

Medical 341

Chapter 341 Master Level_2

His body was undergoing constant changes, and Yan Xiaobao was stunned, feeling his body filled with vitality and ready to unleash at any moment. He experienced a power he had never felt before.

The Phoenix, created by spiritual energy, visibly slowed down, and its entire body began to collapse, descending into the Spiritual Energy Ocean as it dissipated.

Amid this vast ocean, Yan Xiaobao's projection had already taken a seat. As spiritual energy declined and drained away, a few droplets gathered beneath him. The molten Phoenix dashed toward these droplets, and when it finally reached its destination, its entire form scattered into a rain of descending spiritual energy.

The small pond Yan Xiaobao had previously seen was far larger than the current one, yet a substantial amount of energy still returned to the Spiritual Energy Ocean — far surpassing the yield of most cultivators.

The reason Yan Xiaobao underwent a transformation more favorable than most was because he was cultivating according to the twelve zodiac. This method proved to be the most advantageous for him. Though few deem the rooster significant, for a person like Yan Xiaobao, who shares his body with the sovereignty of birds, it was absolutely crucial.

Throughout the journey, Yan Xiaobao's spiritual projection accompanied the Phoenix. Now, he observed how a small lake appeared within his mind. If all the spiritual energy used during the journey replenished itself afterward, then this lake would have been twice as large.

Suddenly, Yan Xiaobao noticed five flames emerge beneath the surface of the lake. Their shapes grew more distinct, and they looked as if they were gradually hovering in the middle altitude, directly below the replica of the cultivation technique.

These five flames did not touch the surface of the lake; it seemed as though constant nourishment from the spiritual energy made them grow larger. Yet, no matter how much Hui Yue tried, he could not summon the green and blue flames. Both flickered faintly, continuing their steady growth under the aura of spiritual energy from the sea.

With a sigh, Yan Xiaobao allowed the other three flames to return to their original positions before leaving the middle Dantian to head toward Lan Feng, who awaited him at his lower Dantian.

Although Yan Xiaobao had unlocked his middle Dantian, the lower level remained shrouded in mystery. Without the lower Dantian, Yan Xiaobao would be unable to create more spiritual energy.

Lan Feng no longer needed to refine spiritual essence since he could rely on Yan Xiaobao's vitality. Sadly, his attempts to refine Wu Wei had all failed, which made the Phoenix immensely irritable as he had no idea what the outcome might have been.

Gazing back at Danrong Cave, Yan Xiaobao noticed that the fourth cave was beginning to show signs of opening in the near future. The energy barriers had significantly weakened — yet although weakened, Yan Xiaobao could definitively say he was not yet capable of breaking through them.

Faint yellow light shimmered weakly, yet Hui Yue remained unsure what shape this energy might take. Could it be another serene blue cloud? Or a harmful red fog? Perhaps it might even transform into a beautiful pearl, akin to the healing green and brilliant radiance. Whatever its form or effect, Hui Yue couldn't help but feel thrilled about the unknown phenomena within the Dantian Cave. From what Hui Yue could tell, no one else possessed anything of the sort.

With a flick of his finger, he completely altered his demeanor, granting the thin mist full control of his awareness. For this young man, both experiences were captivating and highly valuable.

"It's time," Lan Feng said with a radiant smile, visibly satisfied with Yan Xiaobao's current cultivation. He gestured for the white-haired boy to sit before him, speculating about what Lan Feng might be planning.

Yan Xiaobao closed his eyes, only to suddenly notice a sharp light pierce between his eyelids. However, he refrained from opening them, knowing that Lan Feng was currently subtracting different elements of Spiritual Arts from his mind before transmitting them to Yan Xiaobao.

All at once, the white-haired boy felt as if his entire body had been thrown into freezing seawater. His consciousness was jarred, causing his body to twitch slightly.

The information shared this time was so profound that Hui Yue's mind instantly grasped it completely. This triggered a backlash against his consciousness. But after a few minutes, Hui Yue gradually settled back into his meditative posture and began weighing the pros and cons of the knowledge he had acquired.

The first technique he considered was the use of an old potato mash, a skill Yan Xiaobao had previously seen. Though relatively simple, it still required certain spells to strengthen one's affinity with the earth element in order to blindly follow a given command.

"Forget that!" Lan Feng said irritably. "Spells are meant to give cultivators better affinity with specific elements." Lan Feng shifted into an explanatory mode, and Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes to watch the bird in front of him with interest. Though the bird could be annoying, its information was always valuable.

"Do you know why stronger cultivators no longer need to use spells?" When Yan Xiaobao asked the question, Xu Yue nodded seriously before Lan Feng's face broke into an expression of delight as he continued.

"This doesn't happen simply because they acquire stronger cultivation bases but because their affinity with elements grows deeper." Yan Xiaobao frowned. From what he understood, as cultivation bases strengthened, affinity naturally deepened — yet it seemed the Phoenix had another method to enhance affinity. A surge of excitement coursed through Yan Xiaobao as he felt Lan Feng's smirk emerge upon his face.

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'Alright.' Lan Feng straightened his body slightly, causing countless celestial bodies to soar and shimmer. 'What you need to do is to continuously train in a single skill.' Yan Xiaobao's face sank slightly. Train in a single skill?

"It's quite similar to Martial Arts Skills," Lan Feng continued. "Once you master a spiritual art, you won't need to chant these spells anymore. But it's arduous work. At least ten times harder than practicing Martial Arts Skills. Do you think you can do it?"

Hui Yue snorted and closed his eyes again, beginning to organize the numerous spiritual skills he had been gifted with.

First, the Fake Fire Skill was initially just a spark of fire from Mars, but now it no longer relied on Qi to ignite the flames; instead, it emerged directly from his own spiritual energy. Since Yan Xiaobao had already perfected the original spell, he no longer needed to practice it because he was already able to conjure flames in his hand without calling upon them. This was partly due to the presence of Lan Feng, whose affinity with fire was far beyond the ordinary.

The greatest change in Hui Yue's flames was that, unlike the flames sprouting from the Qi Line, his fire had transformed. The core of the flames was now celestial, surrounded by sky-blue hues. The fire was absolutely stunning, but Yan Xiaobao found himself enamored with these colors.

