

## Medical 491

### Chapter 491 Best to Heed the Warning\_2

Although Yan Xiaobao's Demon Core count was insufficient, he still had enough money to pay his entrance fee. He began another journey through the dark tunnels connecting the caves.

All the tunnels looked very similar to each other. The only visible feature was the lit paths. Occasionally, even in the illuminated areas, a group of beasts would appear. However, the main issue faced while walking this path was other humans.

At the start of the tunnel, upon entering, the first thing people discovered was other humans searching for Demon Cores. These individuals were more or less mercenaries, attacking humans and beasts alike in the dark tunnel—anything that could provide them with profit.

As Yan Xiaobao ventured into the tunnel, his pace grew slower as he became more alert. Without a word, Xu Biao and Xie Lan appeared on either side of him, their eyes vigilantly scanning their surroundings. Should anyone decide to make him their target, they were ready to protect the young man.

A faint smile appeared on Yan Xiaobao's lips as he realized how two of the King Ranking Experts were looking after him. Both of their eyes showed a hint of concern, but now, with his three friends captured by the Dragon Army, Yan Xiaobao had no time to worry about them. Whether these two were true friends or not, this was a matter he wouldn't consider until he had recovered his lost companions.

With a deep sigh, Yan Xiaobao pinched the bridge of his nose as Wang Julong's face appeared behind his closed eyelids. An inexplicable longing tore at his heart.

Closing his eyes, Yan Xiaobao took a deep breath. When he opened them again, a new resolve shone within. His eyes glittering, he quickened his steps and began moving through the tunnel before him.

Traveling through the tunnel this time was much like what Yan Xiaobao had experienced so far. While beasts might occasionally leave the safety of the unlit tunnels to attack caravans, the numerous mercenaries present would almost always fight among themselves for the chance to engage the beasts.

The reason for their eagerness to fight the beasts was apparent: claiming the bodies and Demon Cores not only gave them rewards but also provided an extra source of income amidst the dull tasks they were assigned.

As Yan Xiaobao dashed through the tunnel, he saw an increasing number of caravans along the way. However, after running non-stop for three days and nights, Lan Feng suddenly took over his body, guiding him to one side and signaling Xie Lan and Xu Biao to follow.

While Lan Feng was still in control, three cloaks materialized from Yan Xiaobao's storage stone. Two of them were tossed to Xie Lan and Xu Biao. Without waiting to hear what was happening, both immediately donned their cloaks, and Lan Feng did the same.

Xu Hui remained silent as Lan Feng used his body. Meanwhile, Phoenix remarked that since Yan Xiaobao needed to train himself, it wouldn't lend assistance throughout the journey—but that bird often acted contrary to its words.

Several passersby looked at the trio curiously, though no one had the time to stay and actually observe what was happening. Before long, no one could recognize them as the group that had rushed through the tunnel earlier.

"See that caravan?" Lan Feng's voice suddenly echoed in Yan Xiaobao's consciousness. The young man nodded as he looked at the three carriages surrounded by Dragon Army soldiers. Through the visible window, Yan Xiaobao saw Deng Wu, Sha Yun, and Wang Julong.

Seeing the caravan, his heart filled with a mix of excitement and worry, leaving his face with a conflicted expression.

"Do you remember what Scarface did to your team during your journey?" Lan Feng asked with a sly smile. Yan Xiaobao could only smile in return. How could he forget such a dangerous man?

"I think it's time to follow his example. Let's see if Xu and Lan are skilled enough to help, or if I'll have to handle it myself," Yan Xiaobao replied to Lan Feng, suddenly regaining control of his body once more.

"Is that...?" Xu Biao's voice was low, but the hope within was evident. The older man hoped to redeem himself by helping the trio escape the Dragon Army.

Yan Xiaobao nodded in response, his eyes lost in thought. "We'll become Scarface," he said with a faintly sinister smile on his lips.

Understanding his intent, Xu Biao turned slightly pale at the thought of the potential consequences, but within moments, his eyes firmed, and he nodded in agreement.

Seeing Xu Biao agree, Yan Xiaobao felt immense gratitude. He knew he could rely on the King Ranking Experts to save him, but rescuing himself while also aiding in the liberation of Wang Julong and the others was an entirely different matter. Xu Biao's endorsement of the plan made things much easier.

Watching the caravan pass by, the trio waited until it had traveled roughly a kilometer ahead. Only then did Yan Xiaobao begin tailing it. Although he considered picking off the Dragon Army soldiers during the daytime, he knew doing so would draw too much attention. Thus, aside from slowly following, he did nothing, waiting for the caravan to reach its camp.

In the tunnels without sun or moon, travelers found it difficult to distinguish between day and night. The resting intervals were typically brief, only lasting a few hours at most when convenient for one party.

Seeing the Dragon Army come to a halt, Yan Xiaobao instructed his team to do the same, setting up a campfire within five hundred meters of the carriages.

Chapter 492 Best Pay Attention to the Warning\_3

Because the tunnel was lit, it was not uncommon for people to draw close to one another. The Dragon Clan soldiers might have spotted Yan Xiaobao, yet none of them noticed the three cloaked men. They were only three, while the Dragon Army was composed of experts.

Yan Xiaobao was no longer in a hurry to launch an attack. He wanted to gain favor from the people before him. How was their camp set up? How many experts were there, and what ranks were they? What was inside each carriage? What risks would they dare to take?

Soon, Yan Xiaobao observed that the guards were divided into groups of ten. Each group tended their own campfire, with one of these camps always keeping watch during breaks.

Yan Xiaobao noticed that Deng Wu and Sha Yun's carriage was often shut tight, surrounded by four guards. Another carriage, the windowless one, was always encircled by ten guards. The final transport belonged to four King-level experts residing here, allowing them the luxury of not sleeping on the ground. Their ranks were far superior to this.

Once most people fell asleep, Yan Xiaobao merged into the shadows, slowly approaching the camp, reaching the area where ten guards stood watch. It could be said that his cloak was meticulously crafted for this very task, enabling him to completely blend into his aura and become imperceptible. Cloaked and hidden in the shadows like this, he was entirely undetectable. Yan Xiaobao merged himself with the earth, channeling some Qi through his eyes. He could now see more clearly the sleeping guards who were slightly removed from the others.

Yan Xiaobao was fully focused, biting his lip as he summoned ten Earth Spears. These spears were vastly different from ordinary ones. Each had a mere five-centimeter diameter but was exceptionally sharp. They were a distinct type of earth-crafted weapon; they were Earthen Needles!

These needles targeted each guard's temple. As Yan Xiaobao gripped his hand tightly, ten sharp needle tips emerged silently, instantly killing all ten guards.

Yan Xiaobao was not greedy. Instead, he rushed back to the campfires being guarded by Xie Lan and Xu Biao.

Based on Hui Yue's calculations, no one would be able to tell it was him who killed ten men because of his cloak. If a battle broke out, he knew he could retreat with Lan Feng's martial power. However, doing so would mean they would have to pause within the cave for at least a year, perhaps even longer.

