faint. He watched as Yan Xiaobao drifted off to sleep.

The morning came abruptly, as it usually did. Yan Xiaobao's father was on his way to the forest when his eyes landed on his son asleep in the cradle. His eyes widened, and he froze in place until he finally snapped out of it.

"What's wrong?" Hui Lifen rubbed her eyes and asked in a groggy voice.

"Our baby now has white hair!" Hui Guang said in a tone of disbelief, his gaze never straying from the cradle where their child slept. These words made Hui Lifen furrow her brows in shock, but she quickly went over to look at her baby and immediately let out a scream. The scream woke Yan Xiaobao, who opened his eyes and looked at his parents curiously, wondering why they were yelling. However, he soon got his answer.

"His eyes are blue!" Hui Lifen exclaimed in a breathless, incredulous voice.

### Chapter 3: Unexpected Visitor

The news of Hui Yue's transformation spread quickly, stirring the entire village into action. Every person who saw him had the same impression—that they were looking at an angel. His white hair was purer than freshly fallen snow, and his dazzling blue eyes mirrored an endless sky.

Villagers from far and wide visited the Hui Clan's small house to see the beautiful infant. But even as they admired his appearance, a trace of fear lingered in their hearts. No one could explain how or why the child had changed so drastically overnight, and everyone had their own theories.

Some attributed it to a terrifying nightmare that altered his appearance, while others claimed it was a curse from a powerful Magic Beast angered by the villagers' harvesting of medicinal herbs in the forest.

Still, others speculated that he had some rare disease. Whatever theories they offered, no one truly knew why this had occurred.

Though Hui Yue's transformation shocked the village, it was quickly accepted as normal since the baby did not seem to affect anyone else or bring any disaster to the village. Within a year, everyone fully accepted that Hui Yue's changes were unexplainable, and he once again became the treasure of the village.

During that year, Hui Yue managed to gain control over his own body and even learned to walk on unsteady legs. However, every movement he made required extra caution, as he was determined not to reveal his powers to anyone.

That year also saw Hui Yue finally achieve balance. Lan Feng watched with patience as Hui Yue struggled to turn his baby-like babbles into actual words, but when they finally managed to utter their first coherent word, both Lan Feng and Hui Yue felt an incredible sense of relief.

Speaking his first words was like unleashing a floodgate, and within a month, Hui Yue had mastered speech entirely. However, he had to conceal his linguistic abilities, just as he hid his other powers, because he saw no reason to attract unnecessary attention from the villagers again.

## Chapter 182 Shock\_2

After reaching the first Star Level, Hui Yue noticed that the influx of new energy had unlocked twenty new pathways in his body, each radiating a sense of release. Of these twenty, only twelve were accessible for now, and his Qi spiral constantly emitted slender threads to roam along the open paths. As his Qi traveled through his meridians, Hui Yue's body brimmed with power, and he felt immense joy from experiencing this sudden strength.

Lan Feng offered a brief explanation. The twelve open paths were standard meridians, forming a Qi network that allowed his Qi to circulate throughout his body. The meridians were divided into Yin and Yang clusters, with each Yin-Yang path focusing on a specific concentration of Yin-Yang energy. The eight sealed meridians required significant effort to open, but for now, Lan Feng advised against focusing on them as it was unlikely he would engage in combat anytime soon.

Lan Feng refused to elaborate further on the mysterious Yin-Yang energy, emphasizing that it had no practical usage until Hui Yue managed to unlock his Middle Dantian.

Listening to Lan Feng, Hui Yue sighed. However, he understood that Lan Feng would undoubtedly explain everything at the right time, leaving no reason for him to insist on an explanation.

Another benefit of reaching the first star was Hui Yue's ability to gather more essence at once and refine it into the highest quality Qi.

Time passed swiftly as Hui Yue continued refining his Qi, which helped him realize how different his new body was compared to his old one. Over four years of solitude and introspection, Hui Yue strove to stay average, but despite his efforts, he remained the most admired and beloved child in the village due to his calm demeanor and striking appearance.

By now, he was almost five years old and possessed the strength of a ten-year-old child. A few months past his fifth birthday, after carefully refining the white threads, he finally reached the second Star Student Level. Lan Feng instructed Yan Xiaobao to continue refining his Qi with his consciousness as he had done so far, even though he had long gained sufficient control over his body to meditate.

To perfect his foundation, Hui Yue refined and absorbed essence using his consciousness until he reached the first Star Disciple level. Although it was grueling and relentless work, Hui Yue had no intention of complaining. Now, he could refine four Qi threads per day, each thread three times the size of the first one he had created years ago.

As Yan Xiaobao grew older, he was assigned the task of guarding several goats breeding in the village. To complete this task, he typically woke up at dawn, ate some porridge cooked by his mother, cheerfully gathered the goats, and headed to a random hillside outside the village.

At this age, most children were usually assigned lighter tasks; however, Hui Yue's composed personality and temperament earned the admiration of the village chief, and Hui Yue gladly accepted the responsibility. He did so because being outside the village during his cultivation kept him away from curious gazes.

It was one of those days when the sun shone brightly in the sky, with not a single cloud in sight. As he cultivated, only a few goats grazed peacefully on the hillside around Hui Yue. Yet, sensing that something was amiss, Yan Xiaobao furrowed his brow.

"There's a large group of people headed this way," Lan Feng said in an anxious voice upon sensing the aura of cultivators. Upon hearing this, Hui Yue wasted no time gathering the goats to return to the village.

"Elder of the village!" Hui Yue shouted upon returning to the village, drawing everyone's attention to the handsome child. Calling out to the village chief, a faint smile appeared on Hui Yue's typically indifferent face.

"Child, what happened?" the elder asked in a gentle voice, as no one had ever seen Hui Yue this flustered.

"A large group of people is approaching!" Hui Yue gasped as he ran back, panting heavily. "Their group includes cultivators. They seem very strong!" Hui Yue's large blue eyes nervously stared at the village chief, whose face fell upon hearing the news.

The news quickly spread throughout the village, but most of the villagers were in the forest gathering herbs, leaving behind only women and children in the village.

"Everyone!" the elder shouted loudly. "Gather your belongings and head to the shelter in the forest now!"

Once the order was given, everyone hastily set about gathering their valuable livestock and belongings, forming long lines as they moved toward the shelter. After ensuring his fellow villagers' safety, the elder refused to leave, as he couldn't be certain if the visitors were bandits or adventurers, regardless of whether someone would have to welcome them.

Hui Yue hesitated before deciding to stay and observe how real cultivators looked. He was certain he could at least flee if things went awry.

"Yue'er, we need to leave now," his mother said in a frightened voice, although she noticed a strange determination in Hui Yue's eyes.

"Mother, please let me stay; I promise I won't be harmed," Hui Yue said sweetly. It was the first time Yan Xiaobao had ever asked his parents for something, and his mother hesitated slightly. Despite Hui

Yue's demeanor being unfit for a four-year-old, he was still her precious child, and she worried about him.

"It'll be fine, Mother," Hui Yue said with a dazzling smile. "They won't even know I'm here. If they're bandits, I'll simply escape and hide quickly." Hui Lifen could only sigh and hand off her belongings to a friend. She decided to stay with Hui Yue to await the uninvited guests.

They hid behind a building close to the village square, keeping their eyes trained on the road leading to the town. The village chief stood in the middle of the square near the main well, upright and dignified, his expression solemn.