The second art Lan Feng imprinted into Yan Xiaobao's mind was the "Earth Nail," which allowed Hui Yue to craft various spears composed of earth. Previously, he had tried to create one based on his own memory, but the result was disappointing, measuring no more than twenty centimeters. After reciting spells that increased his connection to his elements, Yan Xiaobao noticed he could now forge nails up to three meters long and one meter in diameter.

Fragments of memory also contained information on other spiritual arts, such as the Earth Hand, Flame Storm, and Fire Sea. All three relied on elemental affinity, but since Lan Feng himself lacked Metal Affinity, none of them included any Metal Affinity.

However, spiritual arts based on elemental affinity were not the only ones. Yan Xiaobao gazed at the many abilities surfacing in his mind, feeling a rush of excitement.

The Temperament Guardian was one of these skills, but regardless of how powerful these abilities were, Yan Xiaobao knew they were not something he should start with at this moment. Instead, he let out a deep sigh, stood up, and focused on perfecting the Earth Nail.

Yan Xiaobao stood in the backyard garden, his clothes tattered and hair disheveled, unkempt. Although his skin bore no signs of blood or injury, the young man appeared to be in a pitiful state. Yet, his eyes glimmered with excitement, and a smile spread across his face.

"Jingjing, you're absolutely incredible!" Yan Xiaobao sat down, immediately closing his eyes and silently standing upright. Then, he replayed the entire sparring session in his mind.

Sha Yun usually refused to duel Yan Xiaobao, as she couldn't bring herself to take him seriously. But Yan Xiaobao persistently sought her out. Due to his unwavering determination, the Snake Woman eventually relented and decided to try and help him.

Standing face-to-face, Xu Yue was finally allowed to use his more proficient skill, the Earth Spear. Although Yan Xiaobao was still unable to summon the spears to full size without chanting the spells, he noticed a clear improvement in his affinity with earth.

Another astonishing realization struck Yan Xiaobao. After perfecting his Earth Nail, he would be able to shape the earth into any form he desired, as his affinity allowed him to command the earth to follow his will.

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Chapter 343 Spiritual Art

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Unlike Martial Arts Skills, Yan Xiaobao only needs to perfect his elemental affinities to shape these elements perfectly in the future. This is one of the deadliest strengths of higher-ranking cultivators. Not only do they hold immense power and have a solid cultivation foundation, but once they achieve perfect synchronization with their affinities, they enter entirely different realms, distinct from cultivators with mismatched elemental affinities.

Yan Xiaobao has already perfected his Mars Spark due to his relentless training in the past. His rigorous efforts, combined with Lan Feng's spiritual power and their shared soul, allowed him to complete his Fire Element affinity faster than ordinary cultivators. Yan Xiaobao is now working on his Earth Element affinity.

At first, Yan Xiaobao managed to produce small earth nails, but they have now grown to over one meter in length. Sha Yun, born with a synchronized affinity to Earth, had never heard of a Spell prior to meeting Yan Xiaobao.

Her Earth Spirit Spear can grow up to four meters tall and two meters in diameter at its peak, capable of reshaping Earth in any way she desires. The abilities she creates from the soil are smooth and elegant, resembling a graceful dance.

Standing next to Sha Yun, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but feel slightly overshadowed. Although his attacks might grow to match her scale, he still relies on Spells, which take time to chant... In the heat of battle, losing even a brief moment could mean disaster for Yan Xiaobao, especially against an experienced warrior.

As Xu Yue spent increasingly more time refining Earth-based Spiritual Art, he experienced profound changes in his body and the surrounding world. He was no longer merely Yan Xiaobao; he had become one with the ground, soil, and the energies flowing from Earth itself.

Sitting on the earth, Hui Yue felt as if something had shattered. Beneath him, the Earth started to surge with vitality, slowly transforming, as though responding to Yan Xiaobao's call. The white-haired boy, with eyes tightly shut, showed a slight furrow between his brows, as sweat began to bead along his skin.

During the sparring match with Sha Yun, Yan Xiaobao sensed a stark difference compared to his usual practice. He carefully observed the Snake Woman, noticing that her approach to Earth shared similarities with how he nurtured his Qi and spiritual energy. Both were extensions of him, tied deeply to this place. Inspired, Yan Xiaobao created a spiritual projection once the match ended, diving into his spiritual energy sea.

Within the Spiritual Energy Ocean, Yan Xiaobao adopted a meditative posture, yellow flames gently floating above both his hands as he poured his entire focus into them. These flames had no discernible difference from the red flames he had already perfected, yet they carried a unique sensation.

Hui Yue attempted to merge his consciousness with Earth's flame. As the rumbling within his body grew louder and more profound, it gradually settled into the form of a pentagram. Only then did beads of sweat start to trickle down his skin.

Sha Yun stood beside Yan Xiaobao, her eyes alert yet refraining from interrupting. She stood back, observing. This Snake Woman, whose primary attack revolved around mastery over Earth, found herself pondering—how did the current Yan Xiaobao manage to force such perfect elemental affinity?

Pushing an affinity towards Soul Fusion is a perilous move. If a cultivator is careless or the elemental affinity remains unrefined, calamity could strike. Yet, Sha Yun chose not to intervene, sensing that this young man had the capacity to achieve his desires and overcome challenges.

The pentagram of five pointed stars burst from within the soil, transforming entirely into dirt that enveloped Hui Yue like a sculpture molded from mud, without leaving any part untouched.

When he felt the sudden opportunity arising, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but feel stunned and secretly thrilled. The Earth was responding to him. Suddenly, everything became engulfed in darkness—even within Yue Hui's Dantian Cave, no light could penetrate.

Before the images of his growing plants appeared before his eyes, Yan Xiaobao lay in this black yet extraordinarily tranquil world for an unmeasurable length of time. Small plants soon grew into lush forests and towering trees, their roots steadfastly anchoring into the comfort of the soil.

Laughter escaped Hui Yue's lips as he felt like a child once more, lying in the embrace of a mother—a mother not biologically his, yet undeniably a force that nurtured him.

Yan Xiaobao embarked on a long journey through the Earth Right World. He saw coastline erosion at certain beaches and the growth of others. He witnessed mountains sprouting from the depths of the land and even islands formed from lava.