Although Yan Xiaobao did not understand why Lan Feng insisted on refining significant martial power by the time they reached the Dragon Core, he did not question it. Unless there truly was no other way to survive, he knew he couldn't use martial power recklessly.

Having already opened his Yin-Yang meridians, Yan Xiaobao no longer needed sleep. As long as he was in a place abundant with the essence of the sky and earth, his body would naturally rejuvenate. When he spent time meditating, it benefited him immensely.

Sitting in quiet meditation proved immensely challenging for Yan Xiaobao. Pretending to know nothing about what was happening ahead of the caravan was a hard act. It was even harder to resist directly entering the camp to rescue his companions.

The tunnel remained calm for a long time before abruptly, five hours later, Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes and noticed activity stirring in the camp beside him.

At first, he waited to see if they would rush toward him, or toward Xu Biao and Xie Lan; surprisingly, besides preparations for the caravan to move once again, nothing happened. Smoke drifted into the stale tunnel air, carrying with it the scent of burnt flesh, which left Yan Xiaobao astonished.

Yan Xiaobao and his two followers, once the scent of charred flesh permeated the path, walked past the caravan as though terrified by the smell. Their reaction seemed entirely understandable.

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Chapter 493 Irrational Fear

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"We at least need to question the cultivators who are camping around us!" A Dragon Clan soldier said angrily as he stared at the burning corpse on the ground. One of the guards who had lost their life the night before was his close friend, and the silent death had induced extreme fear and fury among all the other guards. In a team with so many guards traveling together, to have ten people die in such a manner—without a sound and without even a chance to move—sparked an irrational fear, planting seeds of dread in most of the Dragon Clan soldiers.

They all wanted to go back and find the bandits, as no one knew what might happen the following night. However, their captain was looking behind him with an uneasy expression on his face. After slamming his fist on the table, his eyes glimmered in the dim tunnel light.

"I've said it once already," his voice was extremely dangerous, almost like a growl, causing the guard in front of him to shudder, "we will not pursue those who have caused these killings. From now on, we will not sleep during our breaks. Although most of you Duke Masters and master experts have not opened your Yin Yang meridians, if you cultivate at night, you can still survive without sleep. While cultivating, you can sense energy ripples in your surroundings, making it impossible for another ambush to occur."

After saying that, the captain said no more. He opened his dark eyes and began walking toward the carriage where his three King companions were seated. After entering the carriage, his lips let out a sigh, and he let his body collapse onto a soft cushion placed on the floor of the carriage. The cushion offered them some comfort during the long journey.

"Does this have anything to do with the B-class prisoner we obtained?" one of the Kings asked. A tall but thin man with a sharp nose, black eyes, and black hair. His voice was resonant as it drifted toward the captain. The captain clenched his teeth as he nodded.

"I believe those three men are tailing us, preparing to eliminate us and free their companion." He was reminded of those three cloaked men from earlier that morning, whose strength they couldn't even sense. This clearly meant they were stronger than him and were deliberately suppressing their aura. If they ended up battling these highly skilled experts, it was likely they wouldn't merely lose their ten guards but their entire team—not to mention the extremely important cargo.

Realizing this, he knew the cargo in the second carriage was so vital that the captain was prepared to sacrifice every proficient Middle Dantian expert in his team.

Yan Xiaobao frowned slightly as he noticed that no one from the caravan ahead came to inquire with Hui Hui's group. No one came to ask them if they knew anything about the murders that occurred overnight.

Instead, it seemed that they decided to accept the deaths and move hastily forward. Although the silver-haired young man was quite surprised by this turn of events, he was evidently not pleased. As soon as the caravan started moving, they quickly packed up their camp, and three of them once again followed to the next cavern, staying only a few kilometers behind the caravan.

Traveling in a small group behind the caravan was quite normal, and soon enough, many groups were trailing the massive caravan a few kilometers behind.

There were many reasons for this. First, if a Demon Beast Tribe attacked the large caravan, it might fend them off; secondly, safety in numbers.

In the earlier caverns, bandits had never proven to be a major issue. Although there were some bandit groups, they didn't appear frequently. However, the deeper they traveled into the Holy Dungeon, the more bandits they encountered.

Traveling behind such a massive caravan ensured that bandit groups would steer clear. Even if they wanted to attack one of the groups walking behind the caravan, the energy ripples from the battle might alert the main caravan, which would come back to end the fight—usually by slaughtering them all.

The only ones bold enough to attack such a large caravan were high-ranking, large bandit groups. These bandit groups would target the main caravan, as it was the most lucrative. If attacked, the followers would seize the opportunity to scatter in various directions, hoping not to be captured by the bandit group.

Disguised as one of these groups, Yan Xiaobao, Xu Biao, and Xie Lan had been traveling behind the main caravan, each slightly hesitant.

Once the Death Soldiers were discovered, Yan Xiaobao expected to be interrogated that morning, but nothing happened. The group simply hurried away from their previous position, paying no attention to the deceased guard.

This caught Yan Xiaobao off guard. After a moment, he finally realized that the leader of the caravan ahead was carrying out an important mission, one that outweighed the lives of his guards. Upon reaching this conclusion, a smile appeared on Yan Xiaobao's face.

Initially, he anticipated needing to kill as many people as quickly as possible. However, seeing the captain's indifference to the deaths, Yan Xiaobao realized he could take his time, slowly and safely dismantling the Middle Dantian experts one by one.

Though he decided to take it slow, his heart trembled when the image of Wang Julong flashed before his mind again. He had seen Deng Wu and Sha Yun earlier, and neither of them seemed injured. But he hadn't seen Wang Julong. Although he believed she was inside the same carriage and likely fine, he couldn't be certain.

Chapter 494 Irrational Fear\_2

As he pondered this, the fire of anger in his heart kept growing. This caused the blood-red fog within his Dantian Cave to start responding.

At the last moment, Yan Xiaobao calmed down, letting the serene clouds push away the red fog. He let out a deep sigh, hoping these two phenomena would be as manageable as the golden wings and green pearls.

The caravan and its many followers continued deeper into the tunnel, running in relentless waves, group after group falling behind. These followers struggled to keep up with the caravan's fast pace. Only Yan Xiaobao's team and two other teams managed to stay close. After half a day's running, they finally took a break.

Just like the previous night, Yan Xiaobao set up a campfire and waited for the caravan to settle down. It seemed, unlike the night before, no one would sleep tonight. Everyone looked alertly around; the level of vigilance felt higher now than the day the bandits were expected to attack.

Seeing this, a cold smirk appeared on Yan Xiaobao's face as he slipped into the shadows while observing both sides. Xu Biao and Xie Lan also stood up, blending into the shadows. They closed in on the caravan. Without saying a word, they didn't reveal even the faintest hint of their auras.

Unlike the previous night, the guards no longer stayed by the campfire but patrolled the area in pairs instead.

Standing in the shadows, Yan Xiaobao saw two experts appear beside him. The two individuals remained completely still as two guards walked past, holding their breaths.

