

## Medical 351

### Chapter 351 The Terrifying Scream\_2

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Three days later, a group of three passed through the city gates. Two of them were cloaked in black inscriptions, concealing their aura, leaving every cultivator hesitant. These concealed individuals might be incredibly strong, or perhaps exceptionally weak.

Either way, they were clearly a group not to be trifled with, supported by considerable power, as no one would purchase such refined cloaks without spending a fortune. This fact alone made their journey through the city calm and undisturbed.

These three hidden figures were unmistakably the sisters of the beasts. Their journey to Liluo City took much longer than traveling through villages, but it greatly reduced their need to stay vigilant toward humans.

Upon entering the city, both Shui Wu and Ice Bird appeared as bewildered as Sha Yun, which made the Snake Woman puff up with pride. She was no longer the country bumpkin from the Magic Forest—no, now she was a beauty from one of the grand cities. Though she was a magical beast, her life surpassed that of many humans.

Indeed, certain laws prohibited magic beasts from entering specific areas, such as the City Lord Mansion, to prevent enemy forces from smuggling through beasts. However, aside from those limitations, Sha Yun lived a life that respected human livelihoods around her. No one treated her as merely a magical beast but rather as an equal, akin to a friend or acquaintance.

After leading her sisters through the lively streets, Sha Yun skillfully navigated her way through the bustling city, happily explaining everything they encountered along the way. Though it slightly delayed their return, she proudly considered herself fulfilling Yan Xiaobao's request.

Noticing Sha Yun's arrival, the mansion guards quickly opened the gates with a respectful demeanor. The Snake Woman, upon entering, nodded to the guards as acknowledgment and immediately headed toward the Stone Garden where she had met Yan Xiaobao a few days prior.

Since Sha Yun's departure, Hui Yue had only managed to synchronize with her affinity for Earth, but now, just four days later, Yan Xiaobao had successfully achieved perfect synchronization with his affinity for Fire.

As the Snake Woman entered the garden, she immediately spotted the young man hovering in mid-air, a faint silver sheen glimmering on his body.

This silver hue was undoubtedly the metallic affinity, the ultimate affinity Yan Xiaobao could summon within his Spiritual Energy Sea.

Though Yan Xiaobao was currently training his affinity for the Metal Element, striving to enhance his elemental bond, it was clear he had only just begun. His entire body was drenched in sweat, pushed to the absolute limit.

Upon hearing the sound of Sha Yun sliding across the gravel, Yan Xiaobao ceased floating in the air, landing on a stone while opening his eyes with a faint smile on his face.

"Welcome to my home," he said politely as he stood up, pressing his palms together in greeting and bowing toward the two Beast Sisters standing behind Sha Yun.

Xu Yue clasped her hands in greeting, bowing slightly toward the two beasts draped behind Sha Yun, and then slowly walked toward them.

"I'm pleased to see that you two are willing to lend me your strength. I promise to make this journey worth your time," Yan Xiaobao said with a smile as he led the three Beast Sisters into the mansion.

"As long as you're within the mansion, I assure you that no one will disrespect you," Yan Xiaobao continued as he showed the two guests around the mansion and its surroundings. "I suggest you remain near the mansion most of the time. If you truly must enter the city, make sure to wear your cloaks—it's dangerous for you to go alone. These cloaks will offer you a measure of safety."

After this explanation, Yan Xiaobao guided the trio upstairs, where three adjacent rooms were lit warmly. The central room belonged to Sha Yun, though the Snake Woman rarely used it, as she loved to slip into Yan Xiaobao's room.

So long as the sisters remained in the mansion, Yan Xiaobao granted them unrestricted access to the second floor while he himself stayed on the first floor. The sisters were allowed to roam freely within the mansion, and every servant was instructed to tend to their every need.

Both Shui Wu and Ice Bird were stunned by the care they were shown. Previously, they had only ever encountered people who sought to hunt or harm them. To these beasts, humans were no more than playthings or food.

"I assume Sha Yun has already explained the plan to you two?" Yan Xiaobao asked as he toured the two sisters through the estate. They nodded, their eyes fixed on their surroundings rather than listening to Yan Xiaobao's words.

Although they paid little attention to Yan Xiaobao, they still nodded in response to his question. A cunning smile appeared on his face, and he began to whistle as he returned to the Stone Garden, where he resumed his meditation. His body hovered a few centimeters above the ground again, soon glowing silver as beads of sweat once again covered his skin.

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"Why haven't you hired assassins recently?" A voice echoed through the frozen mansion. Zhong Hui turned his head to see a handsome young man emerging from behind an ice pillar that had stood within the structure. This man wore only pants and shoes, his upper body bare, exposing his chiseled chest, white hair, frosted skin, and icy eyes.

Upon closer inspection, it became clear that the man's hair wasn't truly white, nor was his skin; rather, everything was cloaked in frost. His eyes weren't genuinely white either—they had long taken on the chilling hue of the dead. Initially, his appearance might seem striking, but upon closer examination, he'd terrify anyone.

Gazing at the frozen youth, a frustrated sigh escaped Zhong Hui's lips as he shook his head lightly.

"There's no need to send them anymore," he said disdainfully, yet the young man showed no interest in resolving the issue.

"Why not?" the man asked curiously, raising his head slightly. "Didn't you say you wanted to train him? You can't go soft on him just because you favor him." As he continued, a smirk appeared beneath the frost-covered face. "Look at me. Is this how you train the young?"

Zhong Hui chuckled softly as he nodded in agreement. "Admittedly, I have surpassed that point now," he said with a slightly playful tone. "I sent a silent raven after him."

"Really?" the frost-covered man asked, his jaw dropping in delight. "So he'll join us shortly?" he hesitated, at first joking about this newcomer's impending death, yet seemingly never learning from his past mistakes.

"The reason I no longer dare send assassins is because he killed the raven." The man sitting on the frozen throne finally sighed, causing the jaw of the handsome youth to drop even further. Killing a raven was no trivial feat.

"I see," he muttered with a knowing tone. "When do you plan to bring him in?" he finally asked.

"I won't have him join my Frozen Corps," Zhong Hui said, a faint smile gracing his face. "I want this man alive, so for now, I'll simply watch him grow. A few years from now, I'll come to claim him."

The frost-clad man shook his head as he stared at Zhong Hui, as though looking at an ignorant child, his eyes brimming with pity and doubt. Though he seemed inclined to say more, no words escaped his lips as he turned and departed the Ice City hall, muttering to himself while shaking his head incessantly.

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Back in Liluo City, the City Lord finally began making moves against the Wang Family and the Deng family, escalating tensions to an all-time high. Each major family barred their rivals from entry, with every faction spending their reserves hiring additional guards from civilian families. They also used their wealth and influence to recruit noble families still undecided about which faction to join.

While the older generations of factions scrambled to recruit allies, Yan Xiaobao busied himself drafting plans at home. He was frequently visited by guests—some bringing information, others seeking it. Soon,

news spread that Yan Xiaobao housed three high-ranked humanoid magical creatures. However, no one dared antagonize them due to their status as Yan Xiaobao's guests. Even though two of them weren't bound by beast contracts, no one wished to make an enemy during wartime. Instead, they chose to leave them alone due to their neutral stance.