Finally, Yan Xiaobao observed how fields cultivated seeds to sprout, coming to understand that living beings rely on Earth, omnipresent and foundational. Earth, forged by the Earth Element, grants cultivators immense power if they can unlock its secrets. Yan Xiaobao suddenly realized that once he merged with Earth, he would forever carry part of its history, becoming an intrinsic piece of Earth itself.

The soil encasing Yue Hui gradually began collapsing, and minutes later, Hui Yue regained his freedom. He opened his eyes, his soul trembling instantly. The world had shifted, altering his understanding of existence.

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Every step Yan Xiaobao took allowed him to sense the energy ripples released by the Earth into the world. He could perceive every tree and living being within a hundred-meter radius, and every movement that occurred within the soil was easily felt by Yan Xiaobao, as if they formed directly upon his own body.

The white-haired boy broke into a broad smile because he realized this was a success. Hui Yue had managed to amplify his perfect symbiosis with the Earth, but the sensation was vastly different compared to when he was dealing with fire.

Just as he was about to sit down again to meditate, Yan Xiaobao sensed more guests arriving in front of his mansion.

Feeling slightly disappointed, Yan Xiaobao stood up. As he moved, Sha Yun opened her eyes and followed him into the mansion, heading toward the grand entrance.

Yan Xiaobao swung the door open, only to see the Rong twins visiting him once again. Their once lively eyes were now filled with exhaustion and worry. A faint sadness flickered in Hui Yue's heart, but he had no intention of joining any faction.

"Come in," Yan Xiaobao said, allowing the two inside. He then quickly headed downstairs to the kitchen to prepare some snacks.

"You both look very tired," Yan Xiaobao remarked, handing them two cups of warm tea as he sat on a chair across from them, gazing at them.

Over the past year, things in Rio City had undergone tremendous change. Yan Xiaobao had spent his time focusing on ascending to the Second Master Level star and had finally aligned with his elemental affinity to the Earth.

During the first half of the year, things had calmed down, but shocking ripples resonated underground as families such as Wang and Deng frantically recruited troops and allies.

Initially, the opposition had no idea about this because everyone was preoccupied with the surge of wealth generated by Rong Liang's massive steam production and the extraordinary increase in resource mining found nowhere else in Liluo City. They had managed to excavate magic crystals one after another, exporting them to other major cities.

Unfortunately, smaller families in the city began to notice the factional shifts. Tensions rose slowly, becoming impossible to ignore. Markets owned by families began to restrict sales only to members of their faction. Eventually, they even barred entry entirely to those from rival groups.

By now, even unaffiliated citizens—those who were not aligned with any faction, living plain but noble lives—were refused entry into these spaces. In day-to-day life, they held no real significance.

The atmosphere in Liluo City turned stifling. No one dared to leisurely stroll around anymore. No one truly understood what caused such sudden animosity between the two factions, but it was evident that something significant had unfolded, shaking them to their cores.

This situation had placed the Rong Family in a tough position. They had no clue what the rival faction was planning, but everyone instinctively knew that something was underway. The Rong twins, having graduated from the Royal Art Academy, had spent the past year tirelessly working for their family and learning to manage its affairs. Six months ago, they had done everything they could to understand the situation, but even the most skilled eavesdroppers had failed to uncover any useful information regarding the matter.

Looking at Yan Xiaobao, Rong Xing sighed. She deeply cared for the boy who had been her friend for years, viewing him as the younger brother she never had. Because of their bond, Rong Xing understood Yan Xiaobao's mindset well—she knew he had no intention of joining any faction. Doing so would place him in an agonizing position where he might have to choose between his friends.

Despite his neutrality, the twins kept visiting the young man, finding his home the only oasis of peace in the tense city of Liluo. This tranquility nurtured their weary hearts, offering them a brief reprieve before they inevitably had to return to the hostile environment of the City Lord Mansion.

Yan Xiaobao's home remained the one place where the Rong twins could relive the sense of belonging they'd experienced during their years at the academy. It felt like home because Yan Xiaobao had managed to remain unaffected by the city's factional strife. Friends often gathered at his house to replenish their energy.

Having such guests had become more common than before, and Yan Xiaobao could not help but feel a pang of pity for the Rong twins and the entire Rong Sect. Though they had remained on high alert, they had spent the past half month observing the movements of the Deng and Wang families, yet had gained no information about their plans.

In a few weeks, the Rong twins would have to leave Liluo City to return to the main campus of the Royal Art Academy, where they'd studied for years, before eventually coming back home. Yet, under the current circumstances, leaving was simply impossible.

"Everything will be fine," Yan Xiaobao said gently, stroking the elder twin's head. Yet tears welled up in Rong Xing's eyes as she thought about the precariousness of their situation. Things had only been worsening. The Wang and Deng families had already succeeded in winning over most of the smaller families in Liluo City, but no one knew the specifics of their intentions.

"They will attack us," Rong Xing said with a grim expression, tears streaming down her lovely face. "They will fight Father and try to seize the City Lord's position, but the Royal Family neither supports nor will approve it. Why would they even think this is an option?"

"Everything will be fine," Hui Yue said calmly. "Your father is a very strong man, and no one would willingly provoke a fight against him." He continued speaking as Sha Yun arrived with another cup of soothing tea for the crying girl.

Sha Yun was quite possessive, and while she did her best to keep Yan Xiaobao away from Wang Julong, she always seemed pleased whenever she was in Rong Xing's company. Sha Yun recalled how the elderly Rong Xing had once hit Hui Yue, mistakenly believing he'd transformed her into a beast contract.

To Rong Xing, Sha Yun was like a second mother to their group. She loved everyone in their circle in her unique way, but she was not one to be swayed by emotion. To her, Yan Xiaobao was like an older brother in her heart. When Sha Yun joined their circle, Rong Xing had readily embraced her as well.

The entire group also knew that Wang Julong was actually a girl. Many years ago, when she began following Yan Xiaobao, she eventually joined their core team and spent all her time with them. At that time, Yan Xiaobao had told Wang Julong the same secret he had only shared with a revered expert—this secret became her leverage whenever the issue came up.