Step by step, as the guards came closer, Yan Xiaobao waited for them to circle behind one of the caravans so that he could strike unnoticed. However, as soon as the two guards moved behind the carriage, the shadows beside him—Xie Lan and Xu Biao—lunged forward, each delivering swift and decisive strikes to the guards' necks. Silently, both guards collapsed to the ground.

Seeing this, Yan Xiaobao hurriedly packed the storage stone before merging with the shadows, just as the two King Ranking Experts had already done.

Waiting in the darkness, preparing to strike the next guard nearby, Yan Xiaobao's eyes glinted with murderous intent. His gaze shifted to the wagon, and his fists clenched tightly; his friends were imprisoned inside.

Just as Hui Yu glanced at another wagon, he suddenly furrowed his brow as he heard the faint sound of children's voices coming from within the carriage before him.

It was a wagon without windows. The only thing Yan Xiaobao could hear was the sound of several crying children, and his face immediately turned pale. What was the Dragon Clan Team doing with young children?

Thinking it over, Yan Xiaobao nodded, his face showing a resolute expression. Shortly afterward, he took a step back, signaling the two King Ranking Experts to follow.

Once they all retreated to the campfire, Yan Xiaobao quietly waited a moment before noticing the two individuals next to him.

"Can you two delay the four King Ranking Experts for about ten minutes?" Yan Xiaobao asked seriously, his eyes resolved. The atmosphere around him shifted as a faint red glow slowly rose, steadily emerging in his gaze.

Looking at each other, their eyes filled with determination before turning back to Yan Xiaobao and nodding. "We can hold them back for ten minutes, but not longer," they responded.

Hearing this, the white-haired young man gratefully acknowledged his two friends. "Tomorrow night, we'll launch an attack on the entire caravan," Yan Xiaobao said firmly, his eyes unwavering. "Let the King Ranking Experts maintain control; I'll handle the rest."

Hearing this, Xu Biao looked at him skeptically. No matter how strong Yan Xiaobao was, engaging in battle against over twenty experts of his own level—some of whom were even stronger—seemed near impossible.

Still, even if Xu Biao worried about this young man, he said nothing. The resolution and certainty on his face were evident; the young man was determined to prevent the situation from worsening.

The next day unfolded much as before. Yan Xiaobao and his team followed the caravan, once more disregarding the deaths of the guards, before rushing toward the next cave.

Throughout the day, Yan Xiaobao spent time with Xu Biao and Xie Lan strategizing for the upcoming battle. Their plan involved meeting the four King Ranking Experts at two critical times and locations.

Yan Xiaobao himself would face all the Masters, Grandmasters, and Duke-level experts.

As time passed, the caravan once again prepared to race through the tunnel at top speed before settling in to rest their weary and aching legs.

Seeing this, Yan Xiaobao's team set up camp once more. This time, he didn't wait long before all three slipped near the caravan.

The white-haired young man stood in the shadows of a wagon, listening to the sound of crying while completely concealing himself. Not a single patrolling guard noticed him. Yan Xiaobao stood behind the wagon, raised his hand, and suddenly conjured a vivid blue flame in his palm.

The flame was smaller than usual, but once it came to life, Yan Xiaobao hurled it onto the wagon with all his strength. As the blue flame soared to the tunnel's ceiling, it exploded instantly.

As soon as the fire left his hand, Yan Xiaobao retreated into the shadows again. The three observed as four King-level experts quickly emerged from their private wagons and rushed toward the now-burning wagon.

Watching the four experts, Yan Xiaobao glanced toward his two companions before closing his eyes, allowing the red fog within him to surge outward. It consumed his entire body and swept across the surrounding environment, drawing the attention of every cultivator in the camp.

"Behind the wagon!" a voice screamed as a large group of lower-ranking cultivators charged toward Yan Xiaobao, whose body suddenly emitted an ethereal lightness as he activated Velocity Flow, creating several doppelgangers of himself.

Both Yan Xiaobao and his duplicates surged toward the cultivators. He launched fireballs at the Flame Treasure Pearl while the blue flame in his hands illuminated the assault.

After eliminating four scorched men, Yan Xiaobao finally crouched down, merging himself with the earth. A cluster of earthen spears formed beneath him, instantly impaling three unsuspecting cultivators. As their lives escaped them, their eyes dimmed rapidly.

"Take him down together—group attack!" one man screamed as he charged at Yan Xiaobao. Strangely enough, the four King-level experts showed no intention of attacking this intruder and seemed wholly indifferent toward him. Instead, the four experts surrounded the burning wagon filled with children, ensuring the fire was extinguished and the children were shielded from further harm.

Witnessing this, Yan Xiaobao didn't hesitate long before charging toward another wagon where his friends were imprisoned.

Rushing as fast as he could while evading every member of the Dragon Army, Yan Xiaobao sped toward the wagon.

Just as he reached the wagon, three individuals appeared before the enraged Yan Xiaobao. However, before they could stop him, sharp claws extending from his fingers slashed into their heads.

With sheer brute force, Yan Xiaobao launched fierce attacks, unleashing guttural growls. Cracking sounds erupted as two skulls split open, and blood began to seep from every opening on their faces.

Having witnessed this, the third person desperately tried to flee. When Yan Xiaobao ripped open the wagon door, he saw his three friends patiently waiting, their eyes lighting up as he disregarded the fleeing man.

Peering into the wagon, Yan Xiaobao's emotions surged as he saw Wang Julong and his two close friends.

Though they were bound, they seemed unharmed, and an immense weight lifted off Yan Xiaobao's shoulders. He even failed to notice the ten Dragon Clan soldiers standing between him and his companions.

Seeing his friends safe, a roar escaped Yan Xiaobao's lips, causing everyone in the wagon to tremble in fear. Red mist began to escape his body, enveloping everyone within several meters like swirling steam.

Staring at Yan Xiaobao, everyone in the wagon was struck with shock—none more so than his friends. Yan Xiaobao was no longer the same as before. His long white hair, while still cascading down, now framed a face that had completely transformed.

His once-blue eyes had turned bright red. Three long, claw-like marks appeared on his cheeks, and sharp fangs lined his mouth.

His hands were no longer normal, now fully formed into clawed talons. His body had grown slightly, with his leg muscles swelling, further enhancing his already immense strength.

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Chapter 495 Time is of the Essence

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The creature that Yan Xiaobao had turned into mocked them, baring his sharp fangs as he stepped closer to the carriage. When they tried to avoid him, he shoved the soldiers further into the confined space.

As Yan Xiaobao reached the end of the carriage, everyone was pressed against each other, not daring to breathe as they waited to see what the next monster had planned.

Suddenly, a claw gently swiped through the sleeve, freeing three prisoners. Watching this, two soldiers gripped their spears tightly and charged toward Yan Xiaobao with gritted teeth.

Their weapons were large and unwieldy, impractical for combat inside the carriage. Yan Xiaobao easily blocked the two advancing spears by crossing his arms above his head and kicking out with his legs, striking the first attacker hard in the stomach. The man collapsed and couldn't stand up again, overwhelmed by Yan Xiaobao's immense strength, which far surpassed anything he had possessed before.

