

Spirit Realm #Chapter 31 — 40

Power Revealed! - Read Spirit Realm Chapter 31 — Power Revealed!

Chapter 31: Power Revealed!

A wisp of mind energy slowly entered into the spirit artifact, allowing Qin Lie to clearly see a simple and unrefined spirit diagram; it was “Spirit Gathering”!

Compared to the “Spirit Gathering” diagram Qin Lie was familiar with, it was like the difference between heaven and earth. Regardless of whether it was the spirit diagram’s precision, complexity, or size, they were all much too inferior!

Originally, in order to remember the “Spirit Gathering” diagram within the Soul Suppressing Orb, Qin Lie had spent a lot of effort in a bitter attempt to study it. Thus, he had a very profound understanding of “Spirit Gathering” diagrams and was almost able to instantly recognize the spirit diagram within the short spear.

The spirit diagram within the short spear was only a small part of the “Spirit Gathering” diagram that he was familiar with. It probably wasn’t even a tenth of the size of the “Spirit Gathering” diagram within the Soul Suppressing Orb. Moreover, the precision and connections of the inscription were poor, making it unable to fully utilize the effects of a “Spirit Gathering” diagram.

A weird look appeared in Qin Lie’s eyes as an idea unconsciously emerged in his mind: If this can be considered a spirit artifact, then what would happen if I were to inscribe that extremely complex true ‘Spirit Gathering’ diagram into it?

“Crackle crackle crackle!”

He didn’t have time to think any longer as an electric current suddenly rippled around the short spear.

After he infused his spirit energy, the short spear began to flicker with lightning, as if it had suddenly absorbed and trapped a stream of lightning, and also bathed him in light.

“Hm? This is also possible?” silently exclaimed Qin Lie, immediately feeling around inwardly.

He discovered that when his berserking thunder and lightning energy were infused into the incomplete, simplistic, and crude “Spirit Gathering” diagram and circulated within, they would release the special characteristics within the spirit materials of the spirit artifact itself. Thus, the short spear became sharper and the spirit energy became slightly upgraded.

He immediately understood that even the simpler spirit diagrams could also be used to increase the power of the practitioner; this was true as long as they were able to draw out the innate characteristics of the spirit materials used in refining the spirit artifact!

“Qin Lie! Don’t come over!”

Ling Feng shouted, shaking the Firecloud Hammer in his hands and condensed cluster after cluster of fire clouds, which greatly raised the temperature. It was as if Feng Yun’s body had been encircled by red lanterns.

Feng Lun, who was similarly at the seventh level of the Refinement Realm, wielded a double-edged axe. As it hacked and chopped, halo after halo of green light condensed.

Sometimes, the double bit axe would draw a circle, surprisingly forming a beautiful green wing of light. Not only could the green wing of light block the fire cloud clusters, it also forced Ling Feng to retreat after diffusing them.

Clearly, the green wing of light could not only defend, but also attack!

“Ling Feng, we are both very familiar with each other. Your Firecloud Hammer is a Grade Two spirit artifact whereas my Green Wing Axe is Grade Three! Our cultivation levels are the same, as is our spirit energy. However, my spirit artifact is better, and thus you cannot beat me,” Feng Lun chuckled, swinging the Green Wing Axe and forming another beautiful feathered wing, routing out the fire clouds.

They were martial practitioners of the same cultivation level, with their spirit energy effectively the same as well, which meant whoever had the higher quality spirit artifact held the advantage.

Feng Lun hefted the Green Wing Axe, full of self confidence and in no rush to risk his life. His job was to just make sure that Ling Feng couldn’t intervene in another battle so the Feng Family members could smoothly kill off the rest of the Ling Family clansmen.

Feng Lun’s strategy would have been flawless if Feng Jie hadn’t died, as Ling Xin would have died at his hands, which would then allowed Feng Jie to move on to killing the rest one by one.

However...

“Qin Lie! I said don’t come over! Eh?”

Ling Feng suddenly cried in fear as he looked at Qin Lie, who was walking up behind Feng Lun, with a sliver of astonishment showing on his face.

Feng Lun didn't even bother looking behind him, and continued laughing weirdly, "Did you think that your acting would work? How could a fool cause me to divide my attention and look back? Ling Feng, please, your trick is so pathetic it's funny."

"Zzt zzt zzt zzt!"

The sound of a rippling electric current suddenly emanated from behind Feng Lun. He had just finished speaking when his expression suddenly underwent an immense change. He hastily disregarded the shocked Ling Feng as he abruptly looked behind him.

In Qin Lie's hand was what seemed to be a luminous, dazzlingly white lightning bolt. His body exuded an extremely violent and fierce aura, causing him to resemble a vicious beast galloping over.

"This is... that fool?"

Feng Lun was stunned, and subconsciously brandished his Green Wing Axe to form yet another green wing of light which he sent at Qin Lie.

An sharp burst of spirit energy surged over along with the green wing of light, causing Qin Lie's expression to turn solemn.

However, he didn't dodge nor yield. Gripping the short spear twisting with thunder and lightning, he explosively rushed over!

"Zzzt zzzt zzzt!"

The thunder and lightning energy atop the spear tip collided with the green wing of light, resulting in the release of an extremely violent crackling of electricity.

"Cling clang!"

The short spear ripped through the green wing of light, directly hitting the axehead of the double bit axe in Feng Lun's hands. As the grinding of metal released an extremely harsh sound, Qin Lie's seemingly thin body surged forward and explosively collided directly into Feng Lun's chest.

"Crack!"

An extremely crisp sound of bones breaking emanated out from Feng Lun's chest, his expression immediately becoming ugly.

The terrifying feeling of having been bombarded by a giant ship came to mind as his body soared through the air, drawing a parabola before explosively crashing to the ground.

“This...”

Ling Feng’s eyes popped open, his mouth agape. He looked at Qin Lie as if he had seen a ghost in broad daylight, unable to fathom what had just happened.

Qin Lie, who was nearly half the size of Feng Lun, had, with an incredible impact, actually sent Feng Lun flying. How was this possible? How could such a skinny body hide this kind of power that was reminiscent of a primitive savage beast?

Without waiting for Ling Feng to react, Qin Lie’s seemingly small body, with no hesitation whatsoever, struck at Feng Lun again like an extremely sharp sword!

At this moment, Feng Lun, with a mouth full of blood, couldn’t even stand up. He could only fearfully and desperately crawl backwards...

“That first time by the campfire, I had wanted to kill you right then and there due to the cheapness of your mouth. Now I have fulfilled my desire.”

Qin Lie lowly muttered one sentence and then immediately rushed forward again. A stone beneath his foot suddenly exploded as his body flew into the air. As if he were wielding the power of the lightning from the Ninth Heaven, he came crashing down.

“Pssh!”

Qin Lie viciously impaled Feng Jie’s short spear into Feng Lun’s chest, nailing him onto the ground.

If one suddenly glanced over, Feng Lun would seem to be a giant toad which had been nailed in place by a giant nail, his expression ugly and miserable.

“Gurg!”

Feng Lun’s mouth foamed with blood, his body twitching as the light in his eyes gradually faded.

“Zzzt!”

Also at this moment, an explosive, thunderous sound came from within the short spear. The spirit diagram within seemed damaged.

Surprised, Qin Lie went over and touched the short spear. He discovered that the materials within the spear astonishingly had traces of being charred...

Heavenly Thunder Eradication circulated the energy of thunder and lightning. Not only did it use lightning, it also used thunder! Heavenly Thunder was too overbearing and violent, not something any materials of a spirit artifact could withstand.

Feng Jie's short spear was totally unable to withstand the extreme power of the thunder and lightning for long and had already turned into scrap metal in this short period of time.

"Too weak..."

Qin Lie shook his head as he quietly mumbled to himself. Then, he went to wrest the Green Wing Axe from Feng Lun's corpse.

Afterwards, he noticed the sounds of fierce combat around him come to a complete halt. Confused, he looked around at his surroundings and was instantly stunned.

At this moment the eyes of all the martial practitioners from both families were directed at him and they were filled to the brim with extreme terror; their faces shocked pale!

Their expressions were all full of terror and shock, as if they had suddenly discovered a demon!

"Was it him? Was it also him who killed Feng Jie?" Light rippled in Ling Ying's beautiful eyes as she suddenly happily shouted, "Yay! I knew it was him!"

Ling Xin's face became complicated as he suddenly lowered his head. Others who also felt ashamed and embarrassed were also seemingly afraid to face Qin Lie and averted their gazes.

"This guy, you really did hide yourself really thoroughly! Even we, your own people, were fooled by you..." said Ling Feng, bitterly laughing with his face full of great emotion.

Ling Yushi's pretty face also beamed with a radiant and lustrous smile; the look in her eyes caused even Qin Lie's heart to speed up.

"It was you! It was actually you!" Feng Yi's handsome face unconsciously distorted, causing him to look extremely sinister at this moment. "I was wondering why the Ling Family would leave all of a sudden! There wasn't anyone who left the canyon recently, there was only you, who no one paid attention to. It must have been you who messed with us from the shadows!"

Qin Lie didn't immediately respond to Feng Yi. Instead, he looked at Ling Feng, Ling Ying, Ling Xin, and the others and astonishingly asked, "What are you guys blankly staring for? Feng Jie and Feng Lun have both died, what are you waiting for?"

He looked towards the remaining Feng Family members and then mimed slitting their throats towards Ling Feng and the rest, indicating that they should kill all of them.

Ling Feng immediately reacted, quietly letting out a sound of shame before hurriedly shouting, "Stop blanking out already, let's quickly eliminate the Feng Family!"

Ling Ying, Ling Xin, and the rest roared in response, their morale suddenly soaring. Like fierce beasts, they charged at the Feng Family members, ready to kill them all.

The initially disadvantaged Ling Family now had an overwhelming advantage since Ling Feng's opponent, Feng Lun had been annihilated along with Feng Jie. The situation had completely turned around.

"Retreat! Temporarily retreat! Wait till we regroup with Shattered Ice Manor before attempting to enact revenge!" Upon seeing the situation take a turn for the worse, Feng Yi didn't dare say another word to Qin Lie, hurriedly calling for retreat.

As he shouted, his ice cold eyes gazed at Qin Lie. Not bothering to give Ling Yushi another glance, he turned around and withdrew.

"Kill them all! Every kill counts!"

Qin Lie gave instructions at the same time and immediately infused his violent energy into the Green Wing Axe. When the axe began to blaze with electricity, he fiercely threw it over.

"Boom!"

Under the hot sun, the sound of a thunderclap exploded out of nowhere. The axe rotated in the air, as though a crazed lightning dragon as it soared, on a direct collision course for Feng Yi's back.

Feng Yi's expression changed as he hastily tried to stabilize his stance. He swung the Rainbow Hilt Sword, forming five rainbows which were sent out to block the incoming axe.

"Bang bang bang bang bang!"

The five rainbows collapsed in succession upon collision, leaving Feng Yi with no other way to block the axe's fierce onslaught than receiving it with his Rainbow Hilt Sword. The moment the axe and sword collided, his entire body violently trembled and his long black hair suddenly became charred.

The violent, explosive thunder energy surged into the Rainbow Hilt Sword from the axe and then into Feng Yi's body, immediately wounding him.

A mouthful of blood suddenly rose up his throat, but he held it in, not spitting it out. Seeing Qin Lie rushing over with killing intent, Feng Yi, for the first time in his life, didn't dare to say a single word and hurriedly retreated.

Chapter 32: Dual Powers

With Feng Yi's retreat, there was no way to change the fact that the Feng Family had been defeated. Following Ling Yushi, Ling Feng, and Ling Xin's exertion to kill, any Feng Family member who couldn't retreat quickly enough was slaughtered on the spot.

Qin Lie didn't continue fighting and instead walked over and picked up the Green Wing Axe. Feeling it for a moment, he discovered that the Green Wing Axe was not completely ruined yet and could still be used for a while longer. Because of that, he couldn't help but rejoice a little inside.

"Eighth level of Refinement's Feng Yi still wasn't particularly powerful. Head to head... it didn't feel like he was stronger than me."

Qin Lie pondered to himself, thinking back to the previous battle. As he circulated his energy to observe the state of his body, his eyes suddenly lit up a bit.

He discovered that as he circulated spirit energy, the spirit energy within his dantian's spirit sea would come surging out, following his muscles and veins as it converged towards his arms and then palms before discharging out of his fingers and entering into the spirit artifact.

However, this wasn't even his full strength!

As the spirit energy circulated, wisps of thunder and lightning energy began to accumulate within his muscles, veins, flesh, bones, and even his organs. This was what caused his spirit energy to become violent and fierce, not only increasing the power of his spirit energy, but also allowing it to use the energy of thunder and lightning which in turn greatly increased his power!

He suddenly understood.

These last five years, he had constantly been tempering and refining his physique with the power of the lightning from the Ninth Heaven. However, the thunder and lightning energy that had surged into his body and ravaged through it hadn't completely disappeared. Instead, some had infused into his physique, becoming another source of power outside of his spirit energy!