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Chapter 352 The Upcoming Battle

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Wang Julong and Deng Wu were the two guests Yan Xiaobao saw most often. When they visited and conversed with the magical beasts, it was as if the entire situation in Liluo City ceased to exist.

Yan Xiaobao appreciated these visits, feeling an undeniable excitement growing within as he anticipated the battles that lay ahead.

Officially, Yan Xiaobao had not allied with any particular faction, but he already knew what he intended to do during the battles. He had spent considerable time meticulously planning how to execute his strategy.

Hui Yue had always been fascinated by the ancient histories of his old world. Whenever a battle erupted, the plans he implemented drew inspiration from the myths of Ancient Greece.

In the middle of the mansion was a courtyard with an open ceiling, allowing sunlight and rain to enter. As Yan Xiaobao approached the courtyard, he expected it to be abandoned when the downpour began.

Gazing at the courtyard, even as raindrops lightly touched the ground, three Beast Woman sisters sat on bamboo chairs surrounded by servants who catered to them, amplifying their formidable presence.

Above these three Beast Sisters hovered a massive blue water sphere. Upon observing it, Yan Xiaobao realized it was the same celestial sphere Shui Wu used to transport unwanted visitors into her private space.

The blue sphere absorbed every drop of rainwater, ensuring the courtyard—and its occupants—remained dry.

When magical beasts resided in his home, Yan Xiaobao felt the servants were initially tense yet curious. In the end, curiosity overshadowed their fear, and the servants soon discovered these enchanting beasts were not only intelligent but also extraordinarily humanlike once understood.

These three Beast Woman sisters had received pills from Yan Xiaobao in exchange for their willingness to assist him in his current endeavors.

Although Yan Xiaobao provided his friends with medicine pills, the magical beasts quickly recognized the pills' shocking value. A single Qi-gathering pill could cover a Royal Academy professor's salary. The smaller, more common pills were widely available but had much lower usage compared to higher-grade medicine pills.

Despite Rong Liang being the City Lord, even he faced challenges purchasing high-grade pills. All the Alchemists within Liluo City were of lower rank, and even they set extraordinarily high prices for their lower-quality pills.

The abundance of such medicine pills within the Royal Academy stemmed from their belonging to the Royal Family, who employed all higher-level Alchemists. When City Lords attempted to purchase pills, they often needed to pay more than the students of the academy.

Because Yan Xiaobao acquired pills in large quantities, he did not need to worry about finances. All his earnings were dedicated to supplying medicines for himself and his friends.

This generosity left his friends wide-eyed, staring in disbelief, though the gesture pulled at their hearts. The few high-grade pills their families possessed were all reserved for their clan leaders or elders, none of whom had reached Holy Rank.

When it came to buying medicines, the magical beasts were unaware of the pills' true worth but grasped that these pills were far superior to the raw herbal medicines they consumed in the forests.

Over the years, Yan Xiaobao's frequent purchase of pills and acquisition of a grand mansion resulted in a sharp decline in his wealth. Once as affluent as the Deng Family, he now ranked among the average nobility of Liluo City.

Still, for anyone, this was a substantial fortune—especially for someone who spent primarily on servants' wages and medicine pills.

"Milord! Milord!" A servant dashed in through the front door, panting heavily, his clothes drenched by the rain. Yan Xiaobao immediately turned to the young man who had rushed in, holding a black Memory Stone that shimmered faintly with fog-like traces.

This servant was one of Gao Yan's most trusted individuals. Yan Xiaobao quickly accepted the stone and brought it to his forehead.

"Tomorrow marks the day of new beginnings," Yan Xiaobao whispered to himself. He instantly recognized Deng Zengying's voice.

"Who gave this to you?" Yan Xiaobao asked, swiftly handing it to the white-haired servant boy. Deng Yingying's voice was not something accessible to anyone from Gao Yan or the Rong Sect—especially not such an important remark.

As Yan Xiaobao gazed at the Memory Stone, back and forth, he appeared pensive, deep in thought, causing the servant to hesitate to speak. Yan Xiaobao exhaled sharply, smashing the stone into fragments, then faced the servant in front of him, impatiently urging a response.

"Young Master Deng Wu, sir," the servant stated firmly. Although most servants within Yan Xiaobao's mansion lived comfortably, they could not help but feel unease when interacting with the master of the estate. freewebnovel.com

Yan Xiaobao was powerful; this, they were now certain of. He happened to be immensely wealthy, yet his background remained obscured. Everything about him was shrouded in mystery. Despite his friendship with Gao Yan, ordinary citizens could feel an oppressive atmosphere emanating from him. He had a decisiveness unfamiliar to them—not to mention he seldom spent extended time interacting with others, devoting his hours to training and cultivation instead.

Nodding, Hui Yue stepped into the dry courtyard with long strides, immediately capturing the attention of everyone present.

The servants gazed at him with respect—some bowing low, others offering deep nods—but the two magical beast guests appeared visibly annoyed at the interruption of their leisure time. Nevertheless, they refrained from voicing complaints as they witnessed their master’s stern expression.

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"We begin tomorrow," Yan Xiaobao said, a smile forming on his handsome face, his eyes glittering with a merciless light that even sent a chill down the spines of the fierce Demon Beasts in the room. However, this faint fear was quickly overshadowed by the excitement ignited within their cat-like pupils.

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Liluo City had long transformed from a bustling and spirited atmosphere into a city seemingly ruled by martial law. Citizens refrained from leaving their homes unless for errands, and the streets were filled with patrols from two opposing factions.

Whenever these patrols crossed paths, it was almost inevitable that a small skirmish would erupt, the sounds of battle echoing through the empty streets. Scenes of injured, or sometimes even dead, guards had become a daily occurrence.

Nevertheless, the following morning, Yan Xiaobao and the three Beast Sisters left the mansion. But on the desolate streets, not a single guard could be seen. An eerie silence blanketed the major city of the Sun Kingdom.

While ordinary citizens could not precisely discern what was happening, each of them knew that something was about to profoundly change their city. It was something beyond their control, leaving them resigned to the fate of this perilous day.

As they rushed down the empty streets, Yan Xiaobao noticed that every shop in the city had been shut tight. A trace of a soothing smile appeared on his face as he led his small party toward the city’s central plaza. The plaza was the only place capable of accommodating such a large gathering of cultivators at once.

As they drew closer to the plaza, Yan Xiaobao began encountering more and more guards from both factions. At this moment, Yan Xiaobao aligned with neither side, making him an enemy to both factions—a position he had willingly embraced with a vow.

Having long since broken through to the Middle Dantian, martial arts attacks were exceedingly simple for Yan Xiaobao, and he quickly abandoned subtlety as they approached the central plaza. At his feet, he began circulating his Qi through his meridians, rapidly creating four Qi Fans.

As the three companions following him mirrored his actions, he sprang onto one of the Qi Fans, repeating the gesture for the others. Yan Xiaobao nodded in approval as all four Qi Fans soared into the air, propelling their party forward at incredible speed toward the plaza.