The other soldier quickly retreated, rejoining the group guarding the prisoners. As Yan Xiaobao prepared to attack the remaining men, he heard a deafening crash outside. Turning, he saw four King Ranking Experts locked in combat with Xie Lan and Xu Biao.

Seeing this, Yan Xiaobao realized their time was running out. He immediately swung around and shouted at his friends to follow him as he rushed out of the carriage. But none of them followed. Instead, they ran toward the battlefield, where the higher-ranked experts were fiercely fighting.

Initially, Yan Xiaobao had hoped they could escape together with the children. However, witnessing how fiercely the kings defended the carriage, he quickly abandoned that idea. Now, saving his friends became his sole priority, leaving him with no other choice.

Just as he came to this conclusion, another massive explosion echoed from the clash between the King Ranking Experts. Watching closely, Xu Yue saw that both Xie Lan and Xu Biao had been injured, blood dripping from the corners of their mouths and their bodies battered.

"Fall back!" Yan Xiaobao shouted. His voice pierced through the chaotic sounds of battle, and as soon as it rang out, the eyes of two King Ranking Experts shimmered, merging with the shadows once more.

Fortunately, the four adversaries showed no interest in chasing the retreating attackers. They felt at a disadvantage, forced to keep a constant watch on the burning carriage to prevent their precious cargo—the children—from attempting to escape.

The ones intent on fighting were the lower-ranked experts. Yan Xiaobao's call for retreat filled their eyes with hope as they charged toward him and his friends instead of attempting to escape themselves.

Watching them advance, Yan Xiaobao stopped and pushed his three companions forward. Turning back, he struggled to suppress the red fog boiling inside him, but it suddenly erupted, hurtling toward the advancing experts. Letting go of his restraint, he allowed the red fog to completely transform his body in subtle yet horrifying ways. This young man no longer resembled a human. Three distinctive marks etched themselves deep onto his face, his fangs elongated, and his eyes lost their icy blue hue, replaced by a hellish shade of red.

His once-white hair gradually turned crimson along with his skin. His physique grew larger as his legs transformed—longer, sturdier, no longer human-like but reminiscent of a wolf's. His hands grew massive, his claws sharpened to lethal points.

Facing the charging cultivators, Yan Xiaobao let out a long, tortured howl before swiping at the first man rushing at him, tearing him apart with ease.

Before the cultivators could react, one of them had already fallen lifeless to the ground. Only then did the remaining cultivators hesitate and halt, their spines tingling as they glimpsed the terrifying creature before them.

What had once been human now resembled a crimson Fire Wolf. Balanced on his hind legs, his monstrous claws were the largest they'd ever seen. His legs radiated explosive power, his sharp fangs poised to crush their fragile necks. Using his newly enhanced legs, Yan Xiaobao shot forward at the cultivators who had dared to attack him. His palms struck them relentlessly, injuring several and killing others. When he clamped down on an enemy's throat and bit ferociously, his mocking grin never wavered, as he crushed their vertebrae and ended their life in an instant.

With blood staining his lips and dripping from his claws, the young man-turned-beast looked more savage than ever, instilling fear in all who gazed upon him. The more he killed, the stronger he seemed to become, as though the bloodshed and carnage invigorated the beast within.

If Yan Xiaobao's consciousness were clear, he'd notice that within his Dantian Cave, where the red fog typically resided, a small black, gemstone-like stone had begun to form, steadily growing larger. The more lives he claimed, the bigger the stone became.

Gritting their teeth, the four King Ranking Experts remained stationed near the carriage, observing cautiously from the shadows. They feared the kings who had ambushed them before but were equally torn by their desire to attack Yan Xiaobao.

The boy-turned-monster rampaged. His strength continued to grow with each injury he sustained. Many Dragon Clan soldiers, who had once thought to retreat safely, found themselves paralyzed with fear and fled in every direction as they desperately sought to avoid crossing paths with Yan Xiaobao in his frenzied beast form.

Scanning the area with sharp, glowing red eyes, Yan Xiaobao saw no other targets left to strike—no one except the four King Ranking Experts.

Chapter 496 Urgent Time\_2

Looking at the four people, Lan Feng let out a heavy sigh. The Phoenix's soul stood up and walked toward Yan Xiaobao, who was in a dazed state. Without ceremony or any regret, the Phoenix kicked Yan Xiaobao's consciousness, causing him to fall and awaken, his eyes full of shock.

As soon as Yan Xiaobao woke up, a loud howl reached his ears. It sounded like the cry of a wounded beast. Yan Xiaobao swiftly manipulated the blue cloud and took over the red fog once a calming and soothing atmosphere emerged.

When they saw these changes, the four King-level experts were dumbfounded, as the wolf-like beast transformed into a youthful white-haired man. They couldn't fathom what had just occurred. Their astonishment deepened when they felt the dense essence emanating from the blue clouds covering the sky and earth around them.

When his gaze locked onto the young man, the Captain felt a pang in his chest. Though he had long decided that the top priority was to deliver the cargo to the Capital, he still intended to bring along the prisoner. There was a stark difference between losing his personnel for a prisoner's escape and completing a successful mission with them.

He cursed softly, resisting the urge to swear at the Dragon Company's office in Long River Cave for its team mission involving the prisoner. Yet even while cursing, he refrained from approaching the white-haired young man toward whom his friends had once gone.

The Captain clenched his fists, surveying the suddenly quiet surroundings, only to find no bodies left on the ground. All those people had vanished along with the feral young man.

"They're the ones we encountered at the restaurant," said one of the Kings, his voice trembling with rage as he stared at the destroyed carriage behind him.

"I know," the Captain replied angrily, "Bring those laws into the caravan where we previously held the prisoner and lock the doors. The four of us will have to protect this carriage for the remainder of the journey."

"Well, now that all those weaklings are gone, we can spend the night in peace," another King remarked, trying to maintain a positive outlook. "Not to mention, they're unlikely to attack us again. They know

nothing of our cargo, and even if they did, they wouldn't know how to use the laws. Besides us, no one can handle them."

"Shut up!" the Captain roared. "Don't mess up our cargo. Let's keep moving."

"What about the surviving soldiers?" another King asked as he looked at the surrounding darkness. Considering the disappearance of all the bodies, it was difficult to tell how many had survived.

"They escaped," the Captain replied dismissively. Though he understood the futility of humans dealing with beasts, he no longer concerned himself with those who fled. If they managed to reach the Capital themselves, they might get another assignment, but if not, they were no longer worth his attention.

Yan Xiaobao hadn't retreated far. His blue eyes were fixed on the Kings, narrowing sharply at the mention of "laws."

The caravan no longer consisted of three carriages and a large number of soldiers; now it contained a single carriage guarded by four Kings.

Watching them pull away, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but frown slightly before turning and heading in the direction his friends had gone.

Yan Xiaobao hid in the shadows, waiting for the four Kings to disappear into the distance, and then exhaled deeply.