Before long, the group entered the village, and Hui Yue gasped in surprise upon seeing them. It was a large group of over fifty people, half of whom were ranked as students mounted on magical beasts.

At the forefront of the group were three people: a middle-aged man, followed by two children who seemed around ten years old. These three were not riding ordinary magic beasts but sat astride Qilins. The middle-aged man rode an adult Qilin, while the children rode what appeared to be juvenile ones.

Hui Yue marveled at the Qilin's beauty. Their bodies were covered in dark green scales, their bellies and the insides of their legs lighter in color. Their tails, manes, and hooves were engulfed in red flames, and their crimson eyes vigilantly observed their surroundings.

This was Yan Xiaobao's first time seeing real magical beasts. Their majestic beauty deeply impressed him, but he also understood that if these creatures were not tamed, they would become dangerously savage.

Hui Yue noticed his mother was equally stunned by the appearance of such magnificent Qilins, her eyes brimming with excitement. She had never seen magical beasts before, having always lived within the safe boundaries of the village and had no reason to venture out.

Suddenly, the village elder's voice rang out, jolting Ji Yue's focus.

"Respected Lord Rong Liang," the village elder stammered before the middle-aged man.

For a brief moment, Hui Yue was confused as he realized this person wasn't a bandit. The name sounded familiar, but he couldn't connect it to anyone specific in his mind.

"That's because all you do is cultivate endlessly," Lan Feng said in a mocking tone, observing the unfolding scene sharply.

"I'm simply following your orders," Hui Yue retorted sarcastically, asking, "Do you remember who he is?"

Lan Feng responded with frustration, "No, why would I recall a middle-aged man? On the other hand, that girl is sure to grow into a beauty." He continued to stare at the girl riding to Lord Rong Liang's left.

Hui Yue couldn't help but snort. "She's ten years old, you pervert!" he exclaimed disdainfully, while his attention remained focused on the two children and the village elder, who had already revived upon Lord Rong Liang dismounting.

#### Chapter 183 Qilin

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"That's why I said, once she grows up!" Lan Feng continued speaking. "Don't be shocked by such things. For Qilin, they aren't even that powerful. If you want to see a real lizard, then we need to find wild donkeys—those beasts that still have their antlers and whiskers. Now they are worth respecting."

Lan Feng arrogantly added once again, but upon hearing Phoenix's words, Hui Yue couldn't help but let out a snort. He was already stunned by these magical beasts, but Lan Feng's heart held only disdain for them. Yan Xiaobao suddenly felt an incredible urge to seek out a true Qilin.

Lan Feng laughed knowingly as he sensed Yan Xiaobao's desire, but just as he was laughing, a gentle breeze swept in from behind them, carrying their scent toward the village square where the Qilin stood.

When Hui Yue and Lan Feng's scent reached the horses and the Qilin, they immediately panicked. Lan Feng and Hui Yue had merged their souls, so Hui Yue carried the scent of a Holy Beast within his soul, which was enough to terrify any Demon Beast.

Lord Rong Liang noticed the Qilin's fear and was forced to use his powers to calm them down, feeling shaken by the situation.

Hui Yue's eyes widened as he watched a gray mist that instantly subdued all the mounts, rendering them numb and lifeless.

"That is spiritual energy," Lan Feng said in a calm voice. "He has transformed all beings into illusions, rendering them incapable of doing anything now. He is powerful."

Yan Xiaobao felt fortunate to witness such a high-level expert, but he also realized that the mounts' reactions had alerted Lord Rong Liang to their presence. Soon, he and his mother would surely be discovered.

"Come out, little mice," the lord called out in a congenial tone, leaving Hui Yue with no reason to remain hidden. He grabbed his mother's hand and slowly stepped out from behind the house where they had been hiding.

When the village chief saw them, he raised his eyebrows but said nothing.

"I apologize, sir," Hui Yue said with tears in his eyes, using his sweetest voice. "I really wanted to see who was outside the village, so I hid, inadvertently getting my mother involved in trouble."

Lord Rong Liang looked shocked as he regarded the mother and child. He didn't see how either of them could have caused his Qilin to panic, but the closer the two approached the village square, the more spiritual energy was needed to maintain his mounts' illusions.

The child was striking. With his snowy-white hair and deep blue eyes, Lord Rong Liang found it hard to believe he was merely a human child.

"Where are the rest of the villagers?" Lord Rong Liang finally asked as he scanned the barren village.

"We weren't sure whether the approaching party was friend or foe; therefore, I had them hide in our protective shelter," the elderly man answered in a modest yet somewhat embarrassed voice.

"You knew we were coming?" Lord Rong Liang asked in surprise, his tone sharp, as he wasn't accustomed to anyone being aware of his movements while traveling. He was certain everyone in the village was merely cultivators ranked as students.

"This young man spotted your noble party while guarding goats on the noble hillside," Yan Xiaobao quickly said, embodying a child who was a bit frightened yet brimming with curiosity.

Lan Feng burst into laughter as he enjoyed the drama. Lord Rong Liang nodded as he acknowledged their discovery on the road, but his eyes never left the beautiful child before him. If the boy turned out to be half-blooded magical beast, then he knew he must procure such treasure at any cost.

"You don't look like the other villagers. Are you an orphan?" he asked with intrigue, and Hui Yue immediately sensed a hint of danger lurking in his words.

"We lack wealth," Hui Lifen interjected. "Our Hui Yue appeared no different from other children at birth, but during his first year, we encountered an event that led to his current appearance." She spoke with profound respect, bowing to the ground.

Lord Rong Liang had a knack for dealing shrewdly with others. He could immediately tell that the woman's words were truthful. This confused him and made him realize the child didn't seem as simple as he had initially expected.

"Village chief, bring back the other villagers. Our party will set up camp outside this village for a month to prepare for our journey into the forest." Lord Rong Liang ordered firmly. The village chief quickly nodded and turned back, leaving Hui Yue and his mother as they recalled the remaining villagers.

Hui Yue and Lan Feng remained as quiet as possible. Neither wanted their current level of power noticed by this new lord, nor did they wish for anyone to attract unnecessary attention. They were greatly relieved when they managed to leave swiftly.

Under Lord Yuerong's watchful gaze, Hui Yue swiftly clasped his hands together.

"We're bound to face some trouble," Lan Feng stated in a worried tone, to which Hui Yue could only nod in agreement.

#### Chapter Four: His First Friend

Hui Yue quickly gathered the villagers who had been hiding in the shelter. When they heard Lord Rong Liang's decision to use their humble village as a base camp for his retinue, every villager was filled with surprise and pride.

However, Hui Yue didn't share their feelings, as he felt danger every time he saw the revered lord. Lord Rong Liang consistently showed a particular interest in Hui Yue, and Hui Yue had no affection for anyone who took an interest in his affairs.

#### Chapter 184 Qilin\_2

The first day was chaotic. The guards split into several groups. Some set up tents and camps, others searched for food, and a third group scouted the area to ensure everything was safe.

The village where Hui Yue lived was very small and never had a specific name. The villagers were poor, and even if they knew exactly where the village was, no bandits would bother them. However, now Lord Rongrong was a very important person, traveling with two children, and his enemies were likely to send assassins after him when he left the city he managed.

The women in the village would find any excuse to walk past the camp and look at the guards. Some would openly flirt with the men, hoping they would take a liking to them. They hoped the guards would take them away from their impoverished lives. Meanwhile, others would blush and flee when their eyes met.