The closer they flew to the plaza, the more guards they encountered, and the streets grew crowded with patrols. These guards were aligned with Ronghua, a faction that earned a small approving nod from Yan Xiaobao.

The further Hui Yue advanced toward the center, the stronger the guards became. Yan Xiaobao raised an eyebrow in surprise. Most tactical doctrines he knew placed weaker soldiers—or cultivators, in this case—as cannon fodder, with stronger forces joining only once the enemy was worn down. But here, the guards seemed eager to demonstrate their combat prowess, growing stronger the closer they were to the center of power. The auras they radiated grew increasingly menacing.

Sensing Yan Xiaobao and his three followers soaring above these powerful cultivators, the experts below were shaken. Unlike the outer guards, these stronger individuals were well-versed in advanced martial arts techniques, such as those employed by Qi Fan, used by the Rong family's young mistress.

Secretly, Yan Xiaobao was astonished by the sheer number of cultivators gathered on the streets. If even the side streets boasted so many high-ranking practitioners, he could only imagine the incomprehensible number of experts each faction had assembled. If a battle were to break out, it would undoubtedly escalate into ferocious chaos in mere moments.

Hui Yue flew calmly above these experts until the central plaza finally came into view, prompting him to take a deep breath. Thousands of cultivators crowded either side of the plaza, separated only by a ten-meter-wide neutral zone in the middle.

At the forefront of one army stood Lord Rong Liang. To one side was Bubu, and to the other were Rong Ming and Rong Xing. Behind him were all the leaders and elders of his own family, as well as allied clans, including the Ma family elders and Ma Kong. Gao Yan stood with the Ma family, glaring angrily at the opposing faction.

Facing them was Deng Zeng alongside Wang Julong's father, with their respective relatives, including Deng Wu and Wang Julong, flanking them.

As the two sides faced off, not a single word was spoken until their expressions changed upon noticing Yan Xiaobao entering the scene with three specialists accompanying him.

Upon closer inspection, they quickly recognized Sha Yun, her long tail making concealment impossible. However, no one could identify the other two enigmatic figures.

Although Deng Wu, Wang Julong, Gao Yan, the Rong twins, and Ma Kong knew that the two were Beast Sisters, none of them voiced this knowledge aloud. Instead, their faces all bore expressions of profound shock.

Yan Xiaobao's appearance caused a brief hesitation among the elders of various families. However, they had already reached a point of no return. If Yan Xiaobao chose to fight alongside one of the factions, they would be powerless to stop him. They could only hope he would stand with them.

"Do you dare defy the royal decree appointing me as City Lord?" Lord Rong Liang's voice suddenly boomed across the entire city. The ground trembled slightly, and even in the poorest slums, every word could be heard clearly.

"The Royal Family merely replaced us as a temporary measure; otherwise, why are they not here to support you? The Royal Family's true intent is to restore our rightful status among the Hundred Families!" Deng Zengying roared back. While his voice was loud and brimming with the power of Wu Wei, it was still no match for Lord Rong Liang's earlier proclamation.

Rong Liang offered no rebuttal to Deng Zengying's comments. Instead, he raised his arm into the air, clenching his teeth. A swirling golden energy accompanied his roar. "Leave none alive!"

Even as the plaza erupted into chaos, Yan Xiaobao and his group showed no signs of joining the fray. As Lord Rong Liang's command echoed, everyone on the plaza charged at one another. Yan Xiaobao's eyes revealed a trace of disdain, as if mocking these supposedly respected experts for acting more like Vikings than intelligent cultivators of high status.

Ignoring the waves of clashing humans, Yan Xiaobao narrowed his eyes, his gaze landing on Deng Wu, who was staring back at him. Yan Xiaobao blinked, smiled faintly, and gently shook his head before shifting his focus to Rong Xing.

While Wang Julong plunged into the battle, Wang Yuelong exerted great effort as he fought with ranking cultivators from the Rong Sect, pushing courageously toward Rong Xing.

Yan Xiaobao sighed deeply and said, "Let them live," motioning toward the Rong twins, Ma Kang, and Gao Yan. "Kill anyone who dares to lay a hand on them. I have bigger matters to attend to."

With that, Yan Xiaobao deftly descended onto the ground with the four Qi Fans. The three Beast Sisters moved to guard those he had singled out, while Yan Xiaobao intercepted Deng Wu himself.

The cultivators spiraled into chaos all around. Some fought one-on-one, while others found themselves in battles involving up to five opponents. It was as if Yan Xiaobao had stepped onto an ancient battlefield, only the surroundings were not rolling hills and fields but stone walls and wooden market stalls.

Blood splattered everywhere, along with severed limbs. Corpses and wounded men littered the ground. Some cultivators wielded weapons, while others relied solely on their spiritual arts or martial arts techniques.

Hui Yue landed in an area where two cultivators were dueling. With a slight wave of his hand, Qi beneath his feet vanished, coalescing toward his hand and forming the shape of a short sword.

On the other side of Yan Xiaobao, a black dagger suddenly materialized, emanating a dark, ominous aura.

With a swift twist of his wrist, Yan Xiaobao's solidified sword shimmered in the morning light as it cleanly severed the head of a guard dressed in Deng family colors.

As he advanced toward Deng Wu, more cultivators stepped forward. With a resigned sigh, Yan Xiaobao dispatched them all with swift decapitations or precise stabs to the heart. So far, there had been no

need to activate any of his elemental affinities; each opponent who crossed his path was merely a low-ranking cultivator with their Dantian at its earliest stage.

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Finally reaching Yan Xiaobao, he paused briefly as he looked at the friend standing before him.

"Are you sure this is what you want?" Yan Xiaobao asked solemnly, his expression grave. It was clear that if Deng Wu's heart wavered, this would be his only chance to withdraw. However, Deng Wu thought as he always did, a sorrowful smile crossing his face.

"I've already spoken with Wang Julong, and we both agree. We have no other choice. Ultimately, the survival of our tribe takes precedence. Our personal feelings will have to come second." Yan Xiaobao nodded, a deep sadness flickering in his eyes, though it was quickly suppressed and replaced with a faint crimson glow.

"Don't regret your decision later," Yan Xiaobao said as he transformed from a composed young man into a formidable killer radiating an oppressive aura.

The battles that had previously concentrated in the center of Liluo City quickly spread to larger streets and roads. The central plaza had already been completely destroyed by the cultivators with martial power from their Upper Dantian.

Golden light flashed everywhere, and with every strike, an unfortunate guard would fall under the absolute pressure of these attacks.

The sides were evenly matched—Rong Liang's side had Huang Bu, Liang Liang, and the leaders of the Ma family, all of whom were King-level experts. Their opponents were Deng Zengying, Wang Julong's father, and elders from the Deng family. They were currently locked in combat, holding nothing back in wielding their abilities.

As the primary fights among the six senior experts intensified, none of them seemed to gain the upper hand. Instead, they resorted to using spiritual arts to exhaust one another's energy. Among the experts, no injuries had occurred yet, but the ground was littered with corpses, none of which were intact.

Looking around, Hui Yue saw how the three Divine Beasts had formed a triangle, standing together with Hui Yue's other allies to protect him. Rong Xing stood on the ground, swinging her Qi Fan, generating powerful gusts of wind to repel the enemy.