He hadn't expected the Captain to be willing to let so many soldiers under his command die without any retaliation. But upon hearing the word "laws," Yan Xiaobao understood that their so-called cargo was an even higher priority. As he watched them fade into the distance, a mix of emotions surged within him.

Rescuing his friends was the main goal of his attack; however, he was acutely aware that something had changed within him during the confrontation, and he needed time to inspect his body and investigate these changes. Yet, he resolved to do nothing until he reunited with his friends. With one last glance at the dark tunnel where the King Ranking Experts had vanished, Yan Xiaobao turned and started running toward his companions.

Previously, Yan Xiaobao and Xu Biao had agreed to meet at a designated side tunnel. Rushing toward this location, he encountered other soldiers fleeing the battle. They didn't notice the cloaked figure as they cautiously approached the battlefield, hoping to regroup with their allies.

Yan Xiaobao hurried past them, knowing the King Ranking Experts had already left and that these soldiers posed no threat to him or his friends. Thus, he ignored them completely.

Through the shadows, Hui Yue quickly pinpointed the side tunnel where his friends were supposed to be waiting. As he neared his destination, he grew increasingly excited, his heartbeat quickening and a wide, uncontrollable smile spreading across his face.

The side tunnel was pitch dark, the air heavy and oppressive. Entering the tunnel, Yan Xiaobao picked up a luminous stone to light his path. After traveling several kilometers, he finally saw his friends; all of them brightened and overjoyed at the sight of the white-haired boy approaching them.

Yan Xiaobao felt the same joy. His face broke into an uncontrollable grin, his eyes gleaming with happiness. Seeing them directly ahead, he increased his pace.

Among the three of them, Yan Xiaobao's gaze fell on Wang Julong first. At the sight of her, he felt a massive weight lifting off his shoulders. He accelerated, rushing toward the young woman and embracing her passionately. His icy blue eyes shimmered with moisture as his heart pounded uncontrollably, the hug filled with raw emotion.

From the moment he discovered the caravan and tried to locate Sha Yun and Deng Wu through the window, unable to spot Wang Julong, a deep unease gnawed at him. Though he repeatedly assured himself she was safe, lingering doubts slowly eroded his confidence. Now that she stood before him, unharmed and showing no signs of abuse, his emotions overflowed; he could no longer suppress his joy.

Watching Yan Xiaobao's actions left the four Observers stunned, their eyebrows rising as they observed the young white-haired boy's emotional liberation.

Sha Yun saw the embrace that sank her heart. Her emotions soured, yet she did nothing to ruin the moment, patiently waiting to hear what Yan Xiaobao had missed during it all.

For her part, Wang Julong stood frozen, her mind blank as her face gradually turned beet red. She didn't attempt to flee and simply stayed in place, allowing Yan Xiaobao to release his feelings.

It was only after a long while that Yan Xiaobao released her, letting out a sigh and smiling warmly at all his gathered friends. His next move was to give Deng Wu and Sha Yun hugs as well. He truly worried about the three of them and what they'd endured, finally feeling like things might turn out okay.

"We need to head deeper into the tunnel," Xu Biao said nervously. Though he was a King-level expert and heavily impacted by the reunion's emotions, his mind remained sharp, urging them to move forward.

"The Dragon Army has been ordered to take these three to the Capital. I'm certain they won't simply leave them behind," he continued, constantly apprehensive about the sudden appearance of the four King Ranking Experts from behind them. While they managed to keep them occupied earlier, it was primarily because the Kings were focused on protecting the carriage and its "cargo." Even so, Xu Biao and Xie Lan both incurred injuries—not fatal but surely causing them pain.

"Don't worry," Yan Xiaobao said with a radiant smile. "The four King Ranking Experts left earlier, taking one of the carriages," he explained. "It seems their original mission was more important than escorting my friends," he added. After a brief silence, he continued, "Their precious 'cargo' was some laws."

At this revelation, Deng Wu, Sha Yun, and Wang Julong all stared at Yan Xiaobao, their initial shock quickly shifting to regret. They each recalled their time at Cave's End and how they managed to protect certain laws. Unfortunately, it seemed that many others were in grave danger, beyond their capability to assist.

"There's no need to worry too much now," Yan Xiaobao said, comforting them. He began to move his hands, retrieving corpses one by one from his storage stone and laying them on the ground.

Looking at the bodies, he felt a pang of nausea. Some had died clean deaths, but most were mutilated—missing half their bodies, emitting the stench of burned flesh, or with heads shattered beyond recognition. All of these injuries were inflicted by Yan Xiaobao, the effect of the red fog.

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Seeing all the corpses, his friends felt uncomfortable, not knowing why he saved them and arranged them in front of their eyes for this purpose.

After Yan Xiaobao had thoroughly cleaned them up, he discovered that he had managed to kill and store 27 men. He stared at them for a while before picking up a corpse and rummaging through its pocket for jewels and items, panting heavily. He took every stone he came across.

Seeing Yan Xiaobao methodically conduct his actions, the three friends suddenly realized that their storage stones were being kept and maintained by some members of the Dragon Corps who had been with them in the same carriage. If they escaped, their storage stones would be lost forever.

None of the friends wanted this to happen, and it wasn't long before the three of them joined Yan Xiaobao, one after another, in gathering stones.

Despite the many scattered corpses, it wasn't long before the four friends managed to pick up every piece of stone lying around. The smell of charred flesh and blood wafted through the unlit tunnel, summoning one monster after another desiring the delicious meat.

As they searched, Xu Biao and Xie Lan stood ready, warding off every approaching beast. However, when the creatures turned into a horde, the six friends quickly decided to retreat. They had found all their storage stones and truly did not need to continue searching.

Returning to a lit section of the tunnel, Yan Xiaobao and his friends soon discovered another descending passage.

The side tunnel contained many small underground caves carved into the walls, used both as bandit hideouts and homes for large groups of magical beasts. For now, Yan Xiaobao hoped to take over one of these dens so they could sit down and examine their loot. Not to mention, he wanted to see if they could find anything of particular interest among the Dragon Corps items they had gathered.

The tunnel they chose to enter was brimming with magical beasts, indicating the absence of bandits nearby. This was because bandits usually ensured to clear the beasts surrounding their territory, but one

could never be too careful. Hence, the six friends advanced cautiously, killing one beast after another and storing their carcasses in their storage stones.

Finally, after several days of searching, the group managed to find a resting spot. Upon entering the cave, a loud howl echoed within, but when the beast came close enough to sense Xu Biao and Xie Lan's aura, it wisely decided to retreat; unwilling to risk its life for a mere cave.

Within Yue Cave, a campfire was set up. Yan Xiaobao sat down and tossed several storage stones toward Xu Biao and Xie Lan. Each of them quickly used Qi chains to bind the stones together, then opened them to examine their contents.

"Oh, this one contains a thousand Demon Cores," Xu Biao said in surprise. "There's plenty of food here, but no interesting weapons or scrolls."