Hui Lifen was also interested in the campsite, but unlike most young women, she wanted to hear stories from the outside world. Hui Lifen was a very beautiful woman, and the guards were happy to indulge her curiosity and talk about life in the bustling city.

Hui Yue was dragged to the camp by his mother, but fortunately, he was captivated by the exciting stories and thus managed to escape.

Because of their ability to detect his cultivation base, Hui Yue had to be cautious around any cultivation experts higher than him. Lan Feng had the ability to disguise his cultivation base to make it appear as if he hadn't cultivated for a short period; however, this wouldn't last long, and neither Hui He nor Phoenix let people know their cultivation level.

After escaping from his mother, Hui Yue chose to stay at home, and before both parents returned home to prepare dinner, he managed to perfect another line of Qi.

Tonight's dinner was very lavish, with Lord Rong Liang's party distributing all the extra meat they acquired while hunting.

"Yue'er," Hui Lifen said when she saw Hui Yue. "Lord Rong Liang asked about you again," she continued happily. "He said he has never seen a disease like before and very much wishes to examine it later." Hui Yue felt his blood freeze at her words. It was evident that Lord Rong Liang did not believe Hui Yue was just an ordinary boy.

"I'm fine; I believe it would only waste the esteemed lord's time," Hui Yue said meekly, but his mother quickly dismissed his concerns. "Lord Rong Liang is the one requesting to examine you. I believe he simply wants to understand your ailment. Now that he has visited our village, it would be rude to turn him away."

Before Qing Yue came down from the mountain, Hui Yue could only agree to visit the camp in the morning, though he gritted his teeth.

Morning broke as usual, and after a quick breakfast, Yan Xiaobao dashed out the door, disappearing into the dense morning mist.

Since there was no reason to not visit Lord Rong Liang along the way, Hui Yue left the shack. However, Hui Yue wasn't foolish; he was very aware that the lord would not be awake so early, because Hui Yue had specific tasks during the day, he had a good excuse for being there at this unholy hour.

"Halt!" A stern voice suddenly roared in the cold morning. The voice made Hui Yue stop immediately, waiting for the guard to reach his location. The guard frowned, looking at the beautiful child who was definitely no more than five years old. The morning's white mist enveloped his white hair and pale skin, making him seem like a fairy from ancient legends.

"State your purpose." His voice full of hostility, he said, and Yan Xiaobao was impressed by the guard's vigilance.

"I am Hui Yue," he said again with a sweet voice. "Lord Rong Liang said he wanted to check on my ailment, but unfortunately, tending to the goats is my job, so I must take them to the hillside before dawn every morning," Hui Yue continued sadly, facing down.

Seeing his downcast demeanor, the guard couldn't help but feel a slight pang of sorrow, but even if he pitied the child, he didn't intend to awaken Lord Rong Liang at this forsaken hour.

Seeing the guard's hesitation, Hui Yue softly said, "I understand," he said quietly, his inner jubilation echoing with Lan Feng. "Could you tell his master that I wish to be there, but my mom always says I must be responsible and not skip work." Hui Yue glanced at the guard once more, this time with a hint of impending tears about to break forth.

"Of course, I will tell him!" The guard immediately said, rewarded with a bright and innocent smile spreading across Hui Yue's face. No one would have expected that the result of that child's early arrival would be this.

Hui Yue quickly thanked the guard and waved goodbye, then rushed back to the village so he could get far away, in case the sensitive Lord Rong Liang noticed him and suddenly awoke. Recalling Murphy's Law, he couldn't help feeling a bit paranoid.

Hui Yue decided to move to a hillside that was hard to find. After cultivating for several hours, he was finally able to relax a little without being disturbed. He was confident that even if Lord Rongrong wanted to find him, he would have difficulty, since no one knew these hills like Hui Yue did.

However, Lan Feng warned him just as Hui Yue decided to eat his packed lunch that someone was approaching his path.

"It's not Rong Liang," Lan Feng said curiously, "but definitely not someone from the village.

Hearing Lan Feng say this alerted Hui Yue, but he quickly realized that even if he wanted to protect himself and the goats, he could do nothing.

Hui Yue was always gathering essence and refining Qi. He didn't even know there was a martial arts skill that could utilize his accumulated power.

'You useless Phoenix,' Hui Yue swore internally. "What's the point of this refined Qi if I can't even protect my life from some common bandits?" He grew increasingly agitated, as he had no choice but to hope the approaching person was friendly.

When they finally saw who it was, both Lan Feng and Hui Yue were surprised. This person was never supposed to find his hideout; yet, here he was, Lord Rong Liang's son. When he noticed Hui Yue, he had a slight smile on his face and was even holding a beautiful flower in one hand.

Hui Yue wasn't foolish and guessed that Lord Rong Liang was likely busy in the camp and had sent his son to try and gather information. Therefore, Hui Yue had no choice but to be friendly to this newcomer.

"Young Master, how did you get here?" Hui Yue asked with his wide eyes, his voice as clear as a cloudless sky. His voice seemed to amuse Lord Rong Liang's son, who handed the flower to Hui Yue,

"I saw this flower in the forest and thought of your beauty, so I decided to come and present it myself." This was the first thing the young master said to Hui Yi, and Yan Xiaobao couldn't freeze himself momentarily before goosebumps appeared on his skin. The Rong Family must be mistaken.

Hui Yue was dumbfounded, and Lan Feng burst into laughter. This provoked a thunderous explosion in Hui Yue's mind; however, he quickly regained his composure and looked at the flower. It was indeed beautiful. It was a white orchid with a warm yellow core. Its beauty was unparalleled among the forest flowers, but it could also be used to make deadly poison.

'Hey, that's amazing.' Lan Feng, although trying to suppress his laughter, wasn't very successful; he was still chuckling away.

"Ah, it's beautiful, young Master." Hui Yue said, looking at the little boy in satisfaction, his eyes shining. "I will certainly cherish it." Inside, Hui Yue was impatient. He couldn't wait for the young master to leave

so he could resume training, but on the other hand, he had no intention of letting this young master suspect anything unusual about him. So his only option was to patiently wait for the other party to leave.

The young master soon sat on the grass, found his own lunch, and gestured for Hui Yue to sit next to him. Hui Yue smiled, his expression slightly awkward, but inwardly he sighed, trying to think of a way to get rid of the bothersome boy.

"Is it really okay for the young master to spend precious time with the goats on the mountains?" Hui Yue asked hesitantly. He hoped this young master had some chores to return to the camp, but the young boy didn't seem intent on leaving anytime soon.

"Just call me Rong Ming," he said while playing with the grass. Hui Yue felt shocked. Why did he have to be a noble boy's playmate when he had more important things to do? But as usual, he wouldn't risk having the young master suspect anything he could tell his father. Instead, he muttered "Rong Ming" with a low voice, forcefully causing a blush to creep onto his cheeks.

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"You are a wonderful actor!" Lan Feng praised him as he died with a laugh. Although Lan Feng saw Yan Xiaobao becoming stronger, he also enjoyed the current situation. It was far better than staring at goats, grass, and Qi lines all day.

"Yan Xiaobao sighed inwardly, knowing that Phoenix's friend would be of no help. Instead, he decided to give up cultivation for the day and play with this city boy. Hopefully, he could glean some information about the city or the outside world from him, as Lan Feng was utterly useless when it came to knowledge of the current world.