As the enemies were blown back, Rong Ming would use Qi Slash to sever their legs or arms, ensuring they could no longer attack. The twins seemed to avoid killing as much as possible.

Ma Kong and Gao Yan, however, were far less considerate. Ma Kong lobbed bomb after bomb into clusters of enemies, ensuring each one caused devastating casualties.

For those Ma Kong missed, Shui Wu trapped them in her Water Prison, where they were slowly drowning.

Gao Yan, partnering with Bing Bing, wielded their elemental affinities together. Bing Bing's affinity was water, but she specialized in ice. As long as there was water in the air, Bing Bing could unleash her deadly attacks. One by one, ice lances pierced through the advancing guards, a merciless glint visible in her beautiful eyes.

Gao Yan had initially been surprised when he saw the Beast Woman's arrival; he knew they were acting on Hui Yue's behalf. From the beginning, Hui Yue had refused to participate in this battle, making Gao Yan believe Hui Yue would stay out of it entirely.

The common boy who had pledged allegiance to the Rong Sect, also known for being able to provide nearly any kind of information, had foretold that today would be a day of conflict.

His servants worked for Hui Yue. Although he had told them not to spy on Hui Yue, they still occasionally brought him information when they believed it was crucial.

Usually, Gao Yan would scold them when they delivered such reports, as he disliked having his friends monitored. Nonetheless, during major events, his servants continued to provide updates. However,

none of the information he had received had suggested Hui Yue would actually take part in the war. And yet, here he was, defending the Rong Liang Sect alongside the Demon sisters.

Seeing Hui Yue decide to cooperate with the current City Lord, a twisted expression crossed Deng Zengying's face as he stepped back momentarily. His voice roared across the skies, "Wu! Deal with that troublesome friend of yours!" After shouting, Deng Zengying threw himself fully back into the fight.

Deng Wu wore a bitter smile as he stood passively so far, but the faint glimmer of a heavy resolve in his eyes betrayed a hidden severity.

"I've always wanted to see which of us is the stronger," Deng Wu said with a laugh, extending both hands as he prepared to fight.

Rong Xing's face turned pale, her fury surging to unprecedented heights. Her eyes gleamed with inconceivable rage as she unleashed lethal blows, each one aimed to kill the opponent before her.

Rong Xing was not the only one filled with doubt. Every friend who had considered Deng Wu one of their own was left in stunned disbelief, their hearts feeling the sting of betrayal. Bloodshot eyes and intensified attacks borne of anger became their collective response.

Hui Yue's expression remained calm but sorrowful as he set down Qi Fan, ready to confront Deng Wu. Powerful ripples radiated from his spiritual energy sea as red and yellow flames began to grow, dwindling only momentarily before flaring once again.

As these flames came to life, an orange hue seemed to envelop Hui Yue, gradually solidifying into a dense Energy Shield around him. This shield was a tool all cultivators with access to their Middle Dantian could freely use. It allowed for a deeper connection with the surrounding elements while also providing a form of defense. The stronger the affinity, the better the protection it granted the cultivator.

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Some might say that just by looking at Hui Yue's orange shield, one could tell his elemental affinity far surpassed the norm, while a frown appeared on Deng Wu's face.

Although Deng Wu had reached Master level years ago and was currently cultivating with the help of the Dragon cultivation method, he was still merely within the Master level, though he was an Eight-star Master.

If this duel had taken place half a year ago, Yan Xiaobao would have faced trouble matching Deng Wu. But now, things were no longer the same, as Yan Xiaobao had managed to sync completely with Earth, as well as Fire, a feat made possible by his Soul Fusion with Lan Feng.

From one of Hui Yue's palms, a small flame rose while the other held a spinning stone. Gazing at the two distinct objects in his hands, Hui Yue smashed the stone with one hand, causing massive rocks to seemingly appear out of nowhere in the air, descending upon Deng Wu.

Hui Yue and Deng Wu remained in the outskirts of the central plaza, forced away from the middle by the strong energy that emanated with every passing second.

The rain of large stones made Deng Wu retreat slightly, for he understood Hui Yue had no intention of showing mercy. With a sorrowful smile on his face, he dodged the stones and charged towards Hui Yue.

Reaching the white-haired boy, Deng Wu began chanting a spell, forming various hand seals with both hands before biting his tongue, spraying several drops of fresh blood onto an inscription carved into his leather wristband.

"I am sorry," he said, his face heavy with sadness. "The survival of my clan is paramount."

With that, Deng touched the inscription's pattern, and as it lit up, numerous shadows began floating out from the center of the pattern, exuding a sense of dire danger. At first, these shadows seemed harmless, but when an unsuspecting cultivator stumbled into the battlefield where Hui Yue and Deng Wu were testing each other's might, disaster unfolded.

The moment the unfortunate cultivator came into contact with one of the shadows, a corrosion effect seemed to take hold. Before the corrosion completely consumed him, the man emitted agonizing screams.

Hui Yue's eyes twitched as he watched the shadow devour the cultivator entirely, reducing him to a skeleton that it promptly took over, turning him into a moving bone skeleton. Under Deng Wu's command, the mobile skeleton bore no trace of flesh or muscle.

Seeing this, Hui Yue felt deeply shaken. Deng Wu had previously told him he specialized in Metal Affinity, but Hui Yue had never intended to ask about the specifics of this specialization, sensing the other party would rather not explain. Now, Hui Yue realized Deng Wu's true ambition was to become a Necromancer.

Metal Affinity lacked the power to create anything like an Earth Affinity cultivator, nor could it heal or catalyze any living beings. However, what it could do was create inscription patterns that altered those already created by others. This included forcibly storing souls and refining them into his own servants.

These servants were nothing more than souls. Souls themselves posed no danger since they had nowhere to hide. However, once they came into contact with a living being, they would corrode them and, with the help of the inscription, take over their body. Afterward, the cultivation base would merge with the soul and gather into a skeleton, functioning similarly to magical beasts in many ways.

As a Necromancer, Deng Wu was walking a path where the common world avoided him, yet feared him at the same time. Undead Wizards could empower shadows. All of these benefits came at a significant cost; Deng Wu could only create his necromancy inscriptions by sacrificing humans and his own cultivation base.

If cultivators sacrificed too much of their cultivation base, they might even regress in rank. Sacrificing their own cultivation base meant it wouldn't naturally replenish, instead requiring cultivators to arduously cultivate again to regain lost Qi or spiritual energy.

The cultivation base sacrificed determined the strength of his shadows. Hui Yue speculated that these shadows might be capable of corrupting even Seven- or Eight-star Master-ranked experts.

Seeing Deng Wu resort to such a malicious method, Hui Yue laughed heartlessly, summoning Earth Fire in his hands before allowing two red flames to emerge instead. The dense energy shield around him instantly transformed from orange to deep red.

Relying on his affinity for Fire, Hui Yue's flames blossomed from his spiritual energy sea, nourished by vast amounts of spiritual energy. His red flames, bathed in crimson light, revealed an icy blue glint in his eyes, seemingly tinged with red fog. After Hui Yue unleashed his malicious aura, five massive fireballs began swirling, resembling Wang Julong's Thunder Lightning.