"This one barely has any money, only seventy Demon Cores," Sha Yun said with a frown, then suddenly exclaimed, "Wait, oh wait!" She waved her hand, and three Memory Stones suddenly appeared. Placing a Memory Gem against her forehead, a bright blue light shone throughout the cave. After a while, she removed the first stone before moving to the second and third.

"Don't mind them," she sighed. "They're just maps of the cave system. We've seen similar ones in the Demon Dwelling Cave."

Hearing this, everyone held their breath in hope for interesting news, but sighed in disappointment and shook their heads when it didn't come. A few mocking smirks were exchanged before they continued sorting through the stones.

"It's here! I found it!" Deng Wu said excitedly, having uncovered a storage stone that contained a collection of various other storage stones. On the ground lay the stones belonging to Deng Wu, Sha Yun, and Wang Julong.

Yan Xiaobao and the others returned the stones to their original owners and pooled together all the loot they acquired. With about 220,000 Demon Cores in total, it was more than enough to sustain the team as they continued their journey.

In addition to Demon Coins, they found plenty of food and wine, likely brought along by the Dragon Clan members for their mission. Besides food and wine, Yan Xiaobao also uncovered a considerable amount of refined materials, not to mention a large number of inscriptions, which were used by cultivators aligned with metal affinities.

Some bags contained weapons, while others were filled with jewels. After thoroughly examining everything, Yan Xiaobao divided all the items evenly among the six members. All the inscriptions ended up with Deng Wu, who eagerly sorted through each inscription pattern, trying to determine the activation ability of each template.

Having distributed the loot, Yan Xiaobao sat down to begin meditation. He was curious to uncover what changes had occurred within him after being momentarily overtaken by the red fog.

At first glance, everything inside his body seemed just as it had been before. None of his meridians were broken, nor had he advanced to a higher rank as a Master Star. The red cloud seemed unchanged as well.

In fact, contrary to its usual behavior, the red cloud appeared incredibly subdued, prompting Yan Xiaobao to look at it cautiously. He wasn't sure whether this was the calm before the storm or if the earlier battle had exhausted it entirely.

#### Chapter 498 Choosing Wisely\_2

Admiring the red fog, Yan Xiaobao slowly noticed a small black gemstone-like object hidden in the midst of the mist. It was something he had seen countless times before, a small black core. Without a doubt, it was a Demon Core or Beast Core, as people referred to it on the ground.

Seeing the Demon Core within the red fog, Yan Xiaobao was taken aback, especially because the core appeared nothing special. It was a black core, signifying that it belonged to a very ordinary Demon Beast—one vastly inferior to beasts even at the Master level.

Knowing the power he could wield after obtaining it, he found it inconceivable that it was weaker than other cultivators' cores. There had to be a reason why a Demon Core was reduced to being merely a low-level core.

"Don't worry too much;" Lan Feng remarked with his eyes closed, focused on refining Wu Wei. Sharing a soul with Lan Feng made it easy for Phoenix to sense everything Yan Xiaobao experienced, and the sudden disruption finally prompted the bird to speak.

"A beast's core emerges when you're completely overtaken. If you're consumed by the beast for a long time, the core will eventually evolve into a golden one," Lan Feng added, falling silent for a moment. "I suggest not letting the red fog take control immediately. If it seizes your body, you may end up hurting your friends."

Hearing the warning, Yan Xiaobao nodded earnestly. He fully understood that once controlled by the red fog, his body would be beyond his grasp. Every time the mist influenced him, he became a liability—a threat to his friends, incapable of fighting freely.

"Don't let it get you down," Lan Feng continued, "It's an incredible trump card. And for now, while the red fog isn't something Yan Xiaobao can handle alone, he still has the Blue Cloud to aid him."

The Blue Cloud was something he understood better than the red fog. The red fog grew stronger with every kill and relentlessly vied for control of his body. Its transformation into a savage creature was evident. However, the Blue Cloud remained serene, gentle, enigmatic—so much so that Yan Xiaobao couldn't figure out its nature or origin. He'd never heard of a human or any other entity possessing such an aura.

The wings were another anomaly. He previously gained wings from being a creature that had them, right? But if that were the case, why were they crafted by Wu Wei? If the wings were of beast origin, they should have been easier to wield.

The green pearl and the red fog were similarly intriguing entities. Hui Yue speculated they came from someone specializing in healing. Yet, whoever they were, their demeanor was formidable, as they rarely showcased their true power.

Reflecting on the many mysteries surrounding him, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but sigh. They were all equally troublesome yet undeniably useful. Their origins, their functions—these were puzzles Yan Xiaobao had yet to solve. For now, all he could do was learn how to manage them.

Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes and observed his friends, all engrossed in their own pursuits. Xie Lan was healing Xu Biao, Deng Wu was immersed in the multitude of inscriptions he had suddenly obtained, and Wang Julong was training with her staff—energy ripples bursting from every motion she made, showcasing her growing strength.

Sha Yun wasn't training like the others. Unlike humans, as a mystical Demon Beast, she didn't need to exert much effort to advance in cultivation. However, being a Demon Beast meant that while she could merge with the earth's essence naturally, she couldn't train as humans did to increase the percentage of her fusion rate. This innate ability was maxed out by default and could never be further enhanced.

Sha Yun's cultivation method revolved around improving the essence of heaven and earth, fueling her continuous progress.

Yet for now, her energy wasn't focused elsewhere; she sat beside Yan Xiaobao, waiting for him to return from his meditation.

When he opened his eyes, her lips parted as if intending to speak but quickly closed again. Her face turned slightly red, seemingly unable to vocalize what she wanted to say.

Seeing Sha Yun's timid expression, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but chuckle. Before his face turned serious, he gently patted her head. "Yun, what's wrong?" he asked softly. "You know you can ask me anything, so there's no need to be so embarrassed."

Hearing his words, Sha Yun forced a bitter smile. She knew all too well that Yan Xiaobao would answer any question she asked—and that realization was precisely what unsettled her. It was the answer she dreaded.

She wanted to ask whether Yan Xiaobao had feelings for Wang Julong. Based on their behavior, it seemed that way, though he hadn't said anything directly. The Snake Woman harbored hope but felt devastated watching their reunion and the embrace he gave Wang Julong. Now, she felt compelled to know the truth.

And yet, despite her longing for clarity, she found herself utterly incapable of asking the question. Her heartbeat raced, her chest tightening as though her heart was stuck in her throat, blocking the words

she wanted to speak. Eventually, she simply shook her head and walked away to find a quiet corner in the cave, where she began channeling the essence of heaven and earth.

Watching Sha Yun's strange behavior, Yan Xiaobao felt puzzled for a moment before shaking his head and heading toward Wang Julong.

The black-haired woman was so immersed in her training that she didn't notice Yan Xiaobao's approach. She swung her staff at an angle, its motion blocked by the back of a black dagger.

"How about sparring with me for a bit?" Yan Xiaobao asked curiously as he jumped in front of her. Wang Julong's face flushed instantly, recalling the earlier hug, but she quickly put on a mischievous smile and nodded to her friend.