"Why do you need to enter the Magic Forest?" Yan Xiaobao's face showed an expression of fear. He knew his family worried about the core area of the Magic Forest, as the beasts residing there were extremely dangerous. What puzzled him was why someone who lived a luxurious life would want to encounter such dangers.

"Rong Xing, my sister, I need to test some Martial Arts Skills that we practiced in real combat," Rong Ming replied, lying on the grass while gazing at the azure sky above.

"Young Master, can you tell me about life outside the village?" Yan Xiaobao asked breathlessly, his eyes brimming with curiosity. This was one time he didn't need to act; this was something he genuinely wanted to know.

Seeing the young child's expression, Rong Ming smiled contentedly and motioned for him to lie down, saying he would explain.

"Our father is the lord of Lilu City and the surrounding areas, so I am his heir," Rong Ming began in an immensely proud tone. "There is no cultivator stronger than my father."

Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but let out a soft laugh. Though Rong Ming was supposed to be a mature child, he was still a child, and all children loved to boast about their parents.

"Are you a cultivator?" Yan Xiaobao curiously asked, looking at the young boy lying beside him.

"Hmm," came the response. "Xing and I have both reached the Ninth Star of the trainee level. We are absolutely the top-ranked students in the school, but we need to train harder. I must make my father proud." He spoke with a determined voice. His tone and passion made Yan Xiaobao feel a trace of respect for this young boy. After all, it had taken him five years of struggle to reach the Second Star.

"Why is your hair white?" Rong Ming suddenly asked. Yan Xiaobao had long anticipated this question, so he was not surprised when it was finally brought up.

"I don't know," he replied honestly. "One night it was black, and by the next morning, it had turned white. Since I was a child, I haven't been able to remember anything." Yan Xiaobao sighed, and Rong Ming guessed that he had been asked this question many times before.

"What's the city like?" Before Rong Ming had the chance to pose more questions, Yan Xiaobao quickly interjected. For the remainder of the afternoon, Rong Ming told him about clothing stores, restaurants, ports, and markets. To Yan Xiaobao, it sounded much like what a typical large city of his world might be

like, which gave him a slight sense of comfort. When he eventually entered a city, he thought he could rely on some of this newly learned knowledge to ease the burden.

When dusk arrived, Yan Xiaobao stood up to guide the goats and Rong Ming back to the village. Once they reached the village pen, he parted ways with the young master and hurried back home with the excuse that he had promised his mother to return immediately.

When he finally arrived home, Yan Xiaobao couldn't hold back a sigh of relief. While he had obtained some useful information, he still felt as if he had wasted an entire day.

"They're only ten years old, and they've already reached the Ninth Star. I really need to step it up," Yan Xiaobao grumbled to Lan Feng.

"Don't stress," came the reply. "Though they may be at the Ninth Star, it's clear their dispositions lack the refinement of yours. If they want to access their Middle Dantian, they'll need to rely heavily on Qi-boosting medicines, and even then, success isn't guaranteed."

Hearing this affirmation of his hard work, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but feel a twinge of unease.

"Oh, right," he said as he chewed on some steamed buns left for him in the kitchen. "If I don't learn some Martial Arts Skills soon, I'm going to run into some serious problems." Yan Xiaobao muttered, and Lan Feng could only agree.

"But there's a catch," Lan Feng said. "When my father began cultivating me, he directly unlocked my Middle Dantian, so most of my skills require spiritual power or elemental affinity."

Yan Xiaobao was utterly baffled upon hearing this. Elemental affinity? What was that?

"Right. I hadn't explained it before because it's complicated, but I'll explain it now," Lan Feng said slowly.

"The Qi you're currently gathering is pure white Qi. You can use standard Qigong Martial Arts because it has no affinity, but that's why it is limited to Martial Arts. As of now, you don't resonate with any element because you haven't accessed your Middle Dantian and released it."

"I thought the Middle Dantian was for spiritual power?" Yan Xiaobao asked in confusion. He vaguely knew about affinities, but what about spiritual power?

"Correct. So Qi is used for Martial Arts. Spiritual power is employed in Spiritual Art. I suppose in your old world it would've been called magic. Your spiritual power—or as you might know it, magic power—is influenced by your affinity. For instance, if you are attuned to fire, you will be able to use your spiritual power to learn fire-related attacks. Alongside this, there are a few spiritual attacks that aren't determined by affinity, but they are extremely rare. One of them is the illusion you saw Rong Liang use on the Qilin."

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Yan Xiaobao nodded consciously.

"So, do you know any martial arts?" he asked quickly, as he understood that martial arts were something he had to learn.

"I know some," Lan Feng replied hesitantly, "but they are rather advanced. I'm not sure if they would be of any use to you right now."

"It's worth a try," Yan Xiaobao said with determination, and Lan Feng had no choice but to agree. It was certainly better than having no means at all.

"Oh, right," Lan Feng added quickly. "I'm not sure what kind of affinity you have, but since we share a soul, you should be able to use mine."

Yan Xiaobao's eyes lit up with excitement. "What affinity do you have?" Lan Feng snorted at the obviousness of the question. "Obviously, it's fire. But not ordinary flames—it's blue fire."

"Apart from its appearance, does it have any awe-inspiring qualities?" Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but ask. After all, thanks to this phoenix, he had gained a new outward appearance; however, he hadn't obtained any overwhelming powers in the process.

"I don't know," Lan Feng said carelessly. "I've never compared it to normal fire, so I'll let you figure that out."

Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but chuckle—it was so typical of Lan Feng. Inside, he was utterly curious, eager to explore his affinity.

"Once the Cultivation Party is gone, I'll teach you a martial arts skill," Lan Feng promised before they both drifted into a deep sleep.

The next morning, Yan Xiaobao once again led the goats up the slope. This time, he hoped to make up for the cultivation time he had lost the day before. After hearing about affinities and magical abilities, Yan Xiaobao couldn't wait to open his Middle Dantian. The mere thought of magic made him dizzy with excitement, like a child discovering a treasure.

However, as he saw someone approaching him through the morning mist, his excitement quickly faded.

"Yan Xiaobao!" Rong Ming called out excitedly, and Yan Xiaobao could only sigh inwardly. He ended up smiling again and very eagerly greeted the young noble.

That day, Rong Ming told Yan Xiaobao how cultivation and training worked. Every major city within the Empire had a Royal Academy monastery. The Royal Academy was divided into an Inner Circle and an Outer Circle. The Outer Circle consisted of students who relied solely on Qi and their Lower Dantian, while the Inner Circle only admitted students who had surpassed the Master rank or higher.

The Inner Circle was located in the Kingdom's capital city, whereas the Outer Circle was situated within each major city.

The academy enrolled students from the age of ten, and they needed to be at least five-star students. Otherwise, only exceptionally wealthy noble parents could afford the exorbitant tuition fees. Once a student reached the disciple level, their cultivation speed would increase, and the academy would assist them by supplying medicine pills and martial arts skills.

Each year, every academy sent five students to the capital to compete in medium-ranked tournaments and competitions.

Rong Ming and Rong Xing were regarded as the two prodigies among this year's new students, and Rong Ming took great pride in telling Yan Xiaobao all about it.

"The academy doesn't sound like such a bad idea," Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but ponder, though he quickly dismissed the thought as he remembered he would easily attract attention.