However, to Rong Xing, Wang Julong would never feel like a sister but more like a younger brother. This dynamic made the female twin direct most of her parental love toward Sha Yun instead.

On the other hand, although Rong Xing doted on Sha Yun and spent significant time with her, they frequently argued about her habit of flirting with boys around the city or the academy.

Ultimately, before Sha Yun could settle down, Rong Xing found it necessary to threaten her using Yan Xiaobao as a deterrent.

"Do you really want to be a burden?" she had said sternly, deeply shocking Sha Yun. "Flirting leads to mating, and mating leads to babies. If you had little snake babies, do you really think Yan Xiaobao could stay by your side?"

This stern warning rooted itself deeply in Sha Yun's heart, causing her to quickly reign in her romantic tendencies. She began spending more time at Yan Xiaobao's home, which led to them talking far more often than they had in quite some time.

"Thank you for today," Rong Xing said softly after her tears finally ceased. Her face, however, retained a wearied expression, as though she might collapse from exhaustion at any moment.

Yan Xiaobao knew that both Rong Xing and Rong Ming had been working relentlessly during their free time, pushing themselves without rest. Recently, neither had managed to get sufficient sleep, causing Yan Xiaobao to look at them with a small, sympathetic smile.

"Why don't you sleep here for a while?" Yan Xiaobao suggested. He had expected the exhausted woman to decline, but she silently nodded. Although she was eager to return, her body had reached its limit. She hoped that by resting in the serene atmosphere of Yan Xiaobao's home, she might sleep longer than usual.

Chapter 345 Chaos Within

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Rong Ming, like Rong Xing, was exhausted, but his stronger physique had its advantages, allowing him to endure better. Yet, when he saw his first friend swaying in the air, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but laugh before falling asleep.

It wasn't long before Hui Yue had someone prepare two guest rooms. In less than half an hour, the Rong twins each had their own room, and, overwhelmed by fatigue, they sank into a dreamless slumber.

Hui Yue's face showed a bitter smile as he clenched his fists, sensing the earth beneath reacting to his posture. The sensation of controlling the earth surpassed his expectations by a considerable measure.

However, now that the Rong twins had fallen asleep, Hui Yue pondered why it felt so different from controlling fire, as if his Fire Element Affinity hadn't fully resonated with him.

"You've perfected your use of fire," Lan's voice suddenly echoed in Yan Xiaobao's mind. "Perfecting it means you can wield skills without needing spells, but fire is still just a tool for you. Though you have a strong elemental affinity for fire, you haven't truly synchronized with it. Fire hasn't yet become a part of you—it's not yet a piece of your soul."

Hearing this reply left Yan Xiaobao openly perplexed. "Then, how do I synchronize with it?" he asked eagerly, ready to begin immediately. Just as he was about to return to the backyard, he sensed the arrival of more guests.

Yan Xiaobao walked to the front door and saw Wang Julong together with Deng Wu. Unlike the Rong twins, the two were chatting jovially, with visible smiles as they bantered with one another.

When they saw Hui Yue, their smiles lingered on their faces, but their expressions turned stern, offering a slight but respectful greeting. They both entered the house and found a place to sit, while Sha Yun resumed tea service.

That is, she handed Deng Wu a cup of tea, smiling and giving him a welcoming nod. Wang Julong, on the other hand, was entirely ignored.

Luckily, Yan Xiaobao had anticipated this. He had already instructed a servant to bring a second cup of tea. Meanwhile, everyone except the four friends left the room, giving them space to privately discuss certain matters.

"It will start in a few days," Deng Wu's face bore a solemn expression. "Am I wrong about our families?"

Every time Deng Wu visited Yan Xiaobao's mansion, he would ask the same question, and each time, Yan Xiaobao would offer the same answer: no. As Deng Wu sipped the warm tea, he sank slowly into his chair, letting out a sigh of relief.

The three of them started chatting about small matters, like what they'd been eating recently or the changes in their cultivation levels since their last meeting.

Thanks to relying on the cultivation techniques of the Dragon Zodiac, Deng Wu had grown significantly stronger, successfully leaping up two stars in the major rank. Even so, he still lacked any impressive Spiritual Art. Since receiving an invitation to join the Deng Family, Yan Xiaobao had yet to share anything with him.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps could be heard as Rong Xing entered the room. Her complexion was slightly improved compared to before, but she was still pale, with dark circles visible under her eyes. Upon seeing Deng Wu and Wang Julong, a faint smile formed on her lips. She walked toward them and settled into a chair, facing two friends she hadn't seen in a long time.

"We're friends, aren't we?" she asked softly, her voice hoarse and carrying a sleepy tone. Hearing the question, Deng Wu's eyes flickered briefly, and he nodded.

"Don't worry, my flower," he said, utterly serious for once. "We'll always be friends; I swear no harm will ever come to you."

Wang Julong, after staring at Deng Wu for a while, also decided to nod, agreeing with what the older boy had just said. Rong Xing wasn't their target, after all, which made Deng Wu's assurances of her safety quite credible.

Her reaction to his answer was a mixture of relief and hurt; the response sufficed to address the question but didn't reveal what their families were planning. Consequently, Rong Xing was left with an array of complex emotions. Despite this, she felt a budding sense of trust in Deng Wu, who had openly expressed that they would always remain friends.

A true friend is always there when needed and never betrays. That's all she genuinely needed to know. Within Yan Xiaobao's mansion, a few friends gathered together, spending time and chatting, just like they used to back in the academy.

As the sun set, the friends finally dispersed, leaving only Xu Yue and Sha Yun still at the mansion. In Yan Xiaobao's eyes, happiness was evident, as for once he didn't feel like he was forced to carefully choose his friends.

"Why don't you tell Sister Xing about their plans?" Sha Yun asked again, but Yan Xiaobao simply shook his head. "You know why Deng Wu and Wang Julong often visit us. If I told her, she would be upset, and who knows whom she might inform? No matter how much we want to do, there are some secrets that simply cannot be shared." Yan Xiaobao's face bore a sad smile as he gently patted Sha Yun on the head.

"I'm sorry for getting you involved in all this mess," he said softly, pulling Sha Yun along to the kitchen. He had already sent the chef away early, so he personally prepared a meal for the two of them—master and beast—to share together.