Excited by her consent, Yan Xiaobao immediately sprang into action. His eyes gleamed with anticipation as he infused spiritual energy into his dagger, activating Velocity Flow to charge directly into Wang Julong's range.

Knowing his intentions, Wang Julong smirked slyly, raising her staff overhead to clash with his dagger. Yan Xiaobao staggered slightly before retreating. Then a red hue appeared—this wasn't Yan Xiaobao's doing, but Wang Julong's. Her staff glowed, releasing energy, as her small weasel appeared on the battlefield, delight evident in the youth's face.

Noticing Wang Julong employing her full strength, everyone else in the cave quickly stopped what they were doing to watch the duel between the two young combatants.

Wang Julong's staff moved so swiftly that unless one focused on the weapon itself, it was nearly invisible. To the naked eye, only fleeting shadows could be seen here and there.

Yan Xiaobao was stunned by how much her skills had improved. Warmth and joy filled his heart as he concentrated solely on the shadows of her staff, dodging one strike after another. Yan Xiaobao moved so quickly that even the most observant couldn't fully track him.

Realizing she couldn't match him with her current battle style, Wang Julong thought of her weasel. In an instant, a heavy Energy Ripple spread outward like rings in water, disintegrating everything it touched into dust. Even Hui Yue wouldn't dare challenge this terrifying move.

Utilizing Velocity Flow, Hui Yue retreated before soaring high above the Energy Ripple. Like an arrow shot through the sky, he aimed directly for the woman and her glowing red staff.

At such incredible speed, the previous shadows seemed turtle-like in comparison. Yan Xiaobao reached Wang Julong's rear in less than a second. Just as he anticipated victory, her staff struck his abdomen. Forced backward, Yan Xiaobao retreated once again.

As they withdrew, Yan Xiaobao and Wang Julong finally faced off directly. Their weapons twirled around them, the sound of clashing metal echoing throughout the silent cave.

Their attacks grew increasingly powerful, their speed continuously escalating. Wang Julong wielded her staff with both hands, while Yan Xiaobao relied on his single-handed weapon. However, his dagger was reinforced with spiritual energy and infused with black blood.

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Chapter 499 The Confrontation of Refusal to Give Up

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After a slash followed by a fierce strike, and thrust after thrust, the two cultivators remained locked in a stalemate, unable to win yet unwilling to give up.

Wang Julong was faring worse than Yan Xiaobao. Although she had learned how to control the staff's consumption of spiritual energy, she couldn't continue battling for long. Her beautiful face began to pale, and beads of sweat appeared on her forehead.

Seeing this, Yan Xiaobao withdrew once again, simultaneously halting the staff and stepping out of range. "I give up," he said with a gentle smile as he looked at the panting woman before him, his face showing a tender expression.

Meeting Yan Xiaobao's gaze, Wang Julong clutched her staff tightly, held her breath, then nodded toward the white-haired youth.

"I lost," she said quietly, and then sat down to begin cultivating. It seemed she was having a breakthrough.

Her breakthrough did not appear to have elevated her level. However, her body emitted a green glow, indicating she had gained insight into the Wood Elemental affinity.

Seeing this, a sense of happiness welled up in Yan Xiaobao's heart. The more insights and breakthroughs they achieved, the stronger their team became. Even though he had been training diligently, he still felt far from strong enough to protect his friends. For this reason, he hoped they could improve, so that even upon reaching the Dragon Core, they wouldn't easily succumb to challengers.

Sha Yun had been making constant progress, even without doing anything, as she naturally matured as a magical beast with age. This put Yan Xiaobao's worries about her to rest.

After Deng Wu spent time browsing through the wealth of newly acquired inscriptions, he quickly realized that they possessed high-level abilities, with some even utilizing martial power instead of spiritual energy.

Inscriptions work by etching abilities onto parchment, and with the aid of spiritual energy fused with metal, individuals can unleash attacks stored within the parchment.

Each inscription contains various runes. Studying these runes is the method to determine the type of attack they hold. The color of the runes indicates the nature of the elemental attack. A white rune signifies a martial attack crafted by Qi, a silver rune indicates a spiritual art attack with no elemental affinity, while a golden rune denotes an attack utilizing martial power.

Attacks utilizing martial power are exceedingly rare, as they require a King-level expert or someone of higher rank to write and seal the attack within the parchment.

Upon discovering fourteen such inscriptions, Deng Wu displayed immense excitement. The only uncertainty he had was what type of attack these martial power scrolls contained—he wouldn't know

until he used them. As such, they carried an element of risk but simultaneously offered a sense of security.

Apart from the fourteen martial power scrolls, they had also obtained one hundred thirty-four random elemental affinity attack scrolls and fifty scrolls containing martial arts techniques. Overall, Deng Wu's strength increased significantly, far more than he had anticipated.

Deng Wu wasn't the only one who gained something valuable from the storage stone. Every member of the group now possessed numerous luminous stones, as well as food and drinks. Sha Yun received several melee weapons since she had only used a halberd thus far. Xie Lan was gifted a beautiful inscribed armor piece when her defensive power was lacking. Wang Julong was given flower seeds, which had been taken from a man slain in battle—someone who specialized in using plants, much like her. Unfortunately, that man hadn't had the chance to demonstrate his skills before his head was engulfed by the beast transformation of the white-haired youth.

No longer in a rush to reach the Dragon Core, the group remained in the cave for several days, allowing Wang Julong to fully immerse herself in her breakthrough experience.

The insights she gained inspired the others to focus even more deeply on their own training. Soon, all the young members of the group were seated in profound meditation, refining the essence of heaven and earth into Qi, and further refining that Qi Spirit into spiritual energy.

While deeply immersed in meditation, the green aura surrounding Wang Julong grew increasingly intense. Eventually, it became so powerful that everyone in the cave could feel it. The energy she emitted was filled with life and vitality. It was evident that her insights were related to healing.

After seven days of meditation, Wang Julong finally opened her eyes. Her face showed a deep expression, and her lips curled into a faint smile. When she saw that everyone around her—except the two kings—was completely engrossed in cultivation, she couldn't help but smile slightly.

"Julong," Xie Lan called out, and Wang Julong immediately walked toward the woman she still considered her teacher. Unlike Yan Xiaobao, none of the other three friends had ever doubted the loyalty of these two individuals. After all, Yan Xiaobao had never told them that they worked for Zhou Long.

"What did you learn?" Xie Lan asked curiously. As a King-level expert who had previously managed to cultivate to Duke-level, it was clear that she had already grasped much of the deeper secrets surrounding the Wood Element.

"Healing isn't just about mending injuries," Wang Julong began, her voice somewhat hesitant, as if still processing her enlightenment. "Healing is tied to the passage of time. To mend wounds, we're not simply repairing a specific spot; we're manipulating the time required for healing and forcing it into compression. That's why some injuries can't be easily repaired—why some wounds are truly incurable."