"At school, you wouldn't have to hide your cultivation base. When you've reached the disciple level, I should be able to easily conceal myself," Lan Feng said calmly. "I can disguise myself against human cultivators, but if there are strong beasts nearby, they would definitely notice our aura."

Yan Xiaobao nodded solemnly. It would be a great risk, but for now, this was not a decision he needed to make. After all, he was only five years old, and in these five years, many things could change.

The next day, when he saw Rong Ming spotting him on another hillside, Yan Xiaobao was not surprised. This time, Rong Ming taught him about the surrounding nations. Currently, they were living in the Sun Kingdom, ruled by the Sun Royal Family. The Kingdom contained seven major cities, with Sun City as the capital and evidently the largest city.

Apart from the Sun Kingdom, the continent had three other nations: the Siberian Empire, the Moon Province, and the Divine Domain.

The three nations worked as allies together; however, the Divine Domain had been closed off to the outside world for thousands of years, and anyone who dared to enter was never heard from again.

Both Yan Xiaobao and Lan Feng listened with great interest.

"I bet," Yan Xiaobao began, "the person we're looking for is in the Divine Domain." Lan Feng couldn't help but laugh. If their target was hiding in a country filled with fear and murder, it certainly made sense.

The days passed one by one, and Rong Ming came to find Yan Xiaobao every day. This annoyed Yan Xiaobao—he had lost nearly a month of cultivation time—but he'd rather stick with the young boy than constantly be on guard against Rong Liang. Ever since his son started visiting the hills daily, the honorable lord hadn't tried to approach Hui Le.

Finally, on the day Lord Rong Liang broke camp and moved his entourage toward the Magic Forest, Rong Ming made him a solemn promise.

"I promise I'll come back for you," Rong Ming said seriously as he clasped Yan Xiaobao's hand in his own. Yan Xiaobao had grown accustomed to the way Rong Ming looked at him, and he envied the young noble. Yan Xiaobao was certain Rong Ming was lonely, lacking friends, which explained why he became so close to the young white-haired boy.

Lan Feng couldn't stop laughing for several hours, but he refused to tell Yan Xiaobao why. He claimed Yan Xiaobao was too clueless, though someday he would understand.

After Lord Rong Liang led his entourage away, life in the village returned to its usual rhythm. Although the villagers were proud of having been visited by someone as important as Lord Rong Liang, they also knew they couldn't afford to entertain him or waste time celebrating, as they needed to fill their stomachs and secure their livelihood.

While most villagers missed the excitement brought by the visitors, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help feeling glad when things settled back to normal. Last month had been their first break from farming, but Yan Xiaobao didn't enjoy being forced to rest. Remembering Lan Feng's promise to teach him martial arts skills, he became very excited and hurried to fetch the goats earlier than usual that morning.

Once he reached the hillside, Xu Yue impatiently sat down, waiting for Lan Feng to pick up on his hint. He hoped to use the Qi he had painstakingly accumulated over the past years.

"Do you even know what martial arts skills are?" Lan Feng asked in a somewhat aggressive tone, as he disliked it whenever someone tried to push him.

"I hope you can explain it to me," Yan Xiaobao said, flashing his sweetest smile, his eyes holding a trace of innocence that made Lan Feng scoff.

"I'll explain. But only because I need you to become strong," Lan Feng said arrogantly. "Don't think I'll indulge in your foolish behavior." As usual, Lan Feng was correct, and Yan Xiaobao had no more words to say. Eventually, he would acquire the knowledge he wanted.

"Martial arts skills are ranked just like cultivators. That is to say: student, disciple, doctor, and so on. Each rank is divided into low, middle, and high levels." Yan Xiaobao nodded consciously.

"The cultivation base of martial arts skills isn't directly tied to your rank. It only determines the potential advantages of the skills. Martial arts skills don't have actual rank restrictions—they all depend on how much Qi you can channel, and the abilities will grow alongside your rank until the day you reach the full rank of the skill. For example, if you have a martial arts skill that's King-ranked, that skill will grow with you until you become an expert at the King rank. At that point, it can't progress further," Lan Feng explained, once again incredibly sharp and assertive. Yan Xiaobao's tone showed mild irritation, but he refrained from commenting as he knew Lan Feng would start an argument rather than continue the explanation of martial arts.

"This means that until you reach a certain rank, there are many higher-level skills that you won't be able to use, simply because you won't have enough Qi to activate them." Lan Feng's explanation made perfect sense, and Yan Xiaobao eagerly nodded once more.

"Additionally, although I've mentioned the skill rankings, you can't casually acquire ranked skills like this. Martial arts skills cannot surpass your cultivation rank during their creation. When cultivators open their Middle or High Dantian, they no longer need to spend as much time on martial arts skills, as they gain spiritual power and Wu Wei." Hearing this left Yan Xiaobao feeling slightly disheartened, and he couldn't help but complain a bit.

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Therefore, you will have many students, disciples, and practitioners of Martial Arts Skills. Since they are still striving to generate spiritual energy, you'll also find a large number of Master Ranking Skills, but Martial Arts Skills ranked as Duke and King are quite rare. As for Martial Arts Skills at Emperor and Saint Level, they are as scarce as the Phoenix's Tears. When I lived here, at least they returned. I've never heard of God bestowing Martial Arts Skills.

'Are you telling me this because you're going to give me some useless Martial Arts Skills?' Yan Xiaobao asked anxiously, but was met with indignation. 'Have I ever given you anything useless?' Lan Feng

retorted with insult. Yan Xiaobao had no choice but to admit that Lan Feng was doing everything possible to ensure he would become strong.

'I'm going to give you an athletic martial arts skill.' Lan Feng said contentedly. However, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but feel a little disappointed.

'Athletic Martial Arts?' He asked resentfully. 'What's the use of that?'

"You're truly foolish," Lan Feng replied impatiently. 'First of all, you need athletic martial arts skills to escape. Even if you know any combat skills, your cultivation base is too low. Teaching you how to escape will better ensure your survival. I don't care about honor or dignity. All we need is to stay alive until we reach our goals, and this skill is necessary for both you and me.'" Though Yan Xiaobao felt somewhat melancholic, he couldn't deny the truth in Lan Feng's words.

"Athletic Martial Arts also has other uses." Lan Feng continued speaking. After all, he wanted to prove his vast knowledge to the young Yan Xiaobao. 'You can use athletic martial arts skills to accelerate your attacks or defense. When you manage to perfect it, you'll be able to leave shadows while moving and even create optical illusions, causing your opponents to waste energy attacking nothing.' Lan Feng sounded proud, and Yan Xiaobao understood why. Athletic skills were definitely far better than he initially expected.

'What rank is it?' Yan Xiaobao asked curiously. If it were a Master Ranking Skill, it would be quite impressive.

'This is a high-level King Ranking Skill.' Lan Feng said coldly, causing Yan Xiaobao to doubt his hearing.

'High-ranking King! Didn't you say those were incredibly rare?' He asked, shocked, and his reaction gave Lan Feng some satisfaction.

"If I didn't at least possess a multitude of high-ranking skills, I wouldn't have confidence in myself." Lan Feng said smugly. Knowing he had an arsenal of skills to draw upon when needed reassured Yan Xiaobao.

"However," Lan Feng continued, understanding Yan Xiaobao's thoughts. "I don't plan to give you other skills, no matter how easy they may be, until you've perfected this one." Lan Feng was as strict in practice as Qi cultivation. Though Yan Xiaobao tried to request more, he eventually held back upon fully grasping Lan Feng's decision.