During a fight against someone else, he could use this thunder and lightning energy to explosively enhance his fighting capabilities!

Currently, he was only at the seventh level of the Refinement Realm. However, if he used this thunder and lightning energy during a fight, increasing his level of strength by one, then he could even fight head to head with Feng Yi and not feel disadvantaged.

Thus, assuming this was true, Feng Jie and Feng Lun who were at the same level as him were simply unable to defend against him.

“...So it was like this. Seems like not a single bit of my years of harsh, bitter tempering were a waste after all! Not only did Heavenly Thunder Eradication greatly increase the strength of my body, it also allows me to use thunder and lightning energy. It is indeed violent and overbearing!”

Qin Lie silently thought to himself, the corners of his mouth gradually forming a joyful smile. Afterwards, he stopped circulating Heavenly Thunder Eradication and tried to control the spirit energy within his spirit sea again.

A relatively calmer spirit energy surged out of the spirit sea, flowing along the same path through to his palm and then into the Green Wing Axe.

“Swoosh!”

The Green Wing Axe suddenly released a misty green halo. Carefully examining it, Qin Lie immediately detected that there was no longer any thunder or lightning energy inside it.

Sure enough, when he didn't circulate Heavenly Thunder Eradication, the spirit energy within his body was normal and wouldn't destroy the structure of the spirit artifact.

“It's another low grade spirit artifact. This simple “Spirit Gathering” diagram, it's no different from the one inside the short spear...”

Relying on his mind energy to feel about, Qin Lie became disappointed yet again. He immediately withdrew his spirit energy, hefting the axe as he walked back towards the Ling Family's people.

“Qin Lie!” Before Ling Yushi could even speak, Ling Ying had already shouted out, her small face overflowing with excitement and an inexplicable expression. “You are so bad, you actually tricked us for so long! Say, have you been acting the fool this entire time to watch us make fun of you?”

“I never would have thought that Qin Lie would actually be this strong!” Ling Xiao excitedly chimed in.

“You stinkin' brat!” Ling Feng walked over, and pounded his chest in jest. He was also full of happiness.

“This time... it is really thanks to you. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to avoid this,” said Ling Yushi, her bright eyes shining.

“Ling Yang died,” commented Ling Xin, solemnly. He was the only person who hadn’t walked over, still standing in the back with his head bowed.

Qin Lie glanced at him from afar before silently walking over and quietly saying, “Then you better live well and kill all of the Feng Family members to avenge him.”

Ling Xin fiercely raised his head, looking deep at Qin Lie. From within his tiger-like eyes, complex emotions flowed out. With a profound tone, he said, “I, Ling Xin, owe you my life! In the future, I will definitely repay you!”

Surprised, Qin Lie shook his head, replying, “You don’t owe me anything. I killed Feng Jie for everyone’s sake, as well as for my own. Relying on my own power, I wouldn’t have been able to contend with the Feng Family at all. If not for you all, I would have died at their hands, with absolutely no way to live.”

“I owe you my life anyways!” stubbornly said Ling Xin.

“Including Feng Yi, a total of three Feng Family members escaped. When they find Shattered Ice Manor’s people, they will come to kill us again.” Qin Lie took a breath and then bitterly smiled, continuing, “So we are still in danger. Everyone, let’s not talk too much and get out of here before we say any more.”

Everyone nodded their heads to express their acknowledgement.

When he took command of escaping this time, whenever they encountered an area where spirit beasts might gather and had to decide whether or not they would avoid the area, no one questioned his decision.

The sky slowly darkened as Qin Lie and his party gathered within a valley filled with giant, towering shrubs.

The shrubs within the valley were even taller than them, providing them with natural camouflage. No matter how powerful Shattered Ice Manor was, it was pretty much impossible for them to find them through discreet means.

“If all goes well, we will enter Frost Mist Mountain the day after tomorrow. Once we reach Frost Mist Mountain, we will be able to send word back to the Ling Family. Furthermore, martial practitioners of Nebula Pavilion can often be found moving around there. If we are lucky enough to encounter any, we might truly have dodged this disaster,” explained Qin Lie while looking behind him and pointing at Frost Mist Mountain, which was partially hidden from view.

Everyone huddled together, each holding some dried meat to eat as they attentively listened to his words.

“Qin Lie, how are you so familiar with the Arctic Mountain Range? These few years you’ve been constantly holed up within Herb Mountain, so how can you understand the circumstances within the Arctic Mountain Range to such a degree?” smilingly asked Ling Feng as he drank some clean water.

It was clear from their eyes that everyone else was wondering this too.

“It was my grandpa who was rather familiar with the Arctic Mountain Range. He told me about some of it before...” Qin Lie hesitated for a moment, then continued, “Tonight will be the most difficult night. Everyone make sure you are well rested. In a bit, when we are mentally ready, we will continue rushing along our path through the night.”

“Mn, everyone disperse.” Seeing that Qin Lie didn’t want to say anymore, Ling Feng let the matter rest with a smile and instructed everyone to go rest.

Everyone gradually dispersed, picking areas to sit down cross-legged and rest. Ling Ying was also extremely tired and thus didn’t continue pestering Qin Lie, causing him to secretly feel relieved.

“I truly need to thank you. If you weren’t here, Ling Ying and I... our fates would have been extremely tragic and the rest of them would have been massacred.” After everyone dispersed, Ling Yushi remained behind, her bright eyes shining. At this moment, she was somewhat afraid to look at Qin Lie and instead looked in Ling Ying’s direction. “That girl has become very curious towards you. I had thought that she would pester you till it was unbearable again, but it seems that she really is completely exhausted.”

“She does talk a little too much.” Qin Lie nodded in agreement. “I’ve become frightened of her questions. Her not coming over here relieves me greatly.”

Seeing the lingering fear on Qin Lie’s face, Ling Yushi couldn’t help but let out a laugh. After thinking for a moment, she gently asked, “I’ve paid attention to the expression within your eyes many times, and sometimes, they are truly blank. You haven’t always been acting the fool these five years, have you?”

“Mn, most of the time I am actually in that kind of dumb state, it is a kind of cultivation method. It was only recently that I truly reawakened...” With the circumstances the way they were now, there was no need for him to hide certain things any longer, and so, he gave Ling Yushi a simple explanation.

“Last time, last time when I helped you bathe, you... what kind of state were you in?” shyly whispered Ling Yushi, her face turning slightly rosy as she suddenly lowered her head.

“You helped me bathe? When was that? I don’t quite remember, it must have been while I was cultivating.” Qin Lie’s heart beat faster as he quickly acted like he knew nothing.

Upon hearing him say that, Ling Yushi, whose heart was in a mess, concluded that his words were insincere, though she couldn’t quite grasp why she came to that conclusion. Even so, she felt like she was going to die of embarrassment and in a panic, with her face crimson red, she blurted out, “Th-then I will go and rest first...” Once she finished her sentence, she hurriedly walked far away from him with her head lowered.

Qin Lie rubbed his face, abruptly discovering that the skin on his face had become extremely thick. Watching the shyly blushing Ling Yushi in the distance, he secretly laughed to himself, finding it amusing and thinking: You are clearly older than me by two years, but your skin is still thinner than mine. This girl... she’s truly interesting.

“That rotten guy, is he speaking the truth or not? If it’s true, then that time... he already had a reaction?” On the other hand, Ling Yushi’s heart was still in turmoil unable to calm down even with her back to Qin Lie.

“Snap snap!”

After an hour, as the Ling Family members were still recovering, the sound of shrubs snapping suddenly emanated over.

The expressions of Ling Yushi, Ling Ying, and the others greatly changed. Then they hastily shouted for everyone to be careful and hide themselves. Everyone took out their weapons to be ready to fight at a moment’s notice.

No one dared to act rashly. They didn’t dare to flee either. Because as soon as they began running, it would immediately expose their position due to the snapping of shrubs.

They lowered their heads, hiding amongst the dense shrubs, not even daring to breathe. They hoped the people wouldn’t come closer towards them.

But the more afraid of something one was, the more likely it would come towards you. From the sounds of snapping shrubs, they could tell that the incoming people were drawing closer their way.

Ling Feng’s face became sullen, silently gesturing to everyone to be prepared to fight and to take initiative to ambush the incoming party so they could catch the enemy unaware.

Even Qin Lie clenched his Green Wing Axe with his solemnly eyes staring in the direction that the sound came from, cursing their luck.

Suddenly, a bleeding person appeared before of them.

“Liu Yan!”

The Ling Family members became dazed for a moment as they also saw Gao Yu and two other Gao Family members behind Liu Yan, similarly bleeding from their bodies.

Upon realizing that these people were Liu Yan and the Gao Family members, Ling Yushi, Ling Feng, and the others quickly burrowed out, shouting out greetings. They were pleasantly surprised.

Then, Qin Lie’s expression changed, cursing in his heart. If Liu Yan and the rest appeared, then those of Shattered Ice Manor had to be nearby as well. For them to meet with Liu Yan, there was no benefit at all. In fact, it made it more dangerous.

Conversely, upon seeing the Ling Family’s people, Liu Yan, Gao Yu, and the others saw hope, their eyes brightening up.

“Why would you guys be here?” softly exclaimed Liu Yan. He swept his gaze across the Ling Family’s people, then finally fixed upon Qin Lie’s body. He said with heavy sarcasm: “Qin Lie! Very good! Very good indeed!”

Gao Yu’s expression was just as dark. He coldly looked at Qin Lie saying, “Not all of us died, are you disappointed?”

Qin Lie couldn’t help but laugh wryly. He knew with Liu Yan and Gao Yu’s insight, they had long since guessed that the person who had helped the Ling Family escape was him and had also seen through his intentions.

Chapter 33: Mind Invasion

Gao Yu’s face turned dark and his eyes grew cold. Killing intent swirled around him as he advanced, step by step, towards Qin Lie.

Fresh blood dripped from his shoulder, his clothes were all ragged, and he looked severely miserable. He seemed to have suffered a ridiculous amount of hardship.

His fellow Gao Family martial practitioners also had blood smeared all over their bodies as though they had just gone through a grueling battle.

With only three of the original nine Gao Family members remaining, including Gao Yu, the casualty rate could only be described as a complete disaster. From that, it no wonder that his eyes turned red the instant he saw Qin Lie.

“Leaving us behind to attract their attacks while you take advantage of that time to escape, what a scheme!”

Gao Yu grit his teeth, and both his palms started to emit continuous streams of black fog that looked strange and mysterious; as though they were floating vengeful ghosts.

“What are you trying to do?!” Ling Xin roared, positioning himself in front of Qin Lie while glaring at Gao Yu. “It’s your own problem if you didn’t make it out! Had our First Miss not notified you at all, none of you would still be alive!”

“Screw off!”

Gao Yu waved both his hands, and balls of pitch black fog lunged towards Ling Xin with forms akin to the faces of ogres.

With only a cultivation level at the sixth level of the Refinement Realm, Ling Xin was simply unable to compete with the eighth leveled Gao Yu. As soon as he was engulfed in the pitch-black, a sinister chill could immediately be felt spreading through his entire body as though he were invaded by evil spirits. Terrifying illusions surfaced in Ling Xin’s mind, and his eyes were filled with horror as he screamed while retreating.

Qin Lie scrutinized Gao Yu and realized that his hands were adorned with a pair of identical rings that each had the face of a green ogre with long fangs engraved on them. Qin Lie immediately deduced that the balls of pitch black fog came from those Ogre-faced Rings.

Evidently, the two rings were an extremely rare kind of spirit artifact.

“Whoosh!” A pretty figure suddenly appeared standing firm in front of Qin Lie. Before he could react, Ling Yushi spoke sweetly, “Gao Yu! I was the one that made the decision. If you want to find someone to vent your anger on, come at me instead!”

“You?” Gao Yu sneered, his eyes full of skepticism. “With your personality, you couldn’t have made such a ruthless, vicious decision if there wasn’t someone else instigating you. The Ling Family would definitely not dare to sacrifice anyone from Nebula Pavilion so easily!”

Whilst talking, the two Ogre-faced Rings on Gao Yu’s hands started to spew pitch-black, ink-like fog again, which curled upwards to the sky, coalescing into a chilling figure of an ogre’s face and swiftly flew towards Ling Yushi.

A gust of ghastly cold air pervaded the vicinity, and the wails of ghosts could be faintly heard as though there were actually ghosts floating about in the darkness.

This scene truly shocked Ling Yushi, and she suffered a state similar to Ling Xin, witnessing many phantom images lunging towards her which caused her to knit her eyebrows in pain as she bitterly fought against the illusions within her head.

Gao Yu had come across the Ogre-faced Rings by chance, and they held some sort of sinister art formula. It was precisely by cultivating the spirit art within the rings that he was able to improve at such a tremendous pace, becoming more and more proficient in wielding them.

Until this day, Gao Yu and the entire Gao family had yet to determine the grade of this spirit artifact.