This marked the end of the comparison, for unlike Thunder Lightning, these five massive fireballs were purely driven by Hui Yue's desire to reduce every surrounding shadow to ashes. Destroying the soul shadows completely was Hui Yue's sole path through this ordeal. With only a single thought, his Flame Treasure Pearl surged forward, flying directly towards the soul shadows unleashed by Deng Wu.

When the Flame Treasure Pearl collided with the shadows, an enormous wave of heat erupted, followed by an unbearable wailing that echoed across the battlefield. The ferocious roar silenced small skirmishes nearby, as the energy released knocked everyone down, leaving their hair unsettled by the terrifying sound from moments prior.

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Even the advanced cultivators who witnessed the combat between Hui Yue and Deng Wu felt a slight sense of shock in their hearts. The dust raised from the explosion on the road swirled upward, and Hui Yue was pushed back slightly, hidden within the cloud of dust still clinging to Deng Wu.

Glaring at Hui Yue, blood dripped slowly from the corner of his mouth as he inwardly swore to himself. He had once used all the Flame Treasure Pearls, but he was certain that only one soul had perished in his previous attack. He swiftly summoned Qi Fan, leaping into the air as green light flashed out from his Dantian Cave, radiating from the green pearl and illuminating the chest cavity with several broken bones.

Hui Yu squinted, observing how the dust cloud slowly settled, revealing Deng Wu completely unscathed, surrounded by seven shadows, all of which appeared significantly damaged.

Hui Yue's eyes sparkled as he watched Deng Wu casually brush the dust off his clothes, his body unscathed. However, the price Deng Wu paid to keep his body unharmed was far from insignificant.

Initially, Deng Wu had summoned all the souls inscribed onto that particular piece of leather inscription. Now, however, one had been utterly destroyed with no chance of resurrection, while the remaining seven were clearly weakened, becoming slower and more translucent with their spectral forms.

Deng Wu glanced at the seven shadows as if they were trash. Then, with a wave of his hand, they dissipated entirely, shocking Hui Yue to no end. At present, Deng Wu had no intention of landing within the range of his shadows, yet now that Deng Wu had dismissed them, the handsome man ought to find himself at a disadvantage. And yet, he stood there, staring at Xu Yue with a sly smile, blatantly mocking the younger man's repeated attempts at his attacks.

Upon seeing this reaction from his opponent, Hui Yue let out a cold snort. This was no longer merely a contest of skill—it had the potential to become a deadly transaction, as their lives were now on the line. Yan Xiaobao had no way to compete fairly.

Standing beside Qi Fan, Hui Yue once again summoned a fireball that appeared behind the young boy, though this wasn't his only plan. While circling and refining the earthy flames, Hui Yue also prepared a batch of Earth Spears, suppressing the element to avoid revealing his mixed shield to Deng Wu.

Hui Yue also suppressed the red fog, using only a small fraction of it. Yet even so, he could distinctly sense the desire within him to kill. The previous attack had nearly caused Hui Yue to lose control over the red fog. Given that Deng Wu remained unscathed, Hui Yue could hold back no longer. As his killing intent boiled over, his pupils turned from blue to red, crimson steam rising from his pale skin.

Seeing this transformation, the sly smile on Deng Wu's face finally disappeared, replaced by a serious look. Four additional inscription patterns ignited, unleashing shadows that were four times greater than before.

Hui Yue glanced downward at the twenty-eight shadows, instantly giving the command for the ground to form Earth Spears aimed at the shadows, shattering half of them into fragments. Though they were shadows, they could still be destroyed by attacks imbued with spiritual energy, for which Hui Yue did not skimp on his own reserves. He still possessed a secret weapon known as Lan Feng.

In recent months, Lan Feng had been ecstatic due to Hui Yue's breakthrough into the realm of the Middle Dantian, as it allowed him to finally refine Wu Wei.

Wu Wei was the purest form of energy in this world. However, before Hui Yue could reach that level, there remained a long path to travel, which was why Lan Feng refused to explain further. All Hui Yue knew was that Wu Wei combined Yin Yang Energy, requiring a delicate balance between these forces. When Yin and Yang were perfectly balanced, Wu Wei could be refined.

This, however, was not what Hui Yue needed to focus on. Instead, his attention was entirely on observing how the Earth Spears decimated or severely injured half of the shadows, leaving them increasingly transparent. His eyes narrowed as the sneak attack had finally borne fruit.

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Seeing this, Deng Wu couldn't help but roar. Creating such soul runes was not an easy task, and seeing half of them reduced to such a state quickly made Deng Wu hesitate slightly, but when he retracted another batch, a determined expression appeared on his face. He summoned more shadows from them.

Deng Wu didn't wait for Hui Yue to land, instead he began randomly attacking other cultivators, corroding them, and slowly creating a small group of soldiers according to the command of their creator.

The shadows didn't care whether they attacked the guards of the Rong Sect or the Deng Sect and the Wang Clan; any guard entering the shadow's range would be corroded and eventually become skeleton soldiers, never regaining their consciousness.

These unfortunate guards were sent directly to the Hell World, their bones now belonging to souls who couldn't even enjoy such luxury.

Watching Deng Wu allow his shadows to attack random cultivators with decisiveness, it showed he would show no mercy to any friend or foe. To become the winner, he seemed willing to sacrifice anything.

It must be noted that the cultivators close to Deng Wu and Hui Yue were all mercenaries, purchased by the two factions in an attempt to increase their numbers. These mercenaries had no loyalty to any faction because they only cared about their salary.

The corrosion of these mercenaries took less than five minutes. Still, during that time, Xu Yue did not idle; instead, he created Fireballs one after another and merged them into a large sphere.

The Fire Orb wasn't the only thing Yan Xiaobao could do; he also hoped the Fire Orb would become a blazing blanket, covering the sky. Using his close relationship with the earth, he managed to produce lava falling from the sky. It landed on the entire ground covered by the blanket.

Terrible screams could be heard as both undead creatures and cultivators would melt when hit by the large chunks of lava falling from the sky.

After the undead creatures died, their souls were destroyed by the undead, robbing them of the ability to be reborn forever. Nevertheless, there was still no fear on Deng Wu's face as he waved his hand and took out another set of inscriptions from his storage stone.

Spell muttering, within seconds a silver shield was defending the young man. This sight caused Hui Yue to sneer coldly as he once again distanced himself from Deng Wu.

Like Deng Wu, Hui Yue did not worry about his survival at their current level of interaction. Although Deng Wu showed some shocking abilities and expertise, it was apparent that despite the Undead Race being a very powerful force, they couldn't threaten Hui Yue because he was currently airborne, far from any undead creatures. On the other hand, Deng Wu was most inconvenienced by the loss of soul, but he was prepared for the battle because he brought various inscriptions.

Battle erupted fully in Liluo City. Some mercenaries abandoned the fight to loot corpses, while others tried to drag their fallen allies back to a safe area, and others still fought for the cause they believed in, risking their lives.

With the six elders and family leaders utilizing all the power they possessed within their capabilities, casting skills on the opponent, the central battle turned crazy and almost desperate.