Lan Feng ordered Yan Xiaobao to sit in a meditative position and slowly guide his consciousness toward the Dantian, where the Phoenix awaited him.

Then, Lan Feng directed Yan Xiaobao's adult consciousness into another meditative position, where he ordered him to press his hands together to form a bird shape and then close his eyes.

Lan Feng moved slowly, stretching his fingers toward his own forehead, pressing the eye situated in his Upper Dantian against his vision. A sharp ice-blue light illuminated the entire Dantian Cave in an instant. Lan Feng extended his index finger, and the tip manifested a tiny pearl, which rapidly absorbed the radiant blue light. Lan Feng observed the dazzling pearl quietly and nodded in satisfaction when the last beam of light vanished. He looked at the ice-blue pearl in his hand, which had transformed from transparent to luminous.

Lan Feng approached the contemplative Yan Xiaobao and pressed the blue pearl against his forehead. The pearl slipped into Yan Xiaobao's head, illuminating his consciousness with inner knowledge.

The unnatural light erupting within Hui Yue was the sole indication of something different happening compared to his usual energy refinement.

Lan Feng, exhausted from withdrawing Martial Arts Skills from within, leaned against the cave wall as he watched his focused companion.

Seeing his hardworking student, Lan Phoenix couldn't help feeling a touch of comfort. In cultivation, Yan Xiaobao didn't possess any extraordinary talent, nor did he have medicinal herbs or the Elixir of Immortality to help fast-track the process, but he did have unwavering determination, persisting year after year in refining himself to ensure his character was as excellent as possible.

Lan Feng would never admit it, but even he would abandon this grueling and slow cultivation process they were undergoing, so he couldn't help but feel an unusual sense of gratitude toward Yan Xiaobao.

As Lan Feng examined his emotions in exhaustion, Yan Xiaobao was engulfed by a sea of information. As soon as the pearl entered his head, it fused with the light spreading throughout his body, teaching Yan Xiaobao a Martial Arts Skill named Velocity Flow.

To perfect Martial Arts Skills, cultivators must continually practice them. The information provided indicated the paths through which his Qi Flow should be guided via his meridians to activate the skill and included the two seals he needed to form within his lower Dantian.

The light shooting through his meridians displayed examples of where and how Yan Xiaobao needed to apply his Qi, quickly forming a memory of the paths, combinations, and different seals required for practicing Martial Arts Skills. Even though it was just one skill, it had many applications, each unique in its Qi Flow and demanding individual abilities to execute.

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Slowly, the light dimmed, and Yan Xiaobao opened his blue eyes, thrilled as his excitement sparkled at the thought of this newfound knowledge. He couldn't wait to test it out, focusing back on controlling his body rather than his consciousness.

Yan Xiaobao recalled each combination and promptly directed his Qi toward his legs. He allowed it to flow along the paths he had learned, but as soon as he felt something was off, his brows quickly furrowed.

Although he felt he had gained some speed, it was undoubtedly far below what should have been achieved. Furthermore, his new speed was irregular and uncontrollable.

Yan Xiaobao initially frowned, but his expression soon transformed into a wide grin, for he understood this skill could be mastered perfectly. All it required was practice, and practice was something Yan Xiaobao never shied away from.

After learning the martial arts skills, Yan Xiaobao had to slightly adjust his schedule. Previously, he would spend entire days cultivating; however, it was now clear he needed time to practice his martial arts skills. He thus decided to train in the mornings and early afternoons, dedicating his late afternoons and evenings to refining his Qi.

Yan Xiaobao followed this routine for another year. He worked harder than before, yet each time he gained more Qi or improved his control over Velocity Flow, he felt immense joy.

On this particular day, like any other, Yan Xiaobao guarded the goats on the hillside while training in Velocity Flow.

Lan Feng detached his consciousness from the safety of Yan Xiaobao's body. Finding no threats around, he turned his gaze toward the village, a smile suddenly breaking across his face.

'Yan Xiaobao,' he exclaimed excitedly. 'Tonight, when we return home, there's a surprise waiting for you!'

Although Lan Feng allowed his consciousness to wander over the grass, their conversation continued within their minds. Yan Xiaobao gave Lan Feng a puzzled look but refrained from asking questions. Even something as simple as a new dish cooked by his mother could easily excite Lan Feng.

Sharing a body with Yan Xiaobao came with its perks. Lan Feng naturally felt everything Yan Xiaobao did, yet he couldn't take control of the body and could only sit back and enjoy the experience.

Yan Xiaobao smiled at the slightly changed Phoenix over the years. Reflecting on their first encounter, Yan Xiaobao had been convinced that Lan Feng was the fiercest creature in the world. However, after years of conversation, viewing Lan Feng as an abandoned boy with immense power and knowledge over peculiar subjects seemed far more fitting.

Lan Feng occasionally displayed arrogance, yet he was easily brought into a good mood with friendliness and kind gestures. Especially when Yan Xiaobao began practicing his martial arts skills and would use them to hunt small animals in the forest to bring back for dinner.

Lan Feng was undoubtedly a beast, and the simplest way to tame a beast was by feeding it. Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but chuckle as he reminisced about how he usually persuaded Lan Feng.

Yan Xiaobao decided to return to the village to see what surprise awaited him. Gathering two birds and a rabbit onto his shoulders, he herded the goats uphill toward home.

However, before Yan Xiaobao reached the village, he noticed something unusual. A large number of tents were set up in the clearing beside the village—uncomfortable tents resembling those from a year ago.

'Lan Feng,' Yan Xiaobao murmured as the sense of visitors waiting for him struck. 'When he said he would return, do you think Rong Ming was serious?' He asked in a worried tone, but the only response he received was a stifled laugh.

Yan Xiaobao let out a sigh as he prepared himself for visitors in a manner fitting a six-year-old accustomed to their quiet little town.

'Yan Xiaobao!' A shout accompanied by an inner sigh made Yan Xiaobao spin around, his face a mix of shock and excitement.

'Young Master!' he exclaimed with a bright smile. 'I didn't expect to see you here!' He continued, though inwardly he wanted to say, 'Please don't spend another month training me. I'm already behind.' However, Rong Ming quickly placed his hand back in his, then peacefully watched him herding the goats into their pen before dragging the white-haired boy to their camp.

Approaching the increasingly closer camp, Yan Xiaobao felt a wave of unease rise within him. He was currently only a Second Star Student, but reaching the second star at six years old was quite an accomplishment.

Both Yan Xiaobao and Lan Feng knew they couldn't hide their cultivation base from Rong Ming's father, nor perhaps even Lan Feng's existence.

Fortunately, Rong Ming did not take Yan Xiaobao to meet his father but rather introduced him to his sister. Rong Xing was a beautiful young girl with a gentle disposition. She immediately welcomed Yan Xiaobao, sitting quietly with a smile while Rong Ming shared tales of the past year with Yan Xiaobao.

'I really missed you,' Rong Ming said several times during their conversation. 'Oh, we're doing incredibly well at the Academy. This time we're here to see your actual training. Do you also want to cultivate?'

Rong Ming spent another month with Yan Xiaobao, teaching Huihui different cultivation methods and promising to take him to the Academy by the time he turned ten.