Regarding the ring, Gao Yu was gradually touching upon its capabilities. He discovered that he was compatible with this spirit art and was able to form the ogre-like Yin black fog which could directly invade his opponents' mind, such that even those whose cultivation slightly surpassed his would find it hard to escape.

Ling Yushi was at the same cultivation level as him, hence, the moment she was invaded by the fog, she was trapped and could only struggle helplessly.

Gao Yu scoffed with a sneer and strode past Ling Xin and Ling Yushi, making his way towards Qin Lie and taunted, "Do you only know how to hide behind a woman?"

Seeing the situation take a turn for the worse, Ling Ying, along with Ling Feng and the rest, hurriedly moved to try to help Qin Lie.

Sadly, they were further away and didn't expect Ling Xin and Ling Yushi to not even be able to put up a fight. Therefore, they weren't able to get close enough to help in time.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Wisps of pitch black fog emanated, gradually coalescing into ogre-faced specters which floated towards Qin Lie.

From the beginning, Liu Yan stood a short distance away and had yet to speak a single word to stop Gao Yu. He wanted to have Gao Yu teach them a lesson as he was simmering furiously from Qin Lie's schemes.

The chilling black fog permeated Qin Lie's body, and he turned icy cold as he faced the horrifying feeling that there were ghosts swirling around him, just waiting to pounce onto him.

At the same time, as though there was another source from elsewhere, an evil force sneakily bored into his mind...

Mind energy!

Qin Lie immediately understood, upon contact, that Ling Xin and Ling Yushi became dazed due to the invasion of that mind force.

That wisp of mind energy infiltrated him and congealed into countless illusions of vengeful demons that appeared in front of him, furiously rushing to kill him!

Those scenes were intimidating, and they severely shook his state of mind. Just like Ling Xin and Ling Yushi, he had to try very hard to withstand the invasion on his mind!

A breath of cooling air seemingly rippled out from the Soul Suppressing Orb between his eyebrows, instantly rousing him from the hallucination!

One moment he was struggling, and the next, he found that the foreign mind energy from within his mind had vanished without a trace; the illusions had been completely swept away.

Qin Lie's expression shook, and he immediately channeled Heavenly Thunder Eradication, covering his entire body with the energy of thunder and lightning.

"Boom boom boom! Zzt zzt zzt!"

Roars of thunder and lightning rumbled, and the chilling pitch-black fog that had enshrouded him dispersed rapidly under the assault of his Heavenly Thunder Eradication. In the blink of an eye, the fog was eradicated.

Even Ling Yushi and Ling Xin nearby were both quickly released from the fog as he neared them.

"What happened?" Ling Xin jolted awake, blankly surveying his surroundings.

Ling Yushi kept quiet, her clear eyes revealing a hint of suspicion as she looked ahead.

Gao Yu's face paled considerably, and his eyes flashed in astonishment. He looked straight at Qin Lie and shouted, "You, you are actually... actually able to break my move?!"

"Young Master Gao! That's enough!" It was at this moment that Liu Yan finally walked over. He patted Gao Yu on the shoulder to calm him down and turned to look at Qin Lie in surprise. "Those who train in the power of lightning are rare. The power of lightning is the bane of all that is evil. Hence, for Young Master Gao's art formula to lose against you is certainly no injustice."

At his words, Gao Yu reacted as well, as his face turned increasingly unsightly.

The spirit art within his Orge-faced Rings had touched upon this point, indicating that the might of this "Nine Hell Wandering Soul Record" was peerless, sinister, and mysterious. As the cultivation realm increases, one could gather the wandering souls and tormented spirits to invade the enemy's mind, destroying opponents both in body and mind. But this "Nine Hell Wandering Soul Record" also indicated, that the worst

enemy possible for the user would be a martial practitioner who cultivates in the power of lightning.

Martial practitioners who cultivate in the power of lightning, just happened to be the direct bane of the “Nine Hell Wandering Soul Record”. The power of lightning specializes in exterminating wandering souls and tormented spirits. Therefore, it was best to not use the “Nine Hell Wandering Soul Record” to fight such an opponent, else it was just asking for trouble.

“Let bygone be bygones for now. I shall report to Nebula Pavilion upon my return for instructions from my superiors.” Liu Yan turned towards Ling Yushi and Qin Lie and spoke, “The matter at hand is more pressing, and everyone should pull their efforts together to deal with Shattered Ice Manor and the Feng Family pursuit. How about it, Ling Yushi?”

“The Ling family naturally obeys Nebula Pavilion’s arrangement.” Ling Yushi lightly nods her head and continued, “I hope that next time you can restrain the Gao Family sooner, in case he acts up again.”

Upon seeing that Gao Yu was going to blow up in anger again, Liu Yan hurriedly patted his shoulders to calm him down and quickly replied, “It’s good that you are willing to accept my arrangement. We sped along through the forest, and our losses were extremely severe on the way. Those that were unlucky encountered spirit beasts several times, our several brothers had all been killed by spirit beasts. Rather, ones who died under the hands of Shattered Ice Manor were fewer...”

“Not just us, it is the same for Shattered Ice Manor as well. Seven or eight of their members all died under the spirit beast’s assaults. There are many strong spirit beasts in this forest, and once accidentally encountered, it would be very difficult to get away unscathed.”

He then paused to look deeply at the Ling Family before continuing on, “I am very curious, as to why you have only suffered one casualty. Could it be that you have only had a single encounter with a pack of spirit beasts?”

As they were escaping, Liu Yan and Gao Yu’s company only had two members die by the hands of Shattered Ice Manor. The majority were all killed by the spirit beasts; therefore, compared to Shattered Ice Manor, the forest was a greater trouble. Upon seeing that the Ling Family’s losses numbered so few, astonishment birthed from his heart, and he wished to learn the cause.

And then he noticed, that right after he asked, the expressions of the Ling Family members all turned weird.

“What happened?” Liu Yan asked again.

"I'm sorry. Previously... I was too rash, and wronged you." Ling Xin eyed Qin Lie and lowered his head in apology.

"I am ashamed."

"It was our foolishness."

"Qin Lie, do not take it to heart, alright."

The Ling Family members who previously ridiculed Qin Lie were all full of shame now as they finally realized through Liu Yan's words that they were incredibly fortunate to have Qin Lie guiding them.

It was laughable that they were scolding him incessantly throughout the journey, accusing him of slowing them down, resulting in the Feng Family catching up to them. Thinking back, quite a few of them wanted to burrow into ground and hide in shame.

Qin Lie only smiled and didn't say anything, sparing them from further awkwardness.

"It's fine as long as everyone's alright." Ling Yushi consoled everyone, smiled plainly towards Liu Yan, and continued, "We didn't meet any powerful spirit beasts. None of us were injured due to spirit beast packs. Our only clansman that died was due to the Feng Family. However, the Feng Family members we killed were far more, only letting Feng Yi to escape with two others..."

Towards the end of her words, Ling Yushi's bright eyes glanced at Qin Lie, her face written full of pride.

"Impossible!" Gao Yu shouted in disbelief.

"H-how is that possible!?" Liu Yan was similarly in disbelief. "The forest is so huge, and there are numerous large and strong spirit beasts gathered here. How could you take care of every aspect when hurrying through? Also, you said that you killed many from the Feng Family, how did you accomplish such a feat?"

As he finished his words, he discovered that every member of the Ling Family had involuntarily turned their gaze towards Qin Lie.

Liu Yan froze for half a beat, then understood and said while nodding his head, "Looks like young brother is even more miraculous than I imagined."

"Your spirit artifact seems to be broken." Qin Lie said, looking towards the a hexagonal shield in Liu Yan's hands.

The shield was bronze in color, shaped in a hexagon with six protruding corners. Every single corner sported a pointed edge that was as sharp as a sword's. The edges all had

traces of blood on them, revealing that they were obviously sharp weapons capable of attacking. As such, the hexagon shaped shield could be counted as a spirit artifact capable of both offense and defense.

However, on the surface of the hexagonal shield, the engraved strange pattern was as though a severed snake, disjointed and unable to connect together.

Furthermore, on the surface of the shield, there were several traces of caving in. From the looks of it, the spirit diagram within the hexagon shield had ought to be more or less wrecked.

"Mn, it broke during battle, and I can't pour spirit energy into it anymore. It already can't... be considered a spirit artifact anymore." Liu Yan revealed a bitter expression and shook his head, sighing, "I've used it for a long time, it has become so familiar and comfortable. Changing a weapon now would be too uncomfortable, hence I plan to continue using it. Sigh, this Hexagonal Shield of mine is actually a Common Grade Five spirit artifact, you know. It really pains my heart that it broke..."

"Can I take a look?" After thinking a bit, Qin Lie suddenly asked.

Chapter 34: Have You All Gone Mad?

"You want to look at this Hexagonal Shield?" Liu Yan looked confused and asked quizzically, "The spirit diagram in this spirit artifact has already been destroyed. You can't even pour spirit energy inside it anymore. What is there to look at?"

Liu Yan wasn't the only one who looked confused. The entire Ling Family gave him a strange look as well. They did not understand his sudden interest in Liu Yan's broken spirit artifact.

"Just curious," Qin Lie indifferently said amidst doubtful looks.

Surprised, Liu Yan stared intently at Qin Lie's youthful face before nodding indifferently; he then passed the one meter tall Hexagonal Shield over.

"It's broken anyway, so you can look at it all you want. This shield... I exchanged two thousand contribution points for it. It took me three years to accumulate that much. And now, the shield broke, just like that; it hurts to even think about it."

Under the crowd's curious gaze, Qin Lie grabbed the Hexagonal Shield. In his hands, the shield felt incredibly heavy, and there was a strong and sturdy feel to it.

Setting it down, he began rubbing his fingers across the strange patterns on its surface, getting a feel for its textures. At the same time, he quietly released his spirit energy and a wisp of mind energy to probe the insides of the shield.

His mind energy slipped in, and the broken spirit diagram inside the shield appeared abruptly in his mind; it was a combined version of both the “Spirit Gathering” and “Amplification” diagram.

Compared to the “Spirit Gathering” and “Amplification” spirit diagrams inside the Soul Suppressing Orb, these two were much too simple and crude.

During the past few days he had been memorizing the “Amplification” spirit diagram inside the Soul Suppressing Orb whenever he took a break from cultivating.

Now, he had almost memorized the “Amplification” spirit diagram completely, so the moment he saw this simplistic version of the “Amplification” diagram, he immediately recognized it.

The two spirit diagrams took up a large amount of space inside the shield, and the “Amplification” diagram was embedded inside the “Spirit Gathering” one. On close examination, he could clearly see that only the “Spirit Gathering” spirit diagram was damaged...

Due to powerful attacks, some of its lines had been twisted into a clump which caused an obstruction where the spirit energy was supposed to flow through; that was why Liu Yan was unable to pour spirit energy into his shield.

If “Spirit Gathering” could not function, then it would not be able to conduct spirit energy and subsequently cause the embedded “Amplification” spirit diagram to fail as well. That was how this spirit artifact had turned completely useless.

In his eyes, the two spirit diagrams inside the shield appeared to be incredibly simple. Although they were just a small part of the “Spirit Gathering” and “Amplification” in his memories, they were able to accomplish their respective functions. If he could untie the knots and sort out the kinks, then the “Spirit Gathering” spirit diagram would function as it was meant to, and the spirit artifact would become usable once more.

Qin Lie frowned slightly with a serious look as he rubbed his fingers across the shield's surface, thinking quietly to himself.

Liu Yan and the rest looked as doubtful as ever. They just felt that his actions were very peculiar and that it didn't look like he was examining the Hexagonal Shield seriously.

"Brother Liu, those Shattered Ice Manor guys are still tracking us. It may take them much longer to find us at night, but we still shouldn't dally around for too long," Gao Yu suddenly said with a cold expression and then concluded, "I think we should keep moving."

Liu Yan nodded and replied, "Right, we really shouldn't stay at one place for too long."

"Please continue to lead the way, Qin Lie. We'll be right behind you." This time it was Ling Xin who took the initiative.

Deep in his own thoughts, his words pulled Qin Lie back to reality as he returned the Hexagonal Shield to Liu Yan and said, "Let's go. We'll leave this place and find a new safe location."

"Why is he the one leading the way?" A Gao Family member asked in dissatisfaction.

"Because under his guidance, even though we took a longer route, we neither encountered packs of spirit beasts nor lost even a single man!"

There was shock in both Liu Yan and Gao Yu's eyes the moment he said those words. They glanced at each other once before Liu Yan said, "Alright! We'll follow Qin Lie!"

"Then let's go." Frowning, Qin Lie led at the front once more. Occasionally, he would take out a map from his chest, glance at it briefly, adjust their path, and then continue to lead on.

The Ling Family followed closely behind him. After giving their wounds a simple dressing, Liu Yan and Gao Yu caught up to him as well.

"This Qin Lie fellow is no ordinary person," Liu Yan lowered his voice and said.