"Don't worry," Sha Yun said with a radiant smile on her beautiful face. "If there's anything I can help you with, then please let me know," she continued, eager to offer her assistance.

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Sha Yun felt deeply helpless, unable to believe her inability, because although she knew the situation was hurting Yan Xiaobao, she still couldn't help him at the moment. Yet, she wished there was at least something she could do for him.

Hearing this, Yan Xiaobao pondered for a moment. He knew Sha Yun wanted to help him, but he didn't want to place her in danger. Finally, a warm smile spread across his face.

"There is one thing," Yan Xiaobao said slowly after thoroughly considering his options. "If you have the ability to visit your sisters, please invite them to stay in our mansion for a while. We could use their help to ensure everything goes according to my plan."

Clapping her hands excitedly, Sha Yun broke into a big smile. "Alright! I haven't seen them all year!" she said happily.

Early in the morning, after Yan Xiaobao had asked her about the situation, Sha Yun donned a long cloak and carried an extra cloak inside her storage ring, the excitement bubbling within her. As she crossed the empty streets of Liluo City, her eyes were filled with anticipation.

She left at dawn to avoid attracting too much attention and quickly passed through the city gates, heading toward the Magic Forest.

Usually, Yan Xiaobao would return to the Magic Forest every year to train, but this year he hadn't gone home, as he was engrossed in his cultivation. Yan Xiaobao had been entirely absorbed in cultivating essence in the gardens surrounding his mansion.

Sha Yun felt sadness for missing the chance, but she still preferred staying with Yan Xiaobao rather than returning to the forest by herself. However, this time was different. This time, she was capable of doing something that could aid him in fulfilling his previous plans.

Sha Yun felt the adrenaline rushing through her veins — this was her first time leaving Yan Xiaobao in such a long while. The thought of Yan Xiaobao entrusting her with a vital mission, one that could become a great help to him in the future, filled her with pride.

Sha Yun was fully aware that Yan Xiaobao did not love her the way she loved him, but she refused to give up. She was the one who had spent the most time with him and knew him better than anyone.

Since Sha Yun initiated their beast contract, it made her completely trustworthy to him. This resulted in Yan Xiaobao sharing everything about himself with her, including his future plans.

Sha Yun was the only one who knew about Yan Xiaobao's reincarnation and Li Fen. Initially, Yan Xiaobao had planned to keep it a secret, but after countless attempts by the silver-haired boy to tempt him, he ultimately relented and explained that he wasn't ready to embrace new romance or relationships.

From that point on, Sha Yun waited patiently by his side. She never pressured him, but she also didn't see Li Fen as a romantic rival. Li Fen was in another world, and while she and Yan Xiaobao lived together, Li Fen showed no interest in him. To Sha Yun, Li Fen was just a Chapter of Yan Xiaobao's life that had ended, a piece that allowed him to refocus on love. Her hope was that once he experienced love freely, he would fall for her, as she had always been there for him.

Sha Yun didn't view Rong Xing as a romantic rival either. Rong Xing was her sister, just that. Rong Xing had no romantic interest in Yan Xiaobao, but Sha Yun would often feel displeased when the silver-haired boy chose to confide in someone other than her. freewebnovel.com

No, the only person Sha Yun truly regarded as a competitor in love was Wang Julong. While this girl lived her life like a boy and had accepted this way of life, she still looked at Yan Xiaobao in a manner that made Sha Yun uncomfortable.

With a sigh, Sha Yun kept rushing toward the forest, her thoughts trailing along. It had been so long since her last journey here that she couldn't help but daydream along the way.

Sha Yun's speed was almost as fast as Yan Xiaobao's but not entirely. Her tail, a long muscular extension, allowed her to move incredibly quickly as she headed for the Magic Forest. Along the way, her daydreams wandered to how her sisters might respond, to how beautiful life would be if Yan Xiaobao eventually accepted her love.

While Sha Yun daydreamed during her journey, she managed to avoid all the villages completely. She traversed paths used by small animals or those walked by village boys driving cattle into the fields.

Though Sha Yun was already contracted to Yan Xiaobao, and these villages posed no threat to her, she preferred the less-traveled paths. She knew that when she brought her sisters back, they wouldn't be bonded to a cultivator — if someone strong enough were to appear and force Sha Yun to fail during the process, her sisters and Yan Xiaobao would both be affected.

When Sha Yun arrived at the outskirts of the Magic Forest, under the broad, open sky, a wave of nostalgia hit her deeply. She paused for a moment. This place had been her home for so long, and it had been years since she last traversed these woods.

Slowly, as a smile of happiness slid across Sha Yun's face, she moved through the forest; she was reminded of her past adventures with her sisters over the years. Tears welled up in her eyes as she realized that although this place felt incredibly familiar, it no longer felt like home.

As she began to choke up, Sha Yun sank deeply into her emotions, overwhelmed by them. As she looked at the beautiful forest surrounding her, her chest filled with a heavy sensation, and tears poured forth. This had been her childhood home, the place where she grew up. She had always felt it was a place she could forever return to. It was her true home.

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However, now that she is here alone, she does not feel as though she has returned home. There is only one place she truly hopes to be. Only one place where she feels she truly belongs. She needs to be beside Yan Xiaobao to feel like she is genuinely home.

Shaking her head, Sha Yun forced herself to be practical. She was in a beautiful forest, and though it was no longer her home, it was still a place of significance to her, where her sisters lived.

After a brief moment of rest, Sha Yun finally realized that she was standing in a forest filled with mercenaries searching for beast cores. The Snake Woman had been fortunate not to become a target thus far.

Patting her flushed cheeks, Sha Yun stood and began to move again, delving deeper into the forest toward a specific clearing that belonged to one of her sisters.

Upon reaching the clearing, Sha Yun frowned at the sound of sharp, terrifying shrieks. Yet, when she realized all those sounds came from humans, her expression swiftly faded. Clearly, her sister was currently playing her favorite deadly game.

As she hurried into the clearing, a smile flitted across her face. Noticing the Water Prison already deployed, her silver eyes gleamed with excitement as four individuals, seemingly mercenaries, were trapped inside, while two others remained outside. They flailed wildly, doing all they could to puncture the balls of water and free their struggling companions.