Yan Xiaobao could only sigh, but deep down, he couldn't hate the boy since his sentiments were genuine. Why Yan Xiaobao received these feelings was a mystery, though Lan Feng claimed to know but refused to reveal it.

After saying goodbye once more, Yan Xiaobao speculated that Rong Ming might return to the village next year, but he had no intention of wasting time worrying now. Instead, he returned to his usual schedule of cultivation and martial arts practice.

'I don't understand,' Yan Xiaobao grumbled faintly. A year had passed since Rong Ming's group last camped in the village, and Yan Xiaobao, now seven, maintained his beauty, though his stature remained frustratingly unimpressive.

'I'm definitely using Velocity Flow, but even when I execute it correctly, my fists still fail to deliver substantial damage. In fact, I'm often the one who ends up hurt.' Yan Xiaobao muttered while rubbing his head, pondering what he could be doing wrong.

Lan Feng snorted—a sound typically heard when Yan Xiaobao said something foolish.

'It's a high-ranking movement skill of the King level... It's a movement skill, you idiot!' he sighed. 'It lets you move your body at extreme speed and accuracy, but it's your body doing the moving. The problem isn't the skill; it's your physical weakness.' Yan Xiaobao could only respond silently. Lan Feng's explanation made perfect sense and was something he should've realized without needing Lan Feng to explain.

Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but appreciate Lan Feng clarifying things for him. Even now, seven years into this new world, there were still many concepts difficult for Yan Xiaobao to grasp.

Now at the Third Star level, Yan Xiaobao had refined Velocity Flow's movement aspects. He could create mirages at his previous positions and was practicing the final aspect of a higher-level technique referred to as optical illusion.

Though Yan Xiaobao didn't have enough Qi to produce more than one visual illusion, the technique would naturally improve as his Qi increased.

'Oh,' Lan Feng said with a smile. 'Your friend arrived earlier this year.'

Yan Xiaobao expected Rong Ming to appear soon, so hearing the news didn't shock him. Instead, he was surprised to find that he didn't mind the prospect of chatting with his friend.

Despite the numerous children in the village, none could truly be considered friends, as they were usually occupied with chores all day and lived far from the hillside where Yan Xiaobao stayed.

Yan Xiaobao gathered the goats and led them back to the village. He wondered about the events of last year, but upon reaching the settlement, he found things slightly different from previous years.

To begin with, Lord Rong Liang was nowhere to be seen. Though this slightly calmed Yan Xiaobao, he couldn't help but worry about what the reason might be.

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Chapter 189 Lord Rong Liang

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"Are you Yan Xiaobao?" A voice suddenly sounded from behind him. Yan Xiaobao quickly turned around to see a burly man with a kind face. He was wearing the uniform of a Lili City guard, and there was no sense of danger around him.

Yan Xiaobao nodded.

"Please follow me. The young master has requested that you be brought to him as soon as you return." He explained politely, leading him towards the tent at the center of the camp.

Yan Xiaobao was surprised to see where he was being taken, but he dared not say anything. Lan Feng was hiding in the Qi Cave, hoping not to be noticed by any of the distinguished experts stationed in the camp, and he was also very silent.

"Yan Xiaobao!" As the young boy entered the tent, a familiar voice called out, and Yan Xiaobao dazedly looked at Rong Ming.

Rong Ming was now twelve years old. He sat behind a table in the middle of the tent, accompanied by an elderly man. They seemed to be discussing matters concerning the Magic Forest. A map was spread out on the table, with several markers randomly placed.

"I'm sorry I couldn't come to greet you this time," he said apologetically. As he spoke, Yan Xiaobao noticed that the middle-aged man beside him was clearly assessing him. This man was certainly no less formidable than Lord Rong Liang.

However, the man quickly withdrew his gaze and turned back to the many different scrolls on the table. This made Yan Xiaobao breathe a sigh of relief.

"I'm in charge of the beast hunting this year." Rong Ming proudly explained, "Father has business in the city and decided to let me learn something about managing a team of soldiers. This is Bu Huang. He's father's counselor, helping me during this trip." Rong Ming explained while gesturing to the middle-aged man.

Yan Xiaobao quickly clasped his hands, took a deep bow, and then said in a trembling voice, "Yan Xiaobao greets your esteemed counselor."

His actions seemed to earn Bubu's approval, as he nodded in response. "However," Rong Ming continued, this time with a slightly somber expression, "I have many matters that require my attention. Therefore, I won't be able to entertain you this month." Yan Xiaobao nodded before replying.

"This humble one is just a poor child. The young master should focus on his responsibilities." Bu Huang's eyes were filled with growing approval, and Rong Ming gave Yan Xiaobao a sad smile before nodding himself.

"At least have dinner with us!" Rong Ming suddenly exclaimed, and Bubu nodded. Yan Xiaobao had no choice but to agree, and the three of them prepared for the banquet.

During dinner, Rong Ming talked incessantly. He spoke of the past year and how he had reached the second star of the Disciple Team. Rong Xing had just attained the third star, but she possessed rather incredible talent. Yan Xiaobao sensed that he bore no jealousy towards his sister and was proud of her talents.

Yan Xiaobao enjoyed the evening and the food. When he realized that Rong Ming wouldn't be able to break from his training next month, he cherished the moment even more. After saying his goodbyes, he happily headed towards a small lake at the forest's edge.

It was summer, hot and humid. Yan Xiaobao had been training all day, and although it was late, he really wanted to have a bath before heading home.

The still water cooled, each drop washing the sweat and grime from Yan Xiaobao's skin. His long white hair shimmered under the moonlight, and his blue eyes sparkled with satisfaction. Yan Xiaobao was as stunning as a fairy.

"Someone is watching you," Lan Feng commented softly, prompting Yan Xiaobao to turn his head towards the forest. He was initially worried, but upon noticing who it was, a smile appeared on his face.

"Mrs. Rong Xing," he said, his childish voice filled with happiness. He quickly got out of the water and headed towards his clothes, seeing the shocked expression on Rong Xing's adorable face.

"Is something wrong?" he asked, puzzled. Perhaps she had noticed something? He thought, though he was slightly apprehensive.

"You are... you're a boy?" she asked, her fair skin embarrassingly turning crimson. Yan Xiaobao looked at her with a confused expression, which shocked Rong Xing even more.

"Of course?" he answered, perplexed. Why would someone need to explain their gender? However, upon reflection, he realized that people always referred to him as Yan Xiaobao, never discussing his gender.

"Lan Feng..." he spoke in a trembling voice, "Don't tell me Rong Ming thinks I'm a girl..."

Lan Feng had only a moment to respond before a vibrant laughter erupted suddenly from the trees. Yan Xiaobao watched as Rong Xing laughed heartily, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"This is perfect," she giggled, trying to stifle her laughter. "I'll visit you tomorrow when you're on the mountain," Rong Xing laughed, turning back to the camp, leaving Yan Xiaobao and Lan Feng behind.

"The Rong Family is truly chaotic," Lan Feng finally said before the two returned home.

Rong Xing entered the central tent, seeing Rong Ming and Bubu discussing the list of Magic Beast cores they expected to purchase on this trip, and then she burst into laughter.

Her laughter made Rong Ming look at her.

"Where have you been?" he asked curiously, since Rong Xing rarely left the camp.

"I met Yan Xiaobao," she replied with a voice full of happiness. Rong Ming's expression changed suddenly, and he smiled at his twin sister.