Gao Yu scowled and let out a hmph. He did not answer.

"Let's put down our dissent with the Ling Family for the moment. Our first priority right now is to get out of this alive," Liu Yan advised.

"I know what to do," Gao Yu responded impatiently.

Liu Yan nodded.

While hurrying onward, the shield's twisted "Spirit Gathering" spirit diagram would appear from time to time in his mind as Qin Lie quietly pondered about how he should go about fixing it.

It wasn't as if he held any good will towards Liu Yan, he was just curious to test out and see if he could make the two spirit diagrams he memorized work. He wanted to know if they would really be as useful as he had envisioned in his mind.

By doing this, his efforts to memorize them would not be in vain, and he would also be able to decide whether or not he should spend even more effort on the remaining two "Spirit Storage" and "Strengthening" spirit diagrams.

Four hours later.

At midnight, Qin Lie had led the crowd to an ancient-looking forestry as he said, "Let's rest here for a bit. You should also treat your wounds as well," he said while looking at Liu Yan and Gao Yu's people. At that moment, blood was seeping out of Liu Yan and Gao Yu's wounds.

Liu Yan and Gao Yu had no objections to that and both sat down at their chosen spots, took out some medicinal powder, and began skillfully smearing it on their wounds.

Throughout these four hours they had not run into a single spirit beast. This caused them to believe in the Ling Family's words, Qin Lie really did know how to avoid the spirit beast packs!

Qin Lie sneaked his way over to Liu Yan and gave it another thought before saying seriously, "I think I can try fixing your Hexagonal Shield. No guarantees though."

"Ah!" Liu Yan abruptly turned his head with shining eyes and a slight shiver around his shoulders before he inquired excitedly, "Are you serious? This isn't a joke?"

The Hexagonal Shield was ranked as a Common Grade Five spirit artifact, and it took him three years' worth of contribution points to obtain it. Moreover, it could be matched together with his spirit art to increase his strength. That was why he viewed it as his most treasured possession.

The fact that his shield broke had distressed him greatly, so how could Liu Yan not be excited when he heard that Qin Lie could fix his shield?

"I can't give any guarantees. All I can say is that I'll give it a try. It's possible that it'll break immediately during the process and become irreparable in the future."

Liu Yan's Hexagonal Shield was different from the short spear that was destroyed by his thunder and lightning energy before. The spear's body itself was destroyed by lightning, and he had absolutely no way to fix that. But since the only thing that was damaged in this Hexagonal Shield was the spirit diagram, he could at least give it a try.

On the other hand, he had never done this before and thus had absolutely no way to know if it would work. That was why he did not dare to guarantee its success.

"Qin Lie, don't be reckless. The Hexagonal Shield is a Common Grade Five spirit artifact. If became irreparable due to your tinkering, then it'll be..."

Ling Yushi had been paying attention to Qin Lie this entire time, so when she saw him going over to Liu Yan, she too quietly sneaked over.

She was shocked when she heard that he wanted to help fix Liu Yan's spirit artifact and immediately hurried over to warn him. She was terrified that if the shield became completely unusable, Liu Yan would hate him and thus affect his future.

"Uh, it was just a suggestion. There is the possibility that it might completely ruin this spirit artifact, so I guess we can... forget about this?"

Qin Lie also felt like backing down after listening to Ling Yushi. After all, he had never attempted this before, so he was not confident in the slightest that it would work. He was actually quite afraid that he might break the spirit artifact completely.

"Clang!"

To their surprise, Liu Yan actually tossed the Hexagonal Shield beneath Qin Lie's feet and suddenly stood up. He stared deeply into Qin Lie's eyes and smiled bitterly. "Little brother, do not listen to your fiancée. If you think you can do it, then give it your best shot. There's no need to be afraid; I won't blame you for it even if you did break my shield. After all, our current situation is just too perilous, and there is even a chance that we might not make it out of this alive. Even if you are only ten percent confident that it will succeed, you should still give it a try. If you really do fix my spirit artifact, then my chances of survival will be greatly increased!"

"You can't be serious?" Ling Yushi stared at Liu Yan in surprise.

"Without being able to take in spirit energy, my Hexagonal Shield won't improve my combat capabilities in any way. If I encounter a Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioner of the same level, it wouldn't be easy for me to fight them," Liu Yan said helplessly with his hands spread upwards, "If there weren't a bunch of bastards chasing us relentlessly, then perhaps I wouldn't have taken the risk and instead have chosen to wait until we returned to the pavilion so I could get an Artificer to look at it. But right now... it's a question if we'll even make it back home. Do I look like I have any other choice?"

"Understood." Qin Lie sucked in a deep breath and crouched beside the Hexagonal Shield. Then, he said, "Find me some fire crystals."

"Here you go!" Liu Yan straight up passed over a bag stitched together with animal skin; there were at least tens of fire crystals inside the bag. Every single piece was as big as a fist, and they were all as red as crimson fireballs. To their surprise, these fire crystals were all of the highest quality!

"Qin Lie!" Ling Yushi exclaimed with slight anxiety. "Do you really want to do this? Just how confident are you? Even your grandfather can only repair spirit artifacts below Common Grade Five, and this Hexagonal Shield is a Grade Five item. Are... Are you sure you want to try this?"

"Your grandfather's an Artificer?" Liu Yan looked startled, but his expectations had grown greater instead.

Qin Lie no longer answered. He picked up a flint and lit the fire crystals. When the spark hit three fire crystals, they abruptly burst into crimson flames, causing a sudden surge of heat.

In order to fix the spirit diagram inside a spirit artifact, the spirit artifact must first be annealed. By burning it at high temperatures with the fire crystal, it would be able to achieve this effect.

After the spirit artifact had softened enough, spirit energy would be poured inside so as to carefully unclog the spirit network inside the spirit diagram. Once the adjustments were complete, then the annealing could be stopped, and with that, the spirit artifact would be allowed to slowly cool back into normalcy. This process would also allow the spirit patterns of the diagram inside the artifact to harden, thus achieving the objective of repairing a spirit artifact.

"What? Qin Lie is going to try to fix Liu Yan's spirit artifact? Am I hearing this correctly?"

"He also knows how to fix spirit artifacts? That can't be right; is this guy omnipotent or something?"

"Liu Yan's Hexagonal Shield is a Common Grade Five spirit artifact! Back then, not even Grandpa Qin Shan dared to attempt to fix a spirit artifact of this level. What are we going to do if he completely breaks the diagram inside? Has he gone mad?"

The moment they heard Qin Lie was going to fix the spirit artifact, every one of the Ling clansmen gathered over in shock while clamoring at each other.

When Gao Yu heard the noise, he too walked over in great shock. He stood beside Liu Yan and said coldly, "Big Brother Liu, what are you doing? You're going to let him screw with your Common Grade Five Hexagonal Shield? What the hell are you thinking?"

Chapter 35: Repairing a Spirit Artifact

Maybe it was because he was standing closer to the fire crystals, or maybe it was because of something else, but Liu Yan's forehead was now covered in sweat.

He watched as Qin Lie crouched on the ground and heated the Hexagonal Shield on top of the fire crystals until it was crimson red. He also felt an inexplicable tension beneath his heart, and even his fists were clenched tightly away from people's eyes.

"It's broken anyway, and there is also the chance that we might not make it out alive. Might as well let him give it a go, you know?" Liu Yan said with feigned calmness.

"You've also gone mad!" Gao Yu stared frostily at Qin Lie with a chilly expression. "Have you seen such a young Artificer before? Do you think that a fellow who could fix a Common Grade Five spirit artifact be this young? I don't understand why you took this

risk at all; this is a two thousand contribution point spirit artifact, and you're letting a guy like him ruin it? How utterly ridiculous!"

Liu Yan could only smile bitterly upon hearing his words. He also thought that he had been too rash and could not help but feel a twinge of regret inside.

The growth of every artificer was a long and arduous path. In general, only powerful forces could afford to raise them.

Practicing Artifact Forging just used up too many spirit materials, and a small force simply could not afford it at all. To raise an artificer, there needed to be complete dedication and devotion, accumulated time, and countless heaps of spirit materials...

The Ling Family obviously did not meet those requirements, and Qin Lie... was just too young.

No matter how you looked at it, it was impossible for Qin Lie to be an outstanding Artificer. No wonder Gao Yu thought that he had gone mad.

"All of you, please be quiet!"

Ling Yushi's brows were slightly furrowed, her face bright red from the light of the crimson flames burning on the fire crystals. Listening to the noisy crowd around her, she could not help but yell at them because she was worried that they would distract Qin Lie from his task.

The crowd quieted in response. Countless pairs of eyes settled on Qin Lie's back, and everyone of them had faces that spoke of their shock and amazement.

"Swoosh Swoosh Swoosh!"

The flames of the fire crystal were wild and fiery, and they heated the Hexagonal Shield until it was completely red. The turtle-shaped pattern occasionally glowed bright red under the sweltering heat, and it looked incredibly beautiful.

"Zzt Zzt!"

Under watchful eyes, strings of pure white spirit energy seeped out of Qin Lie's right forefinger as he pointed it towards the turtle pattern on the shield from a distance. A beam of white spirit energy immediately stabbed the top of the shield's pattern.

There was a wisp of mind energy mixed inside the spirit energy, and in an instant, he had made a connection with the shield!

He didn't need to touch the artifact directly with his fingertip. With spirit and mind energy alone, he could clearly see the two spirit diagrams inside the shield.

The mind energy began to gradually spread out like a web until it covered the two spirit diagrams inside the shield and locked the twisted parts of the network in place.

Then, the spirit energy rushed out rapidly and gathered at the sections of the network where it was a clustered mess.

Qin Lie's closed his eyes abruptly, more focused than he had ever been before. Feeling the twisted section of the network with his consciousness, he began steadily increasing the input of spirit energy and controlled them to flow towards the critical areas.

He did not act hurriedly, and instead threw himself into feeling the interior of the artifact and its invisible details...

The Hexagonal Shield was propped up with four pieces of stone as the fire crystals continued to burn it on the inside. Even the front part of the shield, that was used for defending, was slowly turning red.

Qin Lie pressed closely against the fire crystals and the shield, and the spirit energy on his forefinger was like a bright white graver resting on top of the turtle pattern.

While maintaining this posture, he began to sweat profusely until his clothes were entirely drenched, almost as if he had just been fished out of a pool.

Time slowly trickled by...

His consciousness gathered around the shield's components themselves; he didn't dare to relax for even an instant as he focused entirely on feeling the subtle changes of the components themselves!

Under the fire crystals' continuous heating, the solid components inside the shield were finally starting to soften, almost seeming like they were about to melt on the spot.

This is it!

As if the floodgates had suddenly opened, the long suppressed spirit energy abruptly rushed towards the twisted spirit network!

Under the guidance of his mind energy, his spirit energy followed the routes he had already planned out in his mind. It split up and attacked from various different directions, instantly untangling the twisted spirit network!

"Whoosh!"

The clogged spirit diagram was now completely unblocked!

There was no longer anything to impede the spirit energy as it flowed through the spirit diagram at a rapid pace! They poured into the Amplification spirit diagram inside the Spirit Gathering spirit diagram, and through the Amplification spirit diagram, they were split into six different parts that charged into the six corners of the shield!

"Zzt Zzt Zzt Zzt Zzt Zzt!"

Six blades of silver light suddenly shot out from the six corners of the shield, causing a huge fright among the Ling Family members nearby as they scrambled backwards in surprise.

Liu Yan was busy wiping the hot sweat off his face, but the moment he saw the all too familiar six beams of light, his body shuddered and his eyes shone with unspeakable excitement. He yelled, "It worked! It worked! Qin Lie actually did it!"

Listening to his cries, everyone from the Ling Family were shocked to the core as they stared incredulously at Qin Lie.

"Heavens, he... he actually did it." Ling Yushi's eyes glittered brightly, and her lips curled into quite the pleasantly surprised smile. She didn't even know what to say anymore.

"You can put out the fire from the fire crystals now." Qin Lie melted down to the floor like a pile of rotten mud while reminding them in exhaustion, "Once the shield cools down, it should then be usable once more. I'm way too tired right now, so I'll be going to get some rest."

Never did he imagine that fixing a spirit artifact would expend so much spirit and mind energy. This was even harsher than cultivating Heavenly Thunder Eradication. It was barely more than a moment, and he almost already collapsed.

Not only had he used a lot of spirit energy, he almost lost too much mind energy to boot. The high amount of concentration also caused him to become overly tense, and there was that terrifying feeling that he might collapse at any time. This artifact forging experience was... too profound so to speak, and it was more tiring than any art formula or cultivating!

"I'll keep this brief. Please accept these spirit pills first and use it well so you can recover quickly." Liu Yan walked forward and turned over an entire bottle of Spirit Recovery Pills, then, towards Qin Lie with glittery eyes, he continued "...Everything that happened before is forgotten. I owe you a favor. If I make it out alive this time, then no matter what troubles the Ling Family may face in the future, you can come looking for me. If I can help out, then I will definitely lend you a hand!"