An expression of conflict spread across Sha Yun's face, unsure of what to do. She had entered the clearing, knowing full well that her sister Shui Wu had noticed her presence. She wanted to join in frightening the mercenaries but, at the same time, did not want to interrupt her sister's fun.

Leaning against the trunk of a tree at the edge of the clearing, Sha Yun watched as the fight unfolded. Shui Wu used the same tactics she had employed years before, separating Yan Xiaobao and his friends, but now her power had multiplied many times over.

The two mercenaries who had avoided being caught in the Water Prison employed every martial arts technique at their disposal, utilizing their full strength and arsenal of weapons. Yet, no matter how hard they struggled, the Water Prison remained unbreakable.

The two mercenaries continued their futile attempts, gradually exhausting themselves while watching their companions drown before their eyes. Slowly, the first man ceased struggling, his limbs slackening as he stopped trying to escape the Water Prison and began to sink.

Soon, the remaining three also sank into the water. At this moment, the Water Prison collapsed entirely, releasing the lifeless corpses of the four mercenaries who had strayed into the clearing.

The two remaining mercenaries gritted their teeth, their bloodshot eyes brimming with fury and hatred. Yet neither dared linger; they bolted through the forest without looking back. Their comrades were dead, and staying to fight alongside them seemed a foolish notion.

As they frantically dashed through the dense forest, a glimmer of hope surfaced in the minds of these two mercenaries. This fragile thread of hope evolved into desperate laughter as they reflected on their narrow escape; both felt a twisted relief at having managed to evade the grasp of one of the Beast Sisters.

The maniacal laughter born from their hearts full of fear abruptly ceased, and the forest became oppressively silent. The faces of the two laughing men froze in their expressions of madness as their bodies slumped to the ground, blood gushing meters away where their heads had been severed from their necks.

Chapter 348 Sha Yun's Beastly Nature

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"Welcome home, elder sister," a melodious voice suddenly resonated as a breathtaking woman rose from the lake. Her entire skin was adorned with gorgeous cobalt-blue scales, even her face was embellished with the shimmering patterns.

Her eyes, feline in nature, were a stunning green, harmonizing with her long, algae-like hair. As this woman stepped out of the lakeside, happiness blossomed within Sha Yun's heart, and even Shui Wu's eyes held faint tears of joy. Neither of the two beasts noticed the scattered litter of corpses.

Surveying her surroundings, she furrowed her brows and asked, "Where is that boy?"

"I am here on his behalf," Sha Yun said, her cheeks flushed with excitement and pride at being assigned such a task. "I need to speak with you and younger sister Bingbing."

Having said this, Sha Yun glanced around before beginning her journey to the clearing that belonged to their third sister. Shui Wu followed behind, her eyes brimming with curiosity, while delight illuminated her face.

To her, whether Sha Yun returned because of an errand involving the despicable boy was inconsequential. What mattered to this woman was that her elder sister had returned; happiness was the only emotion she could feel in the space of her heart.

"Elder sister," Shui Wu dashed ahead, calling out as her sister crossed the dense forest, heading toward their third sister. "Now you should come to the Big Snake Tour for a visit," she said excitedly, clapping her hands together. "He misses you terribly!"

Sha Yun nodded but neither altered her path nor turned back to look at her younger sister. It was apparent that there was only one thing important to the Snake Woman at the moment: to gather her sisters as promised to Yan Xiaobao as swiftly as possible.

When she heard the familiar sounds of bustling beasts within the forest, Sha Yun's primal instincts reawakened. In the distance, the clamor of battle reached her ears, and the metallic scent of blood hung in the air.

Three distinct territories lay far apart. The first, encountered by mercenaries, belonged to Shui Wu, making her the sister responsible for killing most of the humans.

Beyond Shui Wu's domain, the next realm a traveler might encounter belonged to the Ice Bird. The Ice Bird was the youngest of the three sisters, and Sha Yun was quite certain she would be the hardest to persuade.

The Ice Bird had never truly forgiven Sha Yun for leaving the forest with a boy. Each year when they met again, though she would be elated to see her sister once more, a faint bitterness lingered in the depths of her youthful heart.

Worrying about how her younger sister might react, Sha Yun instinctively slowed her pace as she traveled through the forest toward the Ice Bird's domain. Her heart began to beat more steadily yet heavily, and within her clear line of sight, it soon pounded rapidly.

Sha Yun came to a halt, prompting Shui Wu behind her to do the same. Closing her eyes, she took a deep breath to steady herself.

Unlike Shui Wu, Bing was not currently engaged in battle with any mercenaries, nor was there the distinct smell of blood permeating the air. Noticing the lack of bloodshed, Sha Yue's face bore a look of disappointment. This was because the Ice Bird, after killing someone, allowed her icy exterior to briefly crack, making her easier to approach.

Slowly gliding into the clearing, a shudder coursed through the Snake Woman's body, for the plummeting temperature was extreme. Snowflakes drifted from the clear sky, and the ground, which should have been vibrant with healthy grass and moss, was instead blanketed in snow.

In this world of white, a stunning woman stood at its center. Her legs resembled those of a slender, long taloned eagle, each foot equipped with three sharp claws. The rest of her body and face was that of a striking woman, but her skin was covered entirely in small, white feathers, much like Lan Feng's yet differing in color.

This woman had no arms, only two lengthened, elegant white wings, with each wing extending one and a half meters. Her long, curly white hair framed her face, her ice-blue eyes sculpting a profoundly beautiful visage that seemed incapable of expressing pity.

This was the Ice Bird, the youngest of the three sisters and the most difficult to handle. The white-clad woman's face filled with a complex expression at the sight of Sha Yun, but it seemed that anger triumphed. Her wings suddenly flared, hurling ice pillars one after another at the Snake Woman.

Although Sha Yun dearly loved her sister, she generally avoided entering her icy domain unless absolutely necessary. Sha Yun was a Snake Woman, which meant half of her body was that of a serpent. As a snake, cold weather was her nemesis, rendering her movements sluggish and causing her to be grazed by several of the flying ice spears.