Wang Julong led a group of young generations to salvage corpses, while Rong Xing still fought alongside the three beast sisters. They both had a perfect view of Hui Yue and Deng Wu's battle but were at a safe enough distance.

Sha Yun wanted more than just to assist Hui Yue, but she was very aware that the orders given before were those she couldn't defy. She turned around, gritting her teeth, with a bloodthirsty intent in her eyes. As her tail swept through the air like a long lethal whip, there were broken and incomplete corpses everywhere.

Hui Yue slowly retreated to the center of the most troublesome square, with Deng Wu following on the ground, eyes fixed on Hui Yue.

No one had foreseen seeing the two young men, who regarded each other as best friends, being so wary of one another. A significant surge of spiritual energy suddenly emerged from Hui Yue's fists, and he drew black blood, infusing the incredible weapon with spiritual energy to enhance its speed, attack power, and sharpness.

Finally, when he was in the correct position at the central square, a smile appeared on Hui Yue's face as he used Velocity Flow, causing beautiful wings to appear on his ankles while creating his own duplicate holding a duplicate black blood.

Moving within the energy ripple of the six renowned experts in Liluo City was difficult; once Deng Wu arrived with his undead, Hui Yue had already jumped from his Qi Fan, instead turning agilely. The cheetah brandished his daggers, slicing off a skeleton's head one by one.

The same painful screams that Hui Yue heard all morning accompanied the wobbling bones, as souls dissipated one after another, returning to energy from heaven and earth. Although Hui Yue felt sorry for these poor souls, he would show no mercy, as he decided to chop off one head after another.

As Hui Yue and the duplicate rushed through Deng Wu's soldiers, Hui Yue felt his killing intent growing. The world began appearing red as energy burst out from his Dantian Cave, and red steam rolled out from beneath his skin. His oppressive aura grew larger, in turn quickly increasing Hui Yue's power, considerably slowing the undead creatures.

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Deng Wu clenched his teeth, watching as Hui Yue controlled his undead creatures. For a moment, he hesitated, then picked up another inscription requiring four spells to activate.

Once activated, the sky darkened, and rain began falling on the blood-soaked streets, accompanied only by lightning and thunder. Deng Wu's face turned ghostly pale as he drained most of his spiritual energy to power his final inscription.

As the wind whipped through, all the bodies—whole and shattered—began moving, as if puppeteered by some unseen force, devoid of souls. These bodies all converged towards a specific place: the central plaza where Deng Wu and Hui Yue were locked in battle.

The corpses moved neither particularly fast nor sluggishly. Each retained its cultivation level from life, yet all seemed to carry a fragment of Deng Wu's will. Their purpose was singular—to clash with Hui Yue.

Facing this inconceivable army for the first time, Hui Yue was confronted with peril. In a flash, he soared into the air, above Qi Fan. Soon, he realized these corpses could fight with their utmost abilities—some even were ranked at the Master level.

"Oh sh\*t," Yan Xiaobao exclaimed as more and more bodies advanced toward him. His brain raced, operating at maximum capacity to devise a solution.

"You know I can unleash it anytime," Lan Feng said with a grin, his eyes brimming with thrill. But despite his words, Xu Yue shook his head, overtaken by the sheer bloodlust permeating the air. He let out a deafening roar, charging toward the nearest corpse cultivators.

It seemed he had abandoned the last shred of rationality. His teeth sharpened to horrific points, his eyes reddened unnaturally, and the oppressive force of his murderous intent multiplied severally—so much so that six nearby respected experts paused their battles briefly, casting wary glances toward the erupting power source.

Witnessing the usually composed and beautiful Xu Yue transforming into a berserk beast left these experts secretly shaken. Yet none dared dwell on why he appeared as such, for they, too, were embroiled in life-or-death combat. In moments of chaos, even seizing a minor advantage could end a fight prematurely.

The respected experts weren't alone in feeling the crushing pressure of his escape. Everyone within the central plaza suddenly felt the air grow heavy, breathing became strenuous, and their hearts beat irregularly.

Deng Wu felt particularly tormented, his proximity to Hui Yue magnifying the oppressive atmosphere. Yet despite the escalating ferocity, the corpses advancing toward Hui Yue showed neither fear nor emotion.

Unbeknownst to many, Hui Yue had never attempted to use the Speed Flow before. The frenzied youth became an unstoppable force, moving faster than the wind—so swift that it was impossible to seize him. Even as the corpses retaliated, they could only strike at fellow undead.

Realizing it didn't take long to kill these corpses again, Hui Yue knew breaking their hearts was all it required. With an animalistic scream, Hui Yue lunged forward, black blood slicing through hearts one after another, while his left fist shattered any corpses in his way. He was wholly consumed by madness—blood and gore defiling his once-beautiful and peaceful demeanor, making it hard to believe he was the same person.

Deng Wu was gripped by fear as he witnessed the mindless Hui Yue charging toward him, clearly intent on eliminating the master standing behind the corpses. Yet no matter how many times Deng Wu tried to anticipate, he was slowed by the relentless flood of undead he had to fend off.

The enemies' attacks landed occasionally, but none delivered serious damage. As a result, Hui Yue had no intention of sluggishly fighting like other cultivation personnel that fell in battle.

Hui Yue finally broke through. Just as his black-blooded hand was about to strike Deng Wu, Hui Yue abruptly felt his body was no longer under his control.

"Stop," Lan Feng commanded, his voice deep and menacing. This jolted Hui Yue and brought him back to consciousness.

Turning around, Hui Yue saw how Deng Wu had disrupted the inscription keeping the corpses animated and nodded at him in acknowledgment.

A foolish grin spread across Hui Yue's bloodied face, grotesque and inappropriate amidst the carnage, but the youth paid it no mind and nodded, returning to stand beside Deng Wu.

It was now time for the second phase of their plan. Hui Yue looked at the three Beast Sisters, nodding slightly before murmuring a few words to those they were guarding.

Seeing how they nodded to Hui Yue, the six companions vanished from before his eyes, leaving a flicker of satisfaction on his face.

The six respected experts continued their battles, oblivious to Hui Yue and Deng Wu no longer fighting each other and steadily moving into the most chaotic battlefield within the city.

Retrieving an inscription from his storage ring, Deng Wu channeled a few drops of spiritual energy into a safety shield behind him, guarding his father and elders. He nodded to Hui Yue, then slowly ascended into the air.

Hui Yue closed his eyes, descending into the Dantian Cave and switching places with Lan Feng. Phoenix silently observed Hui Yue but nodded approvingly, taking control of the corpses through Hui Yue.

As Lan Feng opened his eyes, immense energy fluctuations erupted from the youthful body. The aura now emanating surpassed the Master-level cultivator and reached the rank of Saintly respected expert.

The six King-level respected experts were struck by chilling dread as the aura radiated. Witnessing the boy Hui Yue who, in some way, every one of them had met before, their eyes widened with astonishment. He stood below them, his gaze brimming with profound knowledge, his entire aura transformed as though belonging to someone else.