"Thank you, Brother Liu!" Without waiting for Qin Lie to speak, Ling Yushi suddenly thanked him with a terrific smile, her beautiful face in high spirits.

She knew that Liu Yan held a considerable status inside Nebula Pavilion. Now that they had Liu Yan's promise, not only would they no longer be held accountable for the matter where they snuck out of the canyon, they might even be able to acquire help through Liu Yan and have more confidence and certainty going up against Du Haitian.

"You should be thanking Qin Lie instead of me," Liu Yan replied while smiling amiably. Then, he suddenly realized something and slapped his head. "Or maybe not. Haha, I almost forgot that the two of you are family."

He teased in goodwill, causing Ling Yushi to blush a little and laugh once softly with pursed lips. Her beautiful eyes glanced at Qin Lie with rippling emotions.

The instant he accepted the Spirit Recovery Pills, he swallowed three without a second thought. At the moment, he had his eyes closed and was fully focused in recovering. It was as if he hadn't heard their conversation at all.

"What are you all still standing there for? If you have time to waste, then start channeling your energy and recover already!" Ling Yushi abruptly turned around, still smiling, and reprimanded the Ling Family with a glare.

It was only now that the Ling Family members, who had gathered over to watch Qin Lie repair the spirit artifact, seemed to have regained themselves from their shock. They stared at Qin Lie from left to right, and to left again, until finally, they looked away after a while and returned to their original positions to cultivate.

Gao Yu and his two family member's faces changed abruptly and kept quiet when they saw Qin Lie actually succeed in fixing the Hexagonal Shield.

When he heard Liu Yan and Ling Yushi's words, Gao Yu knew that Liu Yan was no longer going to hold the Ling Family responsible for selfishly leaving the canyon.

He felt a quiet anger brimming inside his heart. Coldly, without even bothering to talk with Liu Yan, Gao Yu silently trudged away with his clansmen.

.....

"This is the spot! They've been here before!" The Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioner who was skilled in tracking led the men towards the thicket Qin Lie and the others were resting in earlier. While narrowing his eyes, he suddenly laughed, "The Ling Family was here too, I think. Judging from the tracks... it appears that they've actually gotten together."

"Very good; we can now slaughter them all at once. This saves us a lot of energy." Elder Yan Dewu from Shattered Ice Manor let out an odd laugh before shooting a glance at Feng Yi beside him. He said consolingly, "Don't worry, Feng Yi. No one will slip through our grasp."

The Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners at a side let out a gloating expression when they heard the Elder's words. The strange looks on their faces when they looked towards the Feng trio was unmistakable.

Feng Yi had turned incredibly silent, and the bright smile that usually filled his face had been gone for a long time. The only thing left in his eyes were hatred and a desire to kill. "I will kill them all to appease my clansmen," he answered in a faint tone.

"When the time comes, those two little girls of the Ling Family, well... I will take responsibility and hand them to you for three days. It'll be fine as long as you show me their bodies three days later," Yan Dewu chuckled.

Feng Yi nodded without a word and clenched his fist in silence: Qin Lie! Ling Yushi! Just you wait!

"We probably won't catch up to them tonight. But if there are no surprises, we should find them tomorrow." The old tracker furrowed his brows and said, "If we hadn't happened to run into a pack of spirit beasts last time, Liu Yan and the rest would all be dead already. Our luck should be better this time."

"Right, we shan't waste time any longer." Yan Dewu nodded and continued, "Let's wrap this up soon so we can quickly get back to Celestial Wolf Mountain and mine some Fiery Solar Jade. If this drags on for too long and Nebula Pavilion realizes our intentions, then it won't be an easy task to mine out the Fiery Solar Jade."

.....

Qin Lie slowly awakened from his cultivation.

As he opened his eyes, he realized that everyone else was all ready to go except for him. They were all looking at him, as if expecting him to lead the way again.

Not even Gao Yu was an exception, and he appeared to have been waiting for a while patiently. It was only when he saw him awaken that he hmped and said, "If we don't go now it's going to be daylight."

"If you're in a hurry, you can always leave first, right?" Ling Xin poked fun at Gao Yu. "Though it would be bad if you accidentally broke into one of the spirit beast's nesting grounds and died, even saving Shattered Ice Manor the trouble."

Gao Yu grit his teeth but did not reply. His expression remained as cold as ever.

"Let's go." Qin Lie nodded and once again led the way.

The moment he circulated his spirit energy, Qin Lie's eyes abruptly turned bright. He could acutely sense that the spirit energy inside his dantian was a lot purer and more refined than before.

This surprised him, and as he proceeded to sense his mind energy, he found that he was completely refreshed. Even his mind energy had improved by a significant margin. He was overjoyed by the discovery.

"When I was fixing the spirit artifact, my focus had reached an unprecedented level, and my spirit, body and mind were all in their best condition. It is now obvious that the process of expending both spirit and mind energy to tune a spirit diagram is also a wondrous way of cultivation! By fixing the spirit artifact, both my spirit and mind energy were actually enhanced! It looks like... this may very well be an excellent method to cultivate!"

Qin Lie thought to himself and slowly revolved his energy. While spirit energy circulated around his body, he realized that there would be a tingling sense of pain whenever it passed through the acupoints in his body.

"When spirit energy passes into the meridians, one may unleash his power through the acupoints. This is the threshold of the eighth level of the Refinement Realm! This tingling sense of pain inside my acupoints... Am I about to reach the eighth level of the Refinement Realm?!"

For a while, Qin Lie thoroughly savored the feeling with an excited expression as his eyes filled with joy.

.....

Chapter 36: Silver Winged Demon Wolf

During a martial practitioner's cultivation, the first six levels of the Refinement Realm only required the accumulation of spirit energy to slowly temper the body; it was relatively simple and easy.

From the seventh level of Refinement Realm onward, the advancement threshold went up by a whole level of difficulty, each promotion being much harder than the last.

Generally, only extraordinarily talented practitioners, coupled with the usage of spirit stones, spirit materials, and bitter cultivating, could hope to breakthrough to the Natal Opening Realm before the age of twenty.

As of this year, Qin Lie was fifteen and was able to enter the seventh level of the Refinement Realm; his speed was extremely shocking.

At this moment, Qin Lie was feeling a tingling pain from his acupoints. He immediately realized that his bitter cultivation during the last half a year or so caused him to inch closer to breaking through the barrier to the eighth level of the Refinement Realm.

The human body had a total of seven hundred and twenty acupoints. As long as spirit energy can pass through the acupoints and be released, one would have been considered to have entered the eighth level of the Refinement Realm.

The eighth level of Refinement, was all about tempering the body's acupoints!

As long as one was able to find the trick and cause one acupoint to open up and exude spirit energy, opening the rest would become very easy.

The first step to advancing from the seventh level to the eighth was to cause an acupoint to contain spirit energy so that it could then emit the energy.

As soon as his acupoints were able to act as a channel for spirit energy, he would once again rise a level, truly stepping into the eighth level of Refinement!

He continued cultivating. His heart filled with joy as he slowly tried to agglomerate energy to assail his acupoint...

His spirit energy was like a stream, slowly circulating within him. He then condensed a strand of mind energy and perceived the path of the circulating spirit energy, faintly observing the spirit energy entering his muscles, veins, and acupoints.

He could feel each and every acupoint; however, there really were too many of them, and there was no way for him to identify each one.

He slowly gathered spirit energy and suddenly tried to force it into an unknown acupoint in his chest.

“Zzzt zzzt zzzt! Boom!”

A weird electric crackling followed by the boom of thunder suddenly emanated out from that unknown acupoint, directly entering his mind.

The spirit energy that he had tried to force in couldn't penetrate into the acupoint whatsoever, as if it had been hindered by a barrier of thunder and lightning; it was firmly kept outside of the acupoint.

“Th-this is...”

The depths of his mind jolted. His eyes suddenly became blank and dull as he lurched from side to side, almost falling over during his forward advance.

“What’s wrong? Is it because you are too tired? Should we rest here a bit longer?” softly asked Ling Yushi. Upon seeing his abnormal behavior, Ling Yushi, who was behind him, hurriedly caught him.

Shaking his head, Qin Lie stood up again, gesturing that he was ok.

Qin Lie quite enjoyed feeling the wonderful touch of her jade white hands. However, he knew that this was not the time for messing around and said, “Just now, I was a little distracted. I will be more attentive from now on, I’m fine.” He reluctantly moved away from her, continuing to lead the way.

Liu Yan and the rest all stopped, suspiciously looking at the two. Once the two started moving again, they all closely followed behind.

“My entire body’s seven hundred and twenty acupoints have unexpectedly... unexpectedly already been occupied by the thunder and lightning energy. I was wondering where the thunder and lightning energy were coming from when I circulated my spirit energy through my muscles and veins. To think that it was hidden within my acupoints! If it’s like this, then I was already tempering my acupoints when I was cultivating Heavenly Thunder Eradication?”

Qin Lie was extremely confused; he was neither able to figure out if the thunder and lightning energy within his acupoints would affect his future cultivation, nor was he able to determine if this was something good or bad.

“It seems that I will need to find some time to carefully observe and analyze it. In order to breakthrough the eighth level of Refinement, my acupoints have to be able to emit spirit energy. Currently, the thunder and lightning energy have already occupied my acupoints, making it so that my spirit energy cannot enter them. I wonder if it will affect the refinement of my body as I try to enter the eighth level of Refinement...”

He didn’t dare to put these thoughts into practice as they were traveling and finally returned his focus to leading the way.

They rushed home through the darkness. As the sky began to gradually brighten, everyone looked over into the distance, gradually becoming able to see a towering mountain peak piercing into the clouds.

“That’s Frost Mist Mountain!” said Liu Yan encouragingly as he wiped sweat off his brow. “Within Frost Mist Mountain, there are occasionally practitioners of Nebula Pavilion moving around. If we can chance upon a beast hunting squad, it will greatly increase our power! At the very least, we can go home through Frost Mist Mountain and won’t have to continue through the depths of the Arctic Mountain Range.”

Hearing his words, everyone quietly sighed in relief. They all felt as if they were finally able to see the dawning of hope.

“We need to make it past today first. It is going to be our hardest day, and only if we make it out of the forest alive will we reach Frost Mist Mountain,” said Gao Yu, pouring cold water on everyone.

As soon as he said those words, the smiles on everyone’s faces disappeared. Everyone knew that that was the truth, and it was not time for them to relax their vigilance yet.

They continued on their way.

Before long, the sun rose, and ray after ray of sunlight stubbornly made its way through the dense foliage, stabbing into the ground like spears.

“Stop!” suddenly shouted Liu Yan softly, his expression extremely solemn. “In front of us... there are many spirit beasts approaching! Not good, they’re already here!”

Liu Yan was in the Natal Opening Realm. As he was more than a level over everyone else, the first one to feel any abnormalities would naturally be him.

“Didn’t Qin Lie say that we weren’t going to encounter any packs of spirit beasts?” asked someone from the Gao Family.

“It’s not like spirit beasts are inanimate and will always stay in one place. The fact that we haven’t met a single spirit beast this entire way so far is already a proclamation that Qin Lie hasn’t led us astray.” Liu Yan looked the man in the eye, continuing, “This is coincidental. When spirit beasts are active, it is impossible for anyone to correctly predict where they will appear.”

“Big Brother Liu, can we avoid it?” anxiously asked Ling Yushi who knew deep within her heart just how terrifying packs of spirit beasts were.

Shaking his head, Liu Yan bitterly said, “We can’t avoid them, they are already almost here. I hope... it isn’t a pack of too high leveled spirit beasts. Otherwise, we are in some big trouble.”

“Stay close to the trunks of big trees and form defensive formations. Get ready to engage with them,” coldly said Gao Yu, gnashing his teeth.

Everyone suddenly sobered up. No matter whether they were members of the Ling or Gao Family, they all hastily grouped together and formed into defensive formations, carefully preparing for the arrival of the spirit beast pack.

“I hope our luck isn’t too bad. We are so close to entering Frost Mist Mountain, nothing bad must happen,” quietly prayed Ling Ying.

Everyone was like her, all quietly praying and hoping that the approaching spirit beast pack was one of the lowest level spirit beasts.

“Roar!”

Suddenly, a giant, silver colored wolf with two wings on its back, which neared two meters long, appeared from within the forest in front of them.

“A Silver Winged Demon Wolf! It’s actually... it’s actually a Silver Winged Demon Wolf. It’s over!” moaned Ling Xin despairingly upon seeing the spirit beast that emerged, his expression turning into one of deep fear.

When the Silver Winged Demon Wolf appeared, the faces of everyone became ashen, their eyes showing their extreme fear and uneasiness. They were all in despair like Ling Xin.

Silver Winged Demon Wolves loved to eat human flesh. Upon encountering humans, they would definitely not let them pass considering how much they especially relished fresh human flesh.