A few droplets of blood fell upon the snowy ground, staining its untouched purity with specks of crimson. Sha Yun's lips let out faint hisses of pain. Even though the ice spears had merely grazed her, she could feel the profound energy hidden within them. Threads of Qi crept into her body, slowly eroding her internally and freezing her from within.

With a sigh of her wings, Bing dispersed the swirling cold air. As she began walking toward her two sisters, her gaze swept around the clearing, searching for the one person she despised most — a human boy.

"Elder sister, are you alone today?" Bing curiously asked. "Why did you not visit us last year?" A cold woman's face twisted with an expression of pain, revealing her disappointment in her sister's absence during the prior year.

Chapter 349 Sha Yun's Beastliness_2

"I'm truly sorry," Sha Yun apologized. She also wanted to visit, but no matter how much she wished, she knew Hui Yue needed time for cultivation. He had experienced troubling situations and currently required daily training to reach his utmost level before the brewing war in Liluo City erupted.

"Yan Xiaobao is not with me," Sha Yun replied as she noticed Ice Bird glancing around incessantly, seemingly expecting Yan Xiaobao to appear at any moment. She chuckled. "Something has happened in the city," Sha Yun said seriously. "Do you still remember the Stone Forest I mentioned to you before?" The snake woman asked, her mind racing to figure out the best way to persuade her sisters. Seeing the two humans nod eagerly, Sha Yun allowed herself a slight smile.

Ever since Sha Yun first returned to the forest, she had spent most of her time explaining the outside world. Every word she spoke would light up the eyes of her two sisters with excitement and a trace of longing could be seen.

However, the two of them had no intention of handing over their freedom to cultivators. They preferred to live as they always had, just as they had until now.

"The Stone Forest is on the brink of war," Sha Yun explained, deciding to try and help her sisters understand. "Imagine this—two Holy Beast factions lined with magical creatures in this forest, and not just Old Snake." She paused to give her sisters a moment to picture what that might look like. "All beasts in this forest must choose which of the two Holy Beasts they will follow. This is the current situation within the Stone Forest."

"Soon, the two factions of Holy Beasts and their followers will clash in an all-out battle to determine who claims the Stone Forest as their territory," Sha Yun continued, explaining as best she could with a faint smile, noticing her sisters' faces betraying their shock.

"Yan Xiaobao never intended to join this battle, but something has happened, and now he's planning to take a stand. He asked me to see if the two of you are willing to join us."

"Living among humans—has it made you as foolish as they are?!" Ice Bird shouted immediately after Sha Yun finished her sentence. "If we join such a battle, we might very well crush anyone who dares stand against us!"

Sha Yun smiled faintly and pulled out two cloaks, tossing them to her sisters. These cloaks were crafted for Yan Xiaobao by highly skilled enchanters. No aura could leak from within the cloaks, and while wearing them, no one could tell the two were magical creatures.

"Before the battle, you'll stay in my new home," Sha Yun said excitedly. "During the battle, no one will be able to tell you're beasts. Even if you choose to reveal yourselves, no one will be able to do anything about it. They'll be far too occupied with trying to survive."

Sha Yun's words were full of allure, and the snake woman could see her two sisters hesitating slightly. Ever since Sha Yun began describing the world outside, her two sisters had longed to see it for themselves, though their pride always held them back from stepping out.

For humans in the Magic Forest, hunting within their own territory was one thing, but leaving the forest would mean losing all the advantages they had built for themselves—not to mention missing out on the perfect hunting grounds teeming with magical creatures.

Watching her sisters who were close to agreeing, Sha Yun cheered inwardly, though her expression turned bashful. "I really want to show you where I live now," she said hesitantly, as though embarrassed to say it aloud.

Seeing their sister's awkward look, Ice Bird and Shui Wu couldn't help but glance at each other with grins before finally nodding. They both donned the enchanted cloaks gifted by Hui Yue.

Now that they had made their decision, a glint of excitement shone in their eyes. Even the usually stern and expressionless Ice Bird allowed a faint smile to grace her face.

That evening ended with Sha Yun and her companions sitting by the great lake that had once been a volcano. It was the tallest peak among the few mountains in the Magic Forest.

This place was also rarely visited by humans, as it belonged to the Forest King Old Snake.

"So, what's the plan we're supposed to follow?" Ice Bird asked finally, her impatience evident as she stared at the starry sky with her icy-blue eyes. Now that she had decided to join Sha Yun and go to her home, she could barely wait for them to set off.

On the other hand, Sha Yun knew that leaving at night with nothing prepared would come to no good. They couldn't return to Liluo City once the gates were closed, and leaving two untamed magical creatures waiting outside the city walls overnight seemed far too risky.

She answered the question with a slow smile. "He calls it the Trojan Horse," she said, leaning forward and starting to trace small figures in the sand with her nails, using them to elaborate on what was to come.

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Back in Liluo City, Yan Xiaobao spent most of his day attempting to connect to the Fire Element, but things hadn't gone as smoothly as he had hoped. It was as if the connection between Hui Yue and the element was completely blocked. Yet strangely, he could still conjure sparks without any spells.

Lan Feng kept telling him this was normal—it was only because he had forced himself to bond with the Earth Element that he'd succeeded. Everything else would take patience.

However, patience was not Yan Xiaobao's strong suit. He practiced Flame Sparks slowly until his spiritual energy sea was entirely depleted. Then he would sit down to meditate for hours, replenishing and refining more spiritual energy.

When Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes, he found himself somewhat startled to see the sky had gone dark. It was no longer the bright daylight from when he had begun converting Qi into spiritual energy—it was already late evening.

Glancing around, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but let out a sigh. The garden felt much larger than it had when Sha Yun wasn't around. They had been apart for a few days now, separations that mainly occurred during her annual visits to the Magic Forest or when invitations came for events where magical creatures were not allowed.

Yet, the frequency of these separations had decreased year by year, and in the past two years, Hui Yu and Sha Yun had rarely spent more than a few hours apart. When Hui Yue realized he missed her presence during one such separation, it shocked him.

Yan Xiaobao chuckled as he stood up and walked to the kitchen. The cook had left a sumptuous meal on the table for the mansion's master, and he ate with satisfaction. The house remained quiet, feeling far larger than it used to, now that no snake-women were rushing through doors, constantly chattering.