#### Chapter 500 The Confrontation of Refusal to Give Up\_2

Upon hearing this, Xie Lan nodded. She had long understood the truth about time. Time was indeed the most crucial aspect of healing, one of the more elusive truths to gain insight into.

"Did you realize this from Yan Xiaobao's Crystal Stone?" she asked curiously. The Crystal Stone had nothing to do with healing or time, yet somehow, it had sparked such a revelation.

Wang Julong nodded, "His movements are as if blending together. Like the air moves with him as one." She began to explain, her eyes brimming with excitement, "Merging with the air, forcing it to move the way he desires. It's like how we command our flesh, bones, and veins to move." She continued.

"Watching him act this way, I realized seeing him was impossible; there was simply no time. He uses his speed to escape time, flowing and becoming one with the air. I use time to compress, force, and create. We all use time, but the way we manipulate it is distinct."

Hearing this, Xie Lan was utterly flabbergasted. She believed Yan Xiaobao hadn't utilized time at all. She thought he was merely employing pure speed. However, ultimately, whether she understood it or not didn't matter; the important thing was that Wang Julong had made a breakthrough. That was what truly mattered.

Not long after, Deng Wu awoke from his meditation. He was pleased to see Wang Julong no longer dazedly absorbed in her insights. The four Cultivators moved slightly closer to one another, speculating when their new plan might unfold and what it would be.

In the midst of this, Yan Xiaobao opened his eyes, seeing Wang Julong, Xie Lan, and Deng Wu chatting joyfully together, a satisfied smile spreading across his lips.

He stood up, stretching his weary body, then went on to join the others. Yan Xiaobao approached them, heading straight for Xu Biao.

"How far are we from the Dragon Core?" he asked, deeply tired of traversing this Underworld. Although this civilization was quite familiar to him, the constant ceiling overhead and the dark, dim tunnels made him feel like a prisoner.

"Not too far," Xu Biao replied. "We are just three caves away from the Dragon Core. The closer we get, the denser the population. In the last two caves, the entire region consists of two vast cities spanning thousands of kilometers."

Upon hearing this, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but raise his eyebrows. The closer they got to the Dragon Core, the more relieved he felt, and he couldn't suppress his excitement.

While chatting with Xu Biao, Sha Yun woke up from his meditation, and the group settled down together not long after. They looked to Yan Xiaobao, waiting for him to decide the next course of action.

"We are quite close to the Dragon Core now," Yan Xiaobao said, sharing what Xu Biao had mentioned earlier. "Our goal is to navigate through the Dragon Core and find a way to leave these tunnels."

"We need to keep an eye on the laws," he continued, "Although they don't directly concern us, they hold significance for Lan Feng. Therefore, we should look to him to see if we can uncover the truth of the situation."

Upon hearing Yan Xiaobao mention Lan Feng, Sha Yun, Deng Wu, and Wang Julong all nodded. The three of them understood that Lan Feng harbored a Divine Beast within him, while Xu Biao and Xie Lan believed Lan Feng was an expert whose soul had merged with Yan Xiaobao with the help of a Priest.

When Xu Biao heard of Lan Feng, he knew Yan Xiaobao would do whatever it took to uncover what truly happened. Yan Xiaobao was someone who repaid kindness tenfold. It was evident that he had thus far been the one accepting help from the hidden expert who walked behind him.

It was clear that he was indeed the hidden expert guiding their group of four as they ventured underground for combat. To the Guild Master, it was obvious: the hidden expert had saved Yan Xiaobao on many occasions, such as during the duel against the Demon Dance Family.

Xu Biao saw that Yan Xiaobao was ready to move forward, and he nodded solemnly, resolving to aid this young man. He had always considered himself a good friend to the latter and still felt remorseful for choosing to report their actions to Zhou Long.

Deng Wu's eyes took on an even darker hue than usual, and anger was evident on the faces of Sha Yun and Wang Julong.

The trio vividly remembered the young grandchildren and children that had been captured. Although Lan seemed indifferent to her future, she was still a living being; she had emotions and was living her own life.

Seeing how the Dragon Army treated these laws left a bitter taste in Yan Xiaobao's mouth. Though he knew he had no responsibility for the laws, he was still disgusted by the Dragon Clan's treatment of other life forms.

Killing them was one thing. Yan Xiaobao understood he lived in the world of Martial Artists, a world where death lurked in every corner, and only the strong prevailed. It was something he had long since accepted, even finding it thrilling in its own way.

However, he believed in swiftly killing one's opponent or enemy. Capturing laws was never about killing them. It was obvious that whatever actions were taken against them, these beings wouldn't perish, and Yan Xiaobao strongly suspected they were gathered for gentler talks within the Dragon Army. Even the mere term "cargo" revealed how the laws were regarded.

Letting out a deep sigh, a determined expression appeared in Yan Xiaobao's ice-blue eyes. He cracked his neck before signaling his friends to follow him, "Next stop, Dragon Core!"

Leaving the dark cave, Yan Xiaobao and the group began to battle through the shadowed tunnels once more. Before long, they followed the flow of people through illuminated sections of the tunnels.

They now approached their journey to the Capital entirely differently. Previously, they hadn't been in a hurry. Encountering the Scar-faced Killer had caused the group to slow down even further, yet now they realized that Scarface wasn't the only danger they might face along the way.

Truthfully, Hui Yue was slightly disappointed by Scarface. The man had appeared and started killing their team members but then suddenly stopped. He left behind nothing but a lingering sense of danger, as no one knew when he might strike again.

Initially, Yan Xiaobao was deeply concerned, but after considering the situation further, he concluded that perhaps Scarface wasn't as dangerous as he originally thought. He had never seen the man initiate a full-scale attack. The tiger beside him had carried out strikes. Seeing him rely on stealth attacks proved he lacked confidence in facing groups, especially with two King Ranking experts among them.

With this realization, Yan Xiaobao was no longer worried about running into Scarface. Instead, his heart burned with an intense excitement; he longed for the battle he anticipated when they finally clashed.

Traversing the tunnels, the group soon reached another cave. This cave was entirely different from their expectations, as it was largely used for agriculture. Looking into the distance, one could see a vast city located within a valley.

"This place provides food for the Dragon Core and Dragon's Avenue Cave," Xu Biao explained, and Yan Xiaobao nodded. It made sense. As Xu Biao had mentioned earlier, the last two caves—Dragon Core and Dragon's Avenue Cave—both housed two cities that occupied the entire caves, leaving no room for farming. Instead, they relied on earlier caves, primarily this one, the Holy Festival cave.

Although Yan Xiaobao found this cave intriguing, he still moved swiftly through the landscape. The group only spent one night relaxing in the city before setting out again.

Traversing the Holy Festival cave took over a week. They traveled each day, resting for only a few hours each time. Entering another tunnel, they stayed within the brightly lit sections, all impressed by how much busier the tunnel was than previous ones. Carts carried harvested vegetables, corn, and meats to the two cities ahead.

Though the sight of all the carts surprised them, it had little effect on Yan Xiaobao or his friends. When they reached Dragon's Avenue Cave, their journey through the tunnels had gone smoothly.