“We were almost out of the forest. For us to meet a Silver Winged Demon Wolf, do the heavens truly want to end us?” bitterly laughed Ling Feng.

“Ah, we are definitely dead this time. Silver Winged Demon Wolves almost never appear alone. We have no chance at all,” said Ling Xiao helplessly.

“We just barely escaped with our lives from the pursuit of Shattered Ice Manor. For us to be torn to pieces by a Silver Winged Demon Wolf, I’m really not willing! If I had known this would happen, then I would have fought against Shattered Ice Manor. Even if I had only killed one, it would have been worth it!” said a Gao Family member.

As they quietly despaired, one Silver Winged Demon Wolf after another slowly emerged. As more Silver Winged Demon Wolves appeared, their morale fell lower and lower as they became increasingly more terrified and fearful.

Silver Winged Demon Wolves were Rank Two Beasts, able to contend with Natal Opening Realm practitioners. Amongst the group, they only had one Natal Opening Realm practitioner, Liu Yan, and he was at the early stage. If they had to fight one on one, perhaps none of them would be an opponent for a Silver Winged Demon Wolf.

And currently, a total of eleven Silver Winged Demon Wolves had appeared in front of them!

How could they not despair in such a situation?

Out of everyone here, the only person to not feel despair after seeing the Silver Winged Demon Wolves was Qin Lie!

Not only did he not feel despair, he secretly felt excited. Licking his lips, he stealthily extended his hand and touched the sculpture by his chest, secretly thinking: We encountered them so quickly. It's unfortunate, truly unfortunate that Shattered Ice Manor's people haven't caught up yet. Otherwise, this truly would have been perfect.

"Qin Lie..." At this moment, Ling Yushi suddenly neared him, standing side by side with him and deliberately grasping his left hand as she turned her head and apologetically, yet beautifully, smiled at him. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have called you along to Celestial Wolf Mountain. If you hadn't come, you wouldn't have had such troublesome encounters, and you wouldn't... die here with me."

A breeze swept over, blowing the hair on her forehead into a mess, causing her to seem even more like a damsel in distress. Her jade white hand clenched Qin Lie's, seemingly trying to better feel Qin Lie's presence, to better feel the warmth coming from his palm. It seemed as if being this way had calmed her down in the face of her impending death.

"Dying here? That might not be certain..." Qin Lie quietly murmured to himself.

"What did you say?" Ling Yushi's slight smile became somber and sour. "It's all my fault, I just had to call you over, causing you to suffer through this disaster with me."

"I was the one who wanted to come with you," said Qin Lie, his expression aloof.

Hearing him put it that way, Ling Yushi felt warm in her heart, lightly smiling as she said, "Oh you... you're too gentle, caring, and you even know how to protect others. The day of our engagement, when we were holding hands... At that moment, I should've known that, but knowing that now shouldn't be considered late."

Qin Lie was surprised. Who knew that under what seemed like imminent death, Ling Yushi, who was usually strong, would actually reveal a sentimental, feminine side.

"Awooo!"

The loud howl of a wolf sounded, and eleven powerful Silver Winged Demon Wolves suddenly rushed over.

Their silver wings spread as they jumped, allowing them to glide through the air and greatly increasing their speed.

Upon seeing the shockingly fast pace of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves, the people who had originally believed that there was still a sliver of hope to escape had it completely crushed to pieces.

Everyone, even Liu Yan, had looks of despair as they wrung their brains. However, they were still unable to think of ways to escape this disaster. They could only huddle

together and support each other. To them, every moment they lived was another moment.

“I don’t want to watch the Silver Winged Demon Wolves tear me apart and devour my flesh. I’ve heard people say... Silver Winged Demon Wolves don’t eat the flesh of dead people.” A practitioner of the Gao Family emotionlessly raised the sharp knife in his hand, his eyes emotionless as he was about to cut his own throat to avoid being devoured alive.

“Please wait a moment before dying,” Qin Lie suddenly shouted in a deep tone.

Amidst the eyes of despair, fear, doubt, and surprise, Qin Lie walked to the front of the formation. Facing the attacking pack of Silver Winged Demon Wolves, he took out the wooden sculpture that his grandfather had given him, holding it high above him.

.....

Chapter 37: Sculpture

Qin Lie stood in the front of the formation and raised the wooden sculpture high up facing the eleven Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

“They should be stopping now...”

Qin Lie said silently in his heart and waited leisurely for the Silver Winged Demon Wolf pack to stop on their own.

According to his grandfather, the Silver Winged Demon Wolf could recognize the wooden sculpture. Once he displayed it, they would be able to escape from the Silver Winged Demon Wolves’ attack.

There was no reason for him to not believe in his grandfather, so he was completely confident, thinking that once the Silver Winged Demon Wolves saw the wooden sculpture, they would stop their assault.

“What is he doing? Feeding himself to the wolves? Does he think that after the Silver Winged Demon Wolves tear him apart, they will spare us?” That martial practitioner from the Gao Family who was going to commit suicide by cutting his own throat mumbled in a low voice. He felt completely baffled upon seeing Qin Lie’s actions.

“Qin Lie! What are you doing? Hurry and come back!” Ling Yushi was worried and unsettled. She yelled hastily, ignored the formation of the defensive circle, and walked towards him while holding her Twin Heart Hoops.

“That wooden sculpture... must be some kind of strong spirit artifact, that has to be it.” Liu Yan’s was stunned, but he immediately reacted and said with certainty, “Qin Lie must have some sort of plan, let us see what kind of miracle he can bring about.”

From when he met Qin Lie, he found that Qin Lie was filled with the scent of mystery and believed that the wooden sculpture that he confidently raised up in the air should be some kind of extremely powerful spirit artifact, one that could help everyone defend themselves from the Silver Winged Demon Wolves’ attack.

“Wasn’t Grandpa Qin Shan the one who carved the sculpture?” Ling Feng’s face was filled with surprise as he asked, “What is going on? The wooden sculpture can hold back Silver Winged Demon Wolves? That can’t be possible, right?”

Many people of the Ling Family felt the same way. The expression in their eyes were all strange, and they felt that Qin Lie’s actions were a bit ridiculous.

“Uh... How come they didn’t stop?” After a few seconds, seeing that the Silver Winged Demon Wolves didn’t slow down at all, Qin Lie was stunned as well. “No way? It didn’t work like Grandpa said it would at all! This is bad!”

Before, the Silver Winged Demon Wolves were quite far away from the group, but now, after their savage charge, they were already close within reach!

The first demon wolf even charged directly at Qin Lie; the light in its eyes were incredibly fierce as it charged abruptly after a long howl.

An extremely fierce imposing aura emanated from the demon wolf’s body. The silver light flickering from its wide wings gave people a feeling that they were as sharp as a sawtooth.

“Qin Lie! Stop daydreaming!”

Ling Yushi screamed and threw out the Twin Heart Hoops in her hands at the same time. It became a screen of light as it flew towards that fastest demon wolf to help Qin Lie block an attack.

“Awoo!”

That Silver Winged Demon Wolf howled fiercely, and its claws struck viciously onto the Twin Heart Hoops.

The Twin Heart Hoops collided into each other in a rattle of gold and iron and was immediately struck into the sky. The screen of light that was formed with spirit energy was also instantly shattered.

Ling Yushi's beautiful face paled, and without thinking any further, she moved to Qin Lie, stood in front of him, and, with her delicate hands, gathered spirit energy to defend against the angered Silver Winged Demon Wolf.

She was helping Qin Lie block the lethal attack!

The sinister light shining in the eyes of the Silver Winged Demon Wolf was terrifying. It looked at Ling Yushi tauntingly as if it had intelligence as it flapped wide wings, swiftly bringing its majestic body high into the air, before diving towards Ling Yushi.

It seemed like the flesh and blood of a young tender woman was more delicious to it, so it gave up its other prey, Qin Lie.

"Hurry and leave!" Ling Yushi yelled hastily.

Qin Lie felt defeated that the wooden sculpture didn't have the power that he thought it had and became stunned for a moment.

When he finally snapped back to reality, he found Ling Yushi swiftly making her move. She rushed before him, disregarding her own safety in order to try and block the Silver Winged Demon Wolf's attack with her own life.

Ling Yushi was only at the eighth level of the Refinement Realm, and the Silver Winged Demon Wolf was a Rank Two Beast, which was the equivalent of a martial practitioner of the Natal Opening Realm. It was clear from the Twin Heart Hoops being flung away that she had no chance of going head to head with the Silver Winged Demon Wolf.

By the time Qin Lie realized it, Ling Yushi's delicate body was already about to be hit by the Silver Winged Demon Wolf. He didn't have time to grab and attack with his Green Wing Axe, so he wielded that wooden sculpture and attacked with it.

Circulating Heavenly Thunder Eradication, the thunder and lightning energy mixed within his spirit energy violently flowed into the wooden sculpture.

"BOOM!"

An unbelievable frantic power burst out from within the wooden sculpture!

The head of the wooden sculpture instantly shot out more than ten blue streaks of lightning that were as wide as fingers! Each lightning streak was like a horsetail whisk that was spread out and suddenly connected into a burning electric net, covering at least an area four meters before him!

"Clap clap clap! Boom boom boom!"

The lightning was shooting out intensely with the sound of thunder rumbling. The electric net that burst out from the head of the wooden sculpture exuded an intimidating and terrifying aura!

“Bang!”

The Silver Winged Demon Wolf showed fear in its eyes, but it couldn't hold its body back and crashed right into the electric net.

“Awoo!”

A shrill howl came from the Silver Winged Demon Wolf. Its silver hair immediately stood erect as it became burnt, and it fell down from the sky as it curled up its body as if it had been hit directly by lightning in the sky.

“Bzzt bzzt bzzt!”

The burning electric net that was formed from within the wooden sculpture released ferocious streaks and streaks of lightning. Each lightning streak released was tangled together like snakes, and its aura was extremely fierce!

“Clang clang!”

Ling Yushi didn't even pick up her Twin Heart Hoops when they fell to the ground. She watched Qin Lie who shielded her and the scary electric net that was released by the wooden sculpture in Qin Lie's hands. With her life saved from the gates of hell, all sorts of emotions surged within her heart.

“I knew it. If that kid wasn't confident, why would he dare to rush out of the defensive formation?” Liu Yan nodded his head, looked deeply at Qin Lie, and said, “This guy was just as I thought. He is filled with secrets and wouldn't be killed that easily.”

“Brother Liu is wise!” Ling Xin praised sincerely.

Liu Yan smiled slightly.

“Awoo!”

The Silver Winged Demon Wolf that fell on the ground was shrieking, and there were still thin electric currents flickering on his body. After it stood up, it backed away fearfully. Looking at the electric net that was released from the wooden sculpture in Qin Lie's hands, it didn't dare to attack again.

The Silver Winged Demon Wolves that were following behind saw it lose and stopped immediately. Each wolf stood behind each other in a line and were obviously showing fear as they all peeked at the area with the burning electric net.

Qin Lie was also stunned.

He held the sculpture in one of his hands by its legs and pointed its head at the pack of wolves. As he imbued his spirit and lightning energy into it, the life-like hair on the head of the sculpture kept releasing astonishing electric currents and spirit energy, forming a web of electricity and filling the area before him.

“This, this is actually a spirit artifact...”

He never thought that the sculpture that his grandfather had left him could be a spirit artifact, thus, he had never tested it by inserting his spirit energy into it since the day he received it.

At the crucial moment just now, he didn't have the chance to think. When he held the sculpture and was prepared to attack that Silver Winged Demon Wolf with it, he naturally summoned all his strength in order to save Ling Yushi.

But he didn't expect the sculpture to give him such a big surprise!

Because he didn't think that the sculpture was a spirit artifact before, he didn't input mind energy into it and didn't examine the inner workings of the sculpture.

At this moment, seeing that the pack of Silver Winged Demon Wolves stop with surprised expressions, he kept inserting his spirit energy into the sculpture and also slipped some mind energy into it to sense its construction now that he was finally not pressed for time.

A trace of mind energy flow within and his face instantly sparkled brightly as he yelled within his heart, “What a miraculous Artifact Forging method!”

There were at least six different spirit diagrams inside the sculpture!

And it had all the four basic spirit diagrams, Spirit Gathering, Amplification, Spirit Storage, and Strengthening!

It was just that the four basic spirit diagrams within were much simpler when compared to the respective ones within his Soul Suppressing Orb. However, the ones within the sculpture were still several times more refined and complicated than the Spirit Gathering diagrams within the short spear, the Green Wing Axe, and the Hexagonal Shield!

The four basic spirit diagrams within the sculpture were detailed and complicated, but the structure was clear and the diagrams worked together perfectly.

Aside from the four basic spirit diagrams, there were two spirit diagrams that were even more complicated mounted within. Those two should be even more advanced and should be the real core of the sculpture!

Six different types of spirit diagram filled the sculpture. The network of spirit lines interweaved in and out; it was so complicated, just like the human body's tendons, and it stunned Qin Lie greatly!