"Do you like Yan Xiaobao?" his voice slightly nervous as he asked, keeping his gaze fixed on Rong Xing's face. When Rong Ming saw his sister nod, a sense of relief washed over him.

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"Yan Xiaobao is definitely an interesting person," she said, her eyes sparkling with an indescribable brightness.

"If she becomes your Saozi, what would you think?" Rong Ming asked seriously, but his expression quickly turned into a frown as his usually composed sister burst into uncontrollable laughter. Although her personality was quite untimely, the sound of her laughter was still pleasant to the ears, and he found it hard to be angry with her.

"Oh, dear brother," Rong Xing said with a radiant smile. "I would certainly enjoy seeing that happen; however, I think it's unlikely." Rong Ming frowned at her response, but he was a stubborn young boy.

"We'll see," he replied, before turning back to determine the whereabouts of the Magical Creature they needed to eliminate.

Early in the morning, when Yan Xiaobao woke up, things were usually back to normal within minutes, but today was different. He had to push himself to leave the comfort of his worn-out blanket.

The white-haired boy left his hut, but instead of heading toward the pen to tend to the goats, he walked toward the village chief's residence.

As Yan Xiaobao walked down the silent street, his entire body was enveloped by dense morning fog. The nighttime temperatures had dropped, and since the sunlight hadn't yet pierced through the sky, his small frame shivered from the cold.

When he saw light from the village chief's hut, relief appeared in Yan Xiaobao's eyes. He quietly knocked on the door, and the village chief promptly opened it.

"Yan Xiaobao!" she exclaimed in surprise. "Do you need to see your father?" she asked. This young child was known for his maturity, so the woman treated him as an equal, despite him being only seven years old.

Yan Xiaobao nodded and slowly stepped into the warm home. To feel the heat from the fireplace was a luxury he didn't have in his own home, so the young boy had to resist the temptation to stand before the gentle flames and let them warm him. Usually, Lan Feng would assist him in managing his body temperature, but Lan Feng enjoyed sleeping in the mornings, so Yan Xiaobao was on his own.

The woman noticed his gaze sweeping toward the fireplace and offered a gentle smile. "Wait by the fire; I'll go find your father," she said with a cheerful tone before walking into the private residential area.

Soon, the village elder entered the warm room, gazing at Yan Xiaobao. Although it wasn't rare for children to visit him in the morning to avoid their chores, this diligent child had never done so for that reason.

"Village Elder," Yan Xiaobao said respectfully, raising both hands and bowing slightly. "I need someone to replace me in tending to my chores today," he asked hesitantly. Yan Xiaobao disliked leaving work to others, but he had no choice now. Handling the Rong twins was undoubtedly more important than goats.

The elder frowned as he looked at him. Yan Xiaobao was clearly not sick, nor did he seem unwell, so the elder wondered why he needed a day off. But given that Yan Xiaobao had diligently tended to the goats for years without rest, the elder couldn't deny him. He simply nodded and then walked into another room inside the house.

"Xiao Lang," he called loudly, as rustling sounds were heard from inside. "Take care of the goats today. Yan Xiaobao has matters to attend to," he instructed. The boy who had just woken up snorted in response.

Yan Xiaobao thanked him without asking any questions and quickly bowed to the elder before leaving the warmth of the hut.

As the temperature rose, the thin fog thickened, yet the sunlight had yet to break through the eastern mountains. It was a tranquil morning, and the village was slowly awakening, preparing for another ordinary day, just like countless days before.

At least, to the other villagers, it was an ordinary day. Yan Xiaobao knew today would be different for him. He realized that if he made a mistake, the peaceful village might be wiped off the map.

His mind returned yet again to what had happened the previous day. He understood why Rong Ming had always treated him so uniquely, and he clenched his teeth. Though Rong Xing thought it was a funny joke, Rong Ming was someone who might feel he had been tricked.

Yan Xiaobao walked to the edge of the camp and sat quietly beneath a tree, waiting for the young Master to wake up. He couldn't help feeling a little nervous. The current issue was clearly a misunderstanding, and while one could argue that Rong Ming assumed Hui was at fault for being a girl, it could also be said Hui should have noticed and clarified the misunderstanding rather than leading the youth for years.

If Rong Ming wanted to punish the village, it would be easy to place all the blame on Yan Xiaobao and even the other villagers. He could claim they had instructed the young boy to act in such a way to gain favor with the young City Lord of Lili City.

Yan Xiaobao exhaled deeply. He didn't consider Rong Ming to be so petty. This world was very different from the one he had known before, and he understood how crucial honor and dignity were. If Rong Ming truly felt humiliated, he would likely be furious and seek revenge.

The young white-haired boy clenched his teeth again and forced himself to stop dwelling on negative thoughts. Instead, he emptied his mind and allowed his consciousness to enter his Dantian Cave. There, he sat down to begin absorbing essence and refining Qi. The meditation calmed his uneasy heart and helped him strengthen himself.

While Yan Xiaobao was busy cultivating, the sunlight quietly rose, and as soldiers woke up, the camp became bustling with activity. Each had glanced at the small child at least once, but knowing he was a friend of their young Master, none regarded him as a potential threat and allowed him to cultivate in peace.

Yan Xiaobao had just completed his final Qi Line practice when he found Rong Ming sitting beside him, smiling and drawing his senses back to his body.

"I'm glad to see you're cultivating as I showed you," Rong Ming said happily, grabbing the little boy's hand and dragging him to the main tent in the center of the camp.

Yan Xiaobao dared to establish close relationships because his cultivation base grew slowly, making it appear as though he hadn't been cultivating with the most popular methods in over a year. From the outside, the two approaches seemed nearly identical. Now, Yan Xiaobao sank his body into a meditation posture and immersed his consciousness into his Dantian Cave to refine Qi.

When Rong Ming dragged him closer to the tent, Yan Xiaobao felt the worries from each step ease. He knew Lan Feng was of no use to him now, as they had agreed the day before to approach Rong Ming and clarify the misunderstanding.

Even if Rong Liang wasn't present, Huang Bu was, and Lan Feng said he wasn't any weaker than Rong Liang himself. It was apparent that Huang Bu would also notice Lan Feng if he focused entirely on concealing himself.

Yet Yan Xiaobao felt calm, despite considering all the risks he was taking to resolve the misunderstanding. His goal was to become the strongest person in this world, the fifth being to achieve God Level. If he allowed fear to consume him over such matters, he would already have forfeited his right to strive for greatness.

Yes, Rong Ming was stronger than Yan Xiaobao. His entourage could wipe out the entire village; this was undeniable. But Yan Xiaobao knew this was simply his first time facing an overwhelming force of adversaries. Yan Xiaobao would undoubtedly encounter such situations again in the future, and by then, he would likely face even worse odds. For now, he had the advantage of being Rong Ming's friend for the past few years.

The two boys entered the central tent, and Yan Xiaobao reflected on everything that had happened. Rong Ming led the white-haired boy to a table on one side.

"Come, have a seat!" he said excitedly. "Let's have breakfast. Have you eaten?" Yan Xiaobao shook his head as he prepared to open his mouth, but Rong Ming interrupted him. "Today you were supposed to be tending to the goats, so I didn't think I would see you. Tell me, why are you here?"

His voice was friendly, but it was easy to detect the slight seriousness in the older boy's tone, tinged with a bit of concern. Rong Ming also understood Yan Xiaobao's personality and knew the boy would never abandon his chores without something important to discuss.

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