Not only had his cultivation base evolved, but even his entire demeanor shifted. The bloodstained youth managed to halt all experts' battles momentarily as their minds spun in shock.

Golden light gleamed within Hui Yue's hands; the radiance was Wu Wei's divine energy Lan Feng had cultivated in the spiritual energy sea over the last few months—visible, tangible, and indisputably powerful.

Once, Lan Feng couldn't match their strength, as he could only refine spiritual energy. But now, wielding this energy, he regained his advantage—proving the strength of a Saintly expert.

Yet today was not the day Hui Yue would claim ultimate victory. Allowing Lan Feng full control of his body, Deng Wu crafted one final inscription, channeling his last drops of spiritual energy into it. When

activated, a long bluish beam erupted from the center, intensified by a blue figurine retreating as the inscriptions pulsed.

The beam shot swiftly toward Deng Zengying's back. Focused entirely on Hui Yue, he realized too late what had transpired as the attack struck him. In less than a second, the beam pierced his heart, and Deng Wu seized another inscription to bind his father's soul by biting his finger and sealing the spirit with his blood.

The ambush was so sudden that neither Deng nor the Wang Family could react. But when they saw Deng Zengying's lifeless body collapse, their attention turned immediately to Deng Wu. He stared at his father's falling body, his expression severe, devoid of any signs of bloodshed.

At this moment, fury consumed the elders. Just as they were about to attack Deng Wu, Lan Feng finally made his move.

The Speed Flow that Hui Yue used for swift movement now resembled teleportation in Lan Feng's hands. In half a second, he appeared before Deng Wu, erecting a golden barrier.

The sight struck fear into the elders. Not only had they lost their leader, but they were now up against a true prodigy—a child of saintly rank.

With the barrier visible, they immediately recognized the aura wasn't a mere façade but evidence of genuine expertise at the Saint rank. As realization dawned that all their efforts had played directly into this prodigious youth's hands, dread began surfacing visibly.

Hui Yue had long shared knowledge with them to aid survival in this ruthless world, but the Deng clan leader's greed for more than wealth had ultimately led to his downfall, seeking something he could never truly grasp.

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Chapter 359 The Temptation Is Too Great

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The temptation was too great, and in the end, they succumbed. Looking back, the elders couldn't help but mock themselves for discussing whether to kill this young man who knew their secrets, when it was clear he could kill anyone in the city.

The elders had little time to deliberate, as Rong Liang and Bu Huang swiftly encircled the remaining two, forcing them to surrender.

At that moment, Rong Liang turned toward Hui Yue, only to notice that he and Deng Wu had long fled the area—without leaving a single trace behind. Lan Feng dashed through the streets, heading toward the city walls. Once there, Phoenix unfolded its radiant white wings behind Hui Yue, who then grabbed Deng Wu and soared high above the walls.

Lan Feng flew through an entire day's journey, heading toward the mystical forest, where Hui Yue and Deng Wu would wait for the others in his village.

Finally, they arrived, and Hui Yue regained control of his body. After wielding an overwhelming energy foreign to his own, everything was engulfed in pain, but despite the agony, Hui Yue remained astonished, for they had achieved their goal.

"That moment truly frightened me," Deng Wu sighed, leaning against the grass and taking a deep breath. Reflecting on the day's events, even though they occurred less than a day ago, everything seemed so distant.

Xu Yue smiled apologetically at Deng Wu, then lay down on the grass much like Deng Wu, gazing at the sky above.

"What will you do now?" Hui Yue asked. He had never intended to return, for his plan was to venture into the sacred underground city. He wouldn't return to Liluo City for a long time, and when he did, he expected no one to remember him.

However, though their meticulously planned strategy was in motion, Hui Yue finally discovered that Deng Wu had killed his own father to end the battle—an act that carried immense significance.

"Don't worry about me," Deng Wu said softly, staring at the sky. "We're bound to fail anyway," he added, speaking not only to convince Hui Yue but also to convince himself.

"If we fall into Rong Liang's hands, our entire clan will be destroyed. If we win, then our family will be wiped out by the Royal Family for breaking their Royal Decree."

Thinking of the grim future his family was bound to face, Deng Wu let out a sigh. "For one clan member to kill a clan leader, it's enough to show the clan is not fully unified in this plan. My Deng family should survive," Deng Wu said quietly. But Hui Yue knew it was more of a prayer than anything else. The Royal Family could still easily eliminate the entire Deng family by labeling their uprising as treason.

"Wang Julong and the others will arrive tomorrow," Hui Yue said, attempting to change the subject. Suddenly, an idea struck him, and a faint smile spread across his lips.

"Would you like to go with me to Shenzhou's dungeons?" Hui Yue asked. At that moment, a spark of excitement flickered in Deng Wu's eyes, though he seemed poised to relinquish everything.

As they lay on the grass, gazing at the mesmerizing sky, Hui Yue and Deng Wu felt at ease. To an outsider unaware of their circumstances, it would be impossible to guess that these two young men were the talk of Liluo City.

Word had spread across the city: although Lord Rong Liang and his followers managed to protect Deng Zengying, they weren't the ones who killed him—no, the head of the Deng family was slain by his own son.

Dust rose as magical horses raced toward Hui Yue's village. A group of seven people hurried along, their faces etched with exhaustion and stern expressions, lips tightly pursed, and their eyes hollow as they scanned the surroundings for ambushers or pursuers.

This group consisted of three twin sisters, the Rong twins, Gao Yan, Ma Kong, and Wang Julong. Hui Yue stood up and signaled to the seven travelers, but within mere moments, the magical creatures galloped right up to the white-haired boy and Deng Wu.

When they arrived, they looked down at Hui Yue and Deng Wu, before offering collective condolences that could finally be heard. After dismounting, the young men carefully unfastened the animals from their harnesses and sat down to discuss everything.

Before Rong Xing sat down, tears welled up in her eyes as she approached Deng Wu, using all her strength to strike the handsome boy hard. Seeing her expression, Deng Wu was stunned, but when he realized her emotions, his face softened. As he accepted the blow, a sorrowful smile spread across his face, leaving his entire cheek swelling painfully.

"Don't you dare do that again!" Rong Xing said in a trembling voice, her eyes locked onto Deng Wu's dark gaze. "Don't betray us again!"

Seeing the trembling young woman, Deng Wu's heart filled with tenderness, and suddenly, a teardrop fell from his eye. The sight of those tears startled everyone, overwhelming Deng Wu completely. But Rong Xing noticed his expression. She quickly leaned in and embraced him, letting the young man cry in her warm arms.

Deng Wu was still so young. Though he had never felt a close bond with his father, the brutality of the battle had left its scars. It wasn't just his long-standing struggle with Hui Yue, but also the grief of having killed multiple innocent cultivators who had the misfortune of being too near him.

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"They are not innocent," Rong Xing said, gently patting his head to calm him down. "They were aware of the risks when they joined us. We did not force anyone to participate in this war."

Deng Wu nodded, his face resting against Rong Xing's chest. Tears continued streaming from his eyes, but Hui Yue couldn't help but smile faintly at the sight of Deng Wu's expression—a hidden satisfaction had surfaced in Rong Xing's gaze.