Suddenly, he felt like the sculpture was a living being, because it seemed to have human-like muscles, veins, and flesh!

That spirit energy circulating within the Spirit Diagram, was just like arts unleashed by martial practitioners channeling spirit energy, wonderfully brilliant!

Qin Lie was still not a real artificer, but with his shallow knowledge of Artifact Forging, the spirit diagram within the sculpture was definitely a creation of a Master Artificer!

This was the most complicated, mystical spirit diagram he had seen thus far!

The sculpture must also be an extremely unusual spirit artifact!

Compared to the wooden sculpture, the simple spirit diagrams within the short spear, the Green Wing Axe, and the Hexagonal Shield were like child's play compared to a master's creation. They were incomparable.

Because the spirit diagrams within the wooden sculpture were miraculous and unpredictable, after he inserted his powers into it, it intensified his power by several times, becoming so scary that even he himself thought it was unbelievable, and it caused the Silver Winged Demon Wolves to temporarily back off, not daring to continue their attack.

"Qin Lie! Come back here! Stop pouring all your spirit energy in!" Liu Yan suddenly reminded him.

"Mn, let's back off first. Don't continue wasting your strength."

Ling Yushi also said softly. Then, she hurriedly went to pick up the Twin Heart Hoops. Feeling the blue lightning electric net's fierce electric current, she was secretly shocked. She was sure that the power which formed the electric net definitely could not be formed by a martial practitioner in the Refinement Realm.

"What rank would this spirit artifact be?" She pondered in her heart, knowing that this sculpture greatly increased Qin Lie's strength and unleashed power several times more than he was capable of.

Qin Lie came to his senses, nodded his head, and stopped inserting his spirit energy. After he stopped channeling his energy into the wooden sculpture, the electric net didn't disappear immediately, it only slowly shrunk...

"There had already been stored spirit energy inside the sculpture!"

Qin Lie immediately found that there was a white, burning thing inside the Spirit Storage diagram inside the wooden sculpture.

That was the spirit energy that was already stored inside. The reason he was able to make the wooden sculpture release such deterrent power must be because he triggered that ball of white, burning spirit energy within the storage spirit diagram!

The spirit energy was stored within the wooden sculpture for many years, but after being released, it was still as fierce and ferocious, and it didn't exhaust only after one use. This spirit energy... How thick and refined was it?

"Was it really Grandpa who inscribed such a magical spirit diagram and left this astonishing spirit energy? If it really was him, then how many things did Grandpa keep from me?" Qin Lie was thoroughly shocked.

.....

Chapter 38: Heavy Encirclement

Together, Qin Lie and Ling Yushi returned to the defensive formation and began to fight alongside everyone.

"Zing zing zing zing zing zing!"

One sharp ray of silver light after another shot out of Liu Yan's Hexagonal Shield, and the six beams rushed out, amalgamating into a defensive ring.

Ling Feng and Ling Yushi both took out their respective spirit artifacts, gathered spirit energy and infused it into them, also readying themselves to exhibit the power of their spirit artifacts.

Gao Yu's cold expression looked towards the Silver Winged Demon Wolves, also inciting his Ogre-faced Rings.

Cluster after cluster of tormented spirits, in the form of ghostly faces, emerged in front of his body like black clouds, assailing people with coldness while also bringing along a heart wrenching wave of mind energy which turned into a layer of defense as well.

Qin Lie clenched the sculpture, pointing the head of it towards the pack of wolves. Amidst the crackling of electricity, the net of thunder and lightning gradually expanded out.

"Howl!"

The Silver Winged Demon Wolf that had previously been injured lowly howled, signaling for the pack of wolves to spread out and encircle the group of people.

“Everyone be careful! Silver Winged Demon Wolves have intelligence, they know how to attack weak spots. Do not let them break the formation!”

Liu Yan reminded everyone, his expression grim as he circulated his strength so that everyone could continue to hide within the formation. Only Qin Lie, Ling Yushi, Ling Feng, Gao Yu, and himself were outside of it.

The others were armed with javelins, lances, bows, and other long ranged weapons. They huddled within the defensive circle, preparing for the moment when the Silver Winged Demon Wolves drew close enough so that they could coordinate with Qin Lie, Gao Yu, and the rest.

“They’re coming!”

Liu Yan grimly yelled and his Hexagonal Shield expelled six streaks of rainbow-colored rays, causing a powerful aura to emanate from him.

The eleven Silver Winged Demon Wolves surged over at the same time, attacking from all four directions; Qin Lie, Ling Yushi, Gao Yu, and Ling Feng all infused spirit energy into their spirit artifacts.

At this moment, the spirit artifacts all let out colorful, dazzling rays of light. These rays shined upon the Silver Winged Demon Wolves, causing their pupils to contract.

“Whoosh whoosh whoosh! Clap clap clap!”

At the same time, the formation of rainbow rays, the lightning net, the groups of fire clouds, the clusters of tormented spirits, and the curtain of silver light emanated great power, forming layer after layer of thick, defensive rings which welcomed the charging demon wolves.

Behind them, the others were either desperately shooting arrows or throwing javelins and spears towards the wolf pack.

“Awoooo!”

As the Silver Winged Demon Wolves powerfully howled, they charged at the defensive barrier composed by the spirit artifacts. Under the barrage of arrows and javelins, light reflected off of the wolves’ two meter long bodies and flickered in the sky, making it seem as if they were on fire.

Each arrow and spear could only leave shallow cuts on the wolves’ bodies and were unable to truly wound them.

Only the lightning net, sharp rays of light, and tormented wraiths, condensed by the respective spirit artifacts of Qin Lie, Liu Yan, and Gao Yu, were able to cause the

wolves to cry out in pain when they were hit, causing the wolves to avoid them in a panic.

Clearly, only the attacks of Liu Yan, Gao Yu, and Qin Lie could fatally wound the Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

The first wave of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves' attack was unable to break through the defensive barrier. Taking fire from the powerful spirit artifacts wielded by Qin Lie, Liu Yan, and Gao Yu, who were desperately infusing spirit energy into their artifacts, the wolves hurriedly retreated, temporarily leaving the three's attack range.

The first wave of offense ended extremely quickly, and thus they were only able to leave a few wounds on some of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves' bodies.

"How!!"

The wolf which had exchanged blows with Qin Lie earlier suddenly growled, its fierce eyes staring at everyone as it circled them before surprisingly backing off bit by bit.

The rest of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves also strangely retreated, as if they were giving up on this special meal.

"No way?" Ling Xin dropped to the ground, his expression pale as he said, "I had thought that we would be torn to pieces. With our strength... there is no way to win, why did they leave?"

This same question formulated in everyone's mind.

For eleven Rank Two Silver Winged Demon Wolves, each with the power of a Natal Opening practitioner, killing them would not have been a hard task.

In the previous wave of attack, they had nearly broken through the defenses set up by Ling Yushi and Ling Feng, almost able to break through the barrier where they would have bitten and killed every member of the Ling and Gao families there.

"Maybe they decided that brother Liu, Gao Yu, and Qin Lie weren't easy opponents and were afraid of casualties, afraid that killing us required them to pay a certain cost. They... probably didn't want to make any sacrifices, didn't want any wolf to die, so they let us go," explained Ling Feng after thinking for a while.

Liu Yan, Ling Yushi, and the rest all slightly nodded their heads, believing that what Ling Feng had said was definitely possible.

"It's not!" Gao Yu looked over in the distance towards the direction the Silver Winged Demon Wolves left from, his heart beating rapidly. He continued, "When they attacked

earlier, there was the sound of a wolf howling in the distance. If I didn't hear wrongly, they should have been summoned by the chief!"

After his remark, everyone's expressions became terrified. Ling Feng panickingly asked, "Could it be that there is another pack of wolves? If their leader is with another pack of wolves, then that pack is definitely even more terrifyingly powerful than this one!"

After believing that they had just weathered the storm, everyone once again fell into an uneasy fear as they looked in the direction that the Silver Winged Demon Wolves went.

Qin Lie looked at Gao Yu astonishedly. Pondering a moment, he bit the bullet and said, "Although I don't want to irritate everyone, I still must say it. The howl in the distance... I heard it as well. I had originally thought I had heard wrong, but upon hearing Gao Yu say he heard it too, then I mustn't have..."

Pausing a moment, he bitterly laughed and continued, "What Gao Yu said should be correct. There should be another pack of wolves in this forest with the leader, and they are definitely scarier than the ones we just encountered."

Everyone's faces became ashen.

Gao Yu frowned, giving Qin Lie a glance before snorting and muttering, "The Ling Family, I guess not all of them are trash..."

He said this very quietly. The Ling Family members, knowing that he had lost a lot of family members and was deeply resentful towards them right now, acted like they didn't hear anything even if they had.

"What do we do now?" Ling Feng looked at Liu Yan.

Liu Yan's expression was solemn for a moment. Then, he looked at Gao Yu, and then Qin Lie, asking, "What do you two think we should do?"

Gao Yu and Qin Lie shouted at pretty much the same time. After they finished, both of them were startled, and immediately looked the other way.

"Then let's run!" Liu Yan had no clue as to why the wolf pack leader had howled and didn't hear it either. However, now that there was a glimmer of hope, he naturally didn't dare to hesitate as he urged Qin Lie, "Lead the way, we will follow you!"

"Okay!"

Qin Lie didn't bother saying any more. Taking a deep breath, he picked a new direction and quickly left with everyone.

Fifteen minutes later.

“Waaaaah!”

Shrill screams constantly emanated over from nearby; it was coming precisely from the direction they were heading to.

A male clad in the practitioner uniform of Shattered Ice Manor suddenly ran out from amidst the forest with his body covered in blood, his left arm missing, and his face full of terror.

A Silver Winged Demon Wolf opened its silver wings and soared through the sky as it fiercely attacked, biting his neck from behind.

“Snap!”

After the bite broke his neck, fresh blood spewed out from the wound like water. The man had been killed in front of their very eyes.

“So the other group of wolves encountered Shattered Ice Manor’s people...”

Needless to say, everyone now understood why the pack of wolves had suddenly withdrawn.

“It seems that although our luck cannot be considered good, at the very least... we didn’t encounter the pack with the leader,” dryly commented Ling Feng with eyes containing a profound bitterness upon seeing the brutal scene in front of him. Flesh and blood were splattered everywhere.

In front of them, the Silver Winged Demon Wolf tore the Shattered Ice Manor practitioner’s body to pieces. As it chewed up the bloody flesh, it howled, and from nearby, other howls came back.

This Silver Winged Demon Wolf seemed to have been a part of the leader’s pack as it thought that Qin Lie and his group belonged to Shattered Ice Manor. Its cold, cruel eyes flashed with the light of excitement.

“This way! Withdraw this way! Eh? Are those people of Nebula Pavilion? Nebula Pavilion’s people are over here!”

Another practitioner of Shattered Ice Manor emerged from the nearby forest. Upon seeing Qin Lie, Liu Yan, and the rest, they immediately screamed.

“Whoosh whoosh whoosh!”

The sound of clothes fluttering quickly came from all sides. Many of the Shattered Ice Manor practitioners, upon hearing the shouts, transmitted the information along and then began gathering towards Qin Lie, Liu Yan, and their group.

“F*ck your mother!” loudly swore Ling Xin towards those people as his eyes immediately turned red.

“Sheet, this daddy’s going to kill you!” The eyes of the other Gao Family practitioner also turned red. Cursing all eighteen generations, of their ancestors, he stomped and angrily rushed towards Shattered Ice Manor’s practitioner.

The Shattered Ice Manor practitioner, upon locating Qin Lie’s group, clearly wanted to lure the deathly Silver Winged Demon Wolves over so that they would have to fight against the attacks of the wolves together. He wanted to bury Qin Lie’s group along with them. It was no wonder why Ling Xin and everyone else flew into rage.

Sure enough, as those practitioners shouted to each other, they all tried to converge at the position of Qin Lie’s group.

Feng Yi and another Feng Family member appeared in the crowd, also covered in blood as they moved towards the position of Qin Lie’s group.

“Should we break out?” loudly shouted Ling Xin.

“The wolves are still howling within the forest. If we rush right into a pack of wolves, I’m afraid we will die even faster. As soon as we start running, our formation will also fall apart. We can’t outrun them either. We’ll only be bitten to death. Only if we keep our formation and hang on can we have a chance. We must not aimlessly run!” explosively yelled Liu Yan, trying to get everyone to remain calm as they quickly reformed the defensive formation.

Only, that Gao Family member had already impulsively left the area, trying to kill his way over to that Shattered Ice Manor practitioner.

“Shing!”

An icy cold crescent beam suddenly shot out from within the forest, instantly hitting him.

The Gao Family practitioner, who had shouted that he would kill the instigator, now had a bloody hole in his chest. Before he had even reached the other person, he had unwillingly stopped breathing.

“You think you’re strong enough to kill me?”

The Shattered Ice Manor practitioner who had shouted first spat at the corpse of the Gao Family member. Casually swinging the sword in his hand, he beheaded the dead practitioner, and his grin became even wider.