Lord Rong Liang sat in his office, staring at a Memory Stone that had arrived not long ago. It contained a very simple yet effective message.

A week earlier, Lord Rong Liang had sent a message to the Royal Family, warning them of the current situation in the city and requesting assistance in suppressing two scheming families. Rong Liang's belief was that anyone challenging the City Lord of a major city was opposing the Royal Family's decree, something he could not tolerate.

However, the message he received carried very straightforward instructions. "These two families are among the Hundred Great Names, their histories as old as our Kingdom. We cannot send soldiers to suppress these families unless they launch a full rebellion. Only then will we intervene."

Realizing the Royal Family would not intervene before the conflict erupted, Rong Liang could only grit his teeth and do everything in his power to come out victorious. Sitting with eyes closed for several minutes, Lord Rong Liang finally spoke through the wooden door. "Summon Huang!" freewebnovel.com

Elsewhere in Liluo City, Yan Xiaobao sat in his mansion's stone garden. Sitting there, the boy emitted two visible auras—one representing Earth Elemental Affinity, the other Fire Elemental Affinity.

Though Yan Xiaobao initially found being alone strange, he had no intention of wasting effort on things beyond his control. Instead, he sat once more, meditating and contemplating the transformations between Earth and Fire he had been working on mastering.

Hui Yue had already forced his bond with the Earth Element to form, and while it was tempting to do the same with Fire, it wasn't something he intended to attempt. Yan Xiaobao had a gut feeling telling him that forcing the Fire Element wasn't a good idea. Fire was far more destructive, and synchronizing with Earth had already taken a significant toll on Hui Yue's body.

Chapter 350 The Terrifying Scream

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On the contrary, Hui Yue's spiritual projection shifted to the spiritual energy sea, summoning red flames that represented fire elemental affinity and seamlessly merging with the elements of nature.

Looking at the flames on his hand, Hui Yue gently touched them, watching as the flames licked his fingers, giving him a feeling of warmth—not so hot as to harm, but enough to be comforting.

Yan Xiaobao suddenly realized his entire soul was drawn to a world engulfed in a sea of fire. Gazing at this fiery hell, a soothing warmth spread throughout his body.

Raging flames condensed rapidly, suddenly emitting a crackling sound as they surged through his meridians and veins at an astonishing speed, bursting forth from his spiritual energy sea without warning.

As the flames coursed through his body and veins, his scorched meridians would immediately heal in the next instant, sending waves of intense pain through Yan Xiaobao. His entire being was being fiercely tempered by the flames.

In the stone garden on the mansion's side, his piercing screams echoed. Yan Xiaobao could not remain composed, and even seated in a meditative pose, he began to collapse. His body convulsed on the ground as blood sprayed from his mouth, allowing some jagged stones to scrape against his skin.

His blue eyes widened in agony as the excruciating screams built up, growing increasingly desperate with time, although the flames refused to let him lose consciousness.

The entire ordeal lasted for hours until the flames finally subsided. Exhausted of all energy, he lay paralyzed, eyes shut, drifting into a deep sleep on his bed.

The process unfolded entirely during the night, with not a single servant present in the mansion. Yan Xiaobao had chosen solitude during this painful transformation, which ensured that no one heard the terrifying screams of the unconscious young master.

After spending most of the night sleeping in the stone garden, the next morning, Hui Yue woke up, refreshed and invigorated. His body had undergone a major transformation, achieving his first Star Master level previously, with this being yet another breakthrough.

Yan Xiaobao had successfully synchronized with the flames within his body, and through this, his entire physique was refined. His body's resilience had grown manifold, though these changes were invisible from the outside. Yet with every movement, Yan Xiaobao felt them profoundly.

He had attained immense physical strength—strength unlike that derived from Qi or spiritual energy, but pure bodily power. His reconstructed physique carried significantly enhanced strength.

Strength and resilience weren't the only things Yan Xiaobao gained. He also noticed that the opening of the Dai Mai Meridian was close to being breached, while the barrier around another cavity in his Dantian was growing increasingly transparent.

Despite the nearing breakthroughs of both the meridians and barriers, neither had yet opened. Yan Xiaobao, brimming with curiosity about what lay beyond the veils, knew better than to force the process, as impatience could lead to disastrous results.

Even though these advancements approached fruition, Yan Xiaobao felt elated by the profound changes occurring within his body. Though he was merely ranked as a cultivator at the second Star Master level, Yan Xiaobao could competently contend with anyone between the Master and Master Star levels. If the need arose, he could even challenge some Duke-ranked cultivators.

A satisfied smile surfaced on Yan Xiaobao's face as he basked in the newfound power within his body and the energy flowing from Denise. Finally, the young man felt his cultivation was truly on the right path. At this point, if he were to confront Old Huzi, dispatching him wouldn't take more than seconds—at most, a minute.

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In the magical forest, Sha Yun had just explained the escape plan to the two sisters, who marveled at the diagrams etched into the snow. Everything about the plan seemed meticulously thought through; no matter how hard the sisters tried, there seemed to be no vulnerabilities left unresolved.

"Alright," Shui Wu finally said with a nod. The depth of the plan reassured her, making her believe in Sha Yun, who had cared for her and her sister all these years.

Bing Niao remained silent for a while, torn between the temptation of leaving the forest and seeing the outside world, unburdened by human obligations, and the fear of what might happen.

Gazing at her sisters, she let out a soft sigh that escaped her beautiful lips before finally resolving to join them. Being alone was something she could never bear. As she nodded, she quickly grabbed a cloak and draped it over herself.

These cloaks suppressed their aura, ensuring none could detect it leaking out. With them being humanoid beasts, common folk would find it impossible to discern whether they were humans or beasts due to the cloaks' concealment. The only exception was Sha Yun, whose tail was too long to fit underneath.

Fortunately, anyone who saw Sha Yun's silver eyes would know she was bound by a beast contract. Her presence masked the identities of her accompanying cloaked companions, leading assumptions that they might be those in charge of suppressing this powerful beast.

The cloaks were one of the primary reasons the sisters dared to contemplate the journey to the Stone Forest, but they weren't the only factor. On their way back, the three beast sisters would take detours to avoid villages, thereby significantly lowering their risks.