Hui Yue understood Deng Wu had the opportunity to become more acquainted with Rong Xing's presence, and he felt relieved. Though Deng Wu seemed shaken after taking so many lives for the first time, it was not the kind of trauma he wouldn't recover from.

Rong Guang spent a long time observing Deng Wu, clearing his throat before finally shifting his gaze to Hui Yue.

"Once you and Deng Wu fled the city, the Royal Army arrived," Rong Ming began explaining what had transpired in the city since their departure. "They marched with Father to the Deng Family and the Wang Family. All elders were taken to the city prison, awaiting trial."

Wang Julong's eyes carried a trace of sorrow, yet her mouth remained tightly shut, refusing to utter a word or reveal any vulnerability. A determined look could be seen in her gaze.

During the battle, Wang Julong did not engage as a combatant. Instead, she spent her time and energy rescuing as many wounded guards and mercenaries as she could, bringing them to medical quarters set up in specific locations within the city.

"You two seem to have known about these plans for quite some time," Gao Yan said, his brow furrowed as he stared intensely at Wang Julong and Deng Wu, evidently unwilling to forgive their schemes so easily. Ever since witnessing Hui Yue and Deng Wu's fight, it felt as though something was suffocating him.

Wang Julong nodded in response, while Deng Wu didn't even bother to reply. Instead, he buried his face in Rong Xing's embrace, causing her youthful face to flush slightly as she awkwardly patted his head.

Amid the playful banter, Hui Yue made his way to Rong Xing and Deng Wu. He tugged at Rong Xing's collar, revealing a sly smile before dragging the teasing troublemaker to the other side of the circle to finally begin a serious discussion.

"Do you know?" Ma Kong asked quietly while looking at Yan Xiaobao. The white-haired young man nodded solemnly. "I know," he replied with a bittersweet smile.

"Deng Wu and Wang Julong both disagreed with their elders. While the elders were convinced that victory for the Deng Family and Wang Family would secure royal endorsement for their actions, it was clear this wasn't the case," Hui Yue explained calmly.

"The only hope for the Deng and Wang families' survival was to prove that the younger generation opposed the decisions of the elders. Even then, what we did remains incredibly dangerous." Deng Wu finally took over and seriously explained what was about to happen.

"We had to kill my father, or Julong's father," Deng Wu sighed and continued. "Though Zhu Long had always lived as a boy at her father's insistence, he had done everything he could to ensure she could survive disguised this way, while my father tried to ensure I wouldn't survive at all. Considering the situation, my father has to die—it's fair."

Looking at Deng Wu, one would never expect the words he uttered—to kill his own father—to be true. Yet this was exactly what had happened; his expression was as calm as a frigid lake, without a trace of regret or sorrow.

"Why did you need Hui Yue to reveal that he possesses power ranking among Holy Position experts?" Ma Kong asked again, clicking his tongue.

"We needed something so overwhelming that it would make both sides cease fighting—something that would force their attention on him instead of each other or anything lurking behind them," Hui Yue replied with a sigh. "Other than suddenly revealing a cultivator who ranks as one of the Saints, nothing else would astonish and stun the experts from the King Ranking."

Everyone present rolled their eyes, realizing that any such reveal—a cultivator becoming a Saint-level practitioner right in front of them—would inevitably capture everyone's attention.

"Why did you initially choose to oppose each other instead of pursuing your goal directly?" Gao Yan asked curiously, looking at the two younger individuals. He was still grumbling about how he hadn't been informed of anything beforehand. Even his vast network hadn't managed to uncover any information regarding Hui Yue's plan.

"We needed proximity," Hui Yue sighed. "Deliberately approaching them wouldn't have been smart. We had to find a way to get close. The only option we thought of was through battle—making everything look as though we had truly betrayed one another. Clearly, your performance was exceptionally convincing and helped make us appear inconspicuous."

The plan undeniably made sense, but all three of them—Wang Julong, Deng Wu, and Hui Yue—paid a heavy price for its success.

Wang Julong's entire family was on the brink of collapse, as was Deng Wu's. He had even used his own hands to contribute to this downfall. Xu Yue, after spending years keeping himself hidden, was now here—here, revealing his identity as a young Saint, solely to attract attention.

"You won't be able to return with us anymore, will you?" Rong Xing asked Hui Yue in a sorrowful tone, her voice tinged with faint apology.

"I can't return for a while," he replied gently. "But neither will any of you remain in Liluo City over the next few years." He reminded them.

"Ma Kong will be busy expanding the Ma family's insurance network across other major cities in the Sun Kingdom. You and Rong Ming will be occupied with the main department at the Royal Art Academy, while Gao Yan will likely head to the capital alongside you. Who knows? He might even work to establish a network there far greater than the one he built here."

"But what about Wang Julong and Deng Wu?" Rong Xing's eyes became slightly misty as she thought about how this group was on the verge of disbanding, acknowledging that no matter how events unfolded, this was the inevitable outcome.

"We'll return to our families and face the consequences," Wang Julong said, lifting her head. As she uttered those words, determination glimmered in her eyes.

Deng Wu gave Wang Julong a nod; however, his eyes revealed a greater degree of worry than resolution.

Deng Wu felt the pressure—unlike someone with a detached personality. Despite doing his utmost to demonstrate that the younger generation didn't share the elders' perspective, surviving the trials seemed almost impossible. Deng Wu's participation in the hearings was critical if he hoped to save as many lives as possible.

"This is for us," Shui Wu said as she slowly rose and gracefully nodded to everyone before embracing Sha Yun. Finally, she returned to the Magic Forest in the background.

Seeing Shui Wu walk away, Bingbing quickly followed her lead. After a brief nod, she hugged Sha Yun too, then flew back to the forest, returning to her snowy sanctuary.

The circle of friends remained seated for a while. One by one, they stood, bowing lightly before heading toward their magical steeds and mounts, preparing to return to the city where the hearings were to be held.

Deng Wu relied on Lan Feng's power to arrive at the village. With no magical steed of his own, he set off alongside Wang Julong.

Left behind alone, a nostalgic wave swept over Hui Yue as he signaled to Sha Yun. The two began a slow walk into the Magic Forest, where they would wait in Sha Yun's old clearing for the trial's conclusion over the next few weeks.

Hui Yue could no longer stay in his village home, as his presence would bring danger upon them. Not only would the village be at risk, but Hui Yue himself couldn't return to Liluo City knowing that despite his good relations with the noble leaders, the Royal Army would likely regard him with hostility. As the dense Magic Forest engulfed him, Hui Yue let out a deep sigh.

Even though they knew he had been there, Hui Yue hadn't left any clues behind about their departure from the village. Knowledge of this kind could spell trouble for them, and Hui Yue wanted to ensure he wouldn't harm anyone through carelessness.

Back in Liluo City, Wang Julong and Deng Wu were immediately shackled and taken to the City Lord's special prison. Though they were closely monitored, both received gentle and respectful treatment.

During their confinement in the City Lord's residence, Deng Wu and Wang Julong were visited daily by high-ranking officials from the Royal Army, eager to learn what had truly transpired—whether their actions to kill Deng Zengying had been premeditated or merely impulsive after witnessing their failure.