“Yan Qingsong! I’m going to cut you into ten thousand pieces!” Gao Yu let out a bestial howl, crazily rushing over, wanting to finely mince him.

“Hehe, you can come and try. Just like how I beheaded your clansman’s head, I will behead yours as well.” The young practitioner of Shattered Ice Manor, called Yan Qingsong, uncaringly said as he smiled strangely. Waving his hand at the people behind him, he said, “Bring everyone over and attract all of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves here. Sheet, there’s no reason for just us to die, how can we let them off so easily?”

As he waved and spoke, the nearby Shattered Ice Manor practitioners began to all move over.

Before long, even the Head Elder of Shattered Ice Manor, Yan Dewu, appeared along with his trusted subordinates.

He had also been injured with bloodstains around his chest. At the moment, his eyes were sinister. After arriving, he nodded towards Liu Yan, saying, “In order to kill you all, we have already spent a great amount. You can all die peacefully now.”

Upon seeing the appearance of Yan Dewu, Gao Yu, who nearly rushed over, quickly stopped. He ground his teeth, and no longer dared to continue forward.

“This time, we truly cannot escape,” bitterly laughed Liu Yan. Sighing deeply, he said, “We will either be killed by Shattered Ice Manor or get torn to pieces by the Silver Winged Demon Wolves. That being the case, let us try to kill a few more members of Shattered Ice Manor. In this situation, even if we all die, most of Shattered Ice Manor’s people will die as well because they will be chased down by the wolves. It’s worth it!”

Indeed, as soon as Liu Yan finished speaking, another loud howl came from the periphery.

When the wolf howled, Yan Dewu also became frightened.

Afterwards, the sound of the quick movements of Silver Winged Demon Wolves immediately rang out from all sides as one wolf after another gradually appeared from their surroundings.

These demon wolves were extremely disciplined. With the leader’s howl, they used their speed advantage to gradually scatter and encircle everyone within.

As of right now, Shattered Ice Manor’s forces and Qin Lie’s forces were face to face in their formations, and the two forces were in turn surrounded and being observed by the fierce and brutal Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

.....

Chapter 39: Demon Wolf King

The forces of Shattered Ice Manor and Qin Lie had all been completely encircled by the Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

Qin Lie's group and Shattered Ice Manor's practitioners were divided by a bit of distance, each group on one side. When they looked at each other, there were only cold glares.

"Yan Dewu is at the middle stage of the Natal Opening Realm. Within Shattered Ice Manor, he is famous for being ruthless and sinister. The three Hall Masters under him are all brothers. Their names are Tang Mu, Tang Lin, and Tang Sen, and they were all at the early stage of the Natal Opening Realm, experts at close quarter combat. It is rumored that... in the past, the three Tang brothers once killed a martial practitioner at the middle stage of the Natal Opening Realm after joining hands."

After Shattered Ice Manor's people emerged, Liu Yan explained some stuff to Qin Lie and the Ling Family, "This Yan Qingsong fellow is the young manor lord of Shattered Ice Manor. He is the cousin of Yan Ziqian and has cultivated to the ninth level of the Refinement Realm, and is only one step away from the Natal Opening Realm. His strength is also extremely terrifying..."

As Qin Lie listened to Liu Yan's explanations, he solemnly observed the Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners as his eyebrows wrinkled together.

When he had first seen Shattered Ice Manor's group earlier, they had around sixty people with them. After their extended chase, less than forty had appeared.

Of those who had died, most of them had died from spirit beast attacks. If there weren't any other variables, the Silver Winged Demon Wolves had killed the most of them.

The power of Shattered Ice Manor's forces was very great. They had experts such as Yan Dewu and the three Tang brothers, as well as Yan Qingsong and Feng Yi. It was no wonder that when fighting this force the leader of the Silver Winged Demon Wolves had needed to call for reinforcements.

Generally speaking, Rank Two spirit beasts were comparable in strength to Natal Opening Realm martial practitioners. However, if those Natal Opening Realm martial practitioners wielded powerful spirit artifacts, then the practitioners would be a notch above them...

From this perspective, Yan Dewu and the three Tang brothers should have each been more powerful than a single Silver Winged Demon Wolf.

Shattered Ice Manor had a disciplined training system. This group of martial practitioners lead by Yan Dewu were all of his trusted companions and acted in perfect

harmony with one another. Their weapons were also of excellent quality. Due to their advantage in numbers, it wasn't completely hopeless for them to fight and win against the Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

Their chance was even better now due to the fact that they had found Qin Lie and the others and dragged them in to the fray which would divide the Silver Winged Demon Wolves' attacks.

Qin Lie's expression gradually became more and more profound as he secretly pondered and realized that there was very little hope for them to get out of this situation.

"Qingsong, well done!" After Yan Dewu arrived, he continued giving instructions, directing the Shattered Ice Manor practitioners to form a defensive formation. Nodding towards Yan Qingsong, he praised him and then continued, "With the help of Liu Yan's group, we will split the pressure. This time, it will be much easier."

"Elder Yan, what about Nebula Pavilion's forces over there?" asked Feng Yi.

Just from seeing Qin Lie and Ling Yushi, Feng Yi became somewhat unable to contain his inner resentment and wanted to rush over there to kill. He wanted to tortuously kill Qin Lie and viciously massacre the Ling Family, then ruthlessly ravage Ling Yushi's lower body and satisfy his impulses.

"Do not worry about Nebula Pavilion's forces," answered Yan Dewu, his expression cold. "They will help us divide the pressure from the Silver Winged Demon Wolves and make it so that we will deal with a few less. Be at ease, they will definitely all be bitten to death by the demon wolves. That, I am sure of."

"Hehe. Lord Wu's foresight is still the clearest. Please instruct us on how to use those people," complimented Yan Qingsong with a smile. "Liu Yan and his group only have around ten people. When I shouted for everyone to come over, I just wanted to drag them down into the water and force them to help us block the attacks of the demon wolves. It would be extremely unwise to kill them currently because we would be wasting our power."

"Let us follow Qingsong's plan," said Yan Dewu. He didn't bother looking at Feng Yi again as he turned towards the three Tang brothers. Nodding, he said, "Stay in this area and wait for the Silver Winged Demon Wolves to come at you. Hurry up and prepare. The wolf king should almost be here. Harden your mind and kill all of those damned demon wolves for me!"

"Understood!"

"Awooo!" A loud, vigorous howl emanated out from within the depths of the forest.

Upon hearing it, the pack of Silver Winged Demon Wolves surrounding the Shattered Ice Manor practitioners and Qin Lie's group all howled towards the sky in response.

They licked their knife-like sharp teeth, a cruel, bloodthirsty aura emanating out from their eyes. They fiercely rushed forward from every direction, simultaneously attacking Shattered Ice Manor's people as well as Qin Lie's group; each wolf had a frightening demeanor.

"Let us first deal with the wolf pack!" Liu Yan quietly swore and then hurriedly stopped everyone, having them prepare the defensive formation to deal with the demon wolves' attacks.

As he had been explaining Shattered Ice Manor's major figures earlier, their own group had been slowly moving towards Shattered Ice Manor's forces in formation, hoping for an opportunity to decisively strike them down.

From his point of view, their group was doomed to die here. It was either being torn to shreds by the wolf pack or being killed by Shattered Ice Manor.

That being the case, they might as well drag a few more Shattered Ice Manor enemies down with them before dying. This way, even if they died, it would be worth it.

But the Silver Winged Demon Wolves just struck too quickly!

Not waiting for the group to approach Shattered Ice Manor, the wolf pack unleashed a raging offensive, scaring Liu Yan and forcing him to give out new orders.

Everyone followed his orders, immediately stopping as Qin Lie, Ling Yushi, Ling Feng, and Gao Yu stepped forward, directly facing the attacks of the demon wolves as Ling Ying, Ling Xin, and the rest attacked from within the defensive ring.

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Three powerful male wolves spread out their silver wings, and a sinister light shined in their eyes as they glided over in the air.

"They're coming!"

The hairs on Qin Lie's body all stood up on end as he clenched the sculpture left behind by his grandpa. Taking a deep breath, he focused on the upcoming fight.

Cold beads of sweat appeared on everyone's foreheads except for his. They too prepared themselves to go all out, risking their lives to try and buy more time.

"Charge!"

“Give it your all!”

“Sheet, I’m not going to stand for this! I don’t want to die in a demon wolf’s mouth! I want to shatter Shattered Ice Manor!”

“I’m also not going to stand for this!”

From within the encirclement, several people shouted, and their eyes turned red as their demeanor became angry and crazed.

“Aooo!”

At this moment, an impelling howl suddenly came from within the nearby forest.

Upon hearing this howl, within the cruel, cold eyes of the three Silver Winged Demon Wolves who were getting ever so closer to Qin Lie’s group, a sliver of confusion appeared.

It seemed as if their leader had issued an extremely strange order, causing them to feel surprised and confused at the same time.

“Eh? What happened?” asked Ling Feng, stunned.

Qin Lie also became dazed.

The three Silver Winged Demon Wolves which had been rushing over had suddenly changed direction, passing right by Qin Lie’s group as they moved towards Shattered Ice Manor’s people instead.

Even the demon wolves behind them changed their targets. All of them ignored Qin Lie’s group and headed towards Shattered Ice Manor’s people.

“Holy f*ck! I... I really saw ghosts this time!” moaned Ling Xin, collapsing exhaustedly to the ground.

“God, I haven’t seen wrongly, right? My eyes haven’t become blind, right? Why would they let us go?” shrilly questioned Ling Xiao.

“What’s going on?” puzzlingly whispered Liu Yan, his expression also becoming stunned after the demon wolves all changed their directions. His frayed nerves finally calmed down as he too dropped to the ground.

“Eh? How come they aren’t attacking Nebula Pavilion’s forces? Are those demon wolves blind? Could it be that they can’t see the group of people right there?” A perplexed shout sounded from within Shattered Ice Manor’s forces.

Over on Shattered Ice Manor's side, every one of them had all become completely astonished.

They looked in an extremely awkward manner in Qin Lie's direction, completely unable to comprehend what they were seeing. Even after all of their insidious calculating, they never had expected that the Silver Winged Demon Wolves would completely ignore Qin Lie's group.

—This was completely beyond reason!

"What happened? Just how exactly could this happen? Those demon wolves... why would they ignore us? When they were rushing at us just now, they were exuding killing intent and were clearly ready to kill us. I'm sure I didn't see wrongly," questioned Ling Yushi, her beautiful eyebrows crinkling as she tried to think of an explanation. She couldn't think of any reason that would explain what had just happened.

"It was the howl of the demon wolves' leader!" suddenly exclaimed Gao Yu.

Everyone suddenly looked at him.

"The three forwardmost demon wolves only went past us because the leader issued new commands," said Gao Yu, his expression extremely perplexed. "Although I don't understand either, one thing is certain — the one that let us go was the demon wolves' leader!"

"Huh?" Everyone looked at each other as they became increasingly puzzled. They had no idea why the wolf king would rescind its attack on them.

It was just at this moment!

A strong, sturdy-looking, giant wolf majestically walked out from within the forest, its entire, three meter long body silvery white.

This giant wolf was clearly a full level higher as a pure energy fluctuated around its wings. It seemed that once it spread its wings, it would be able to fly around the world.

After its appearance, everyone was immediately certain that this was the leader, the wolf king of the pack of demon wolves!

After it appeared, it didn't look towards Shattered Ice Manor's area, seemingly not caring about them as they were already under attack. It instead moved towards Qin Lie's group.

"I'm... I'm afraid that the wolf king might... might be a terrifying Rank Three!"

Upon seeing the true appearance of the wolf king, Shattered Ice Manor's Yan Dewu couldn't help but swallow his saliva, incomprehensibly mumbling as a sliver of fear surfaced within his eyes.

From when Shattered Ice Manor had encountered the wolf pack all the way until now, the wolf king had yet to make an appearance, and thus, it was also the first time Yan Dewu had seen it.

Just glancing at it was enough to cause chills to run down Yan Dewu's spine. After slightly sensing it, he immediately guessed the true strength of the wolf king.

A Rank Three spirit beast was comparable in strength with a martial practitioner of the Manifestation Realm, powerful enough to squash the lives of anyone here!

Including Yan Dewu himself!

How could he not be terrified?

Only, when the giant, silvery white wolf appeared, it didn't pay any attention to him. In fact, it didn't even look towards Shattered Ice Manor's location. Instead, it walked straight towards Nebula Pavilion's group. This made Yan Dewu feel nervous, but it also gave birth to a wild thought: Why does it want to personally kill Nebula Pavilion's forces? Just how did they anger it for it to personally appear and attack?

"A terrifying Rank... Rank Three entity." Upon hearing Yan Dewu's cry, Liu Yan's face paled as he hopelessly said, "It seems like it is about to personally make a move! Sheet, just how did we anger it?"

At this moment, all of the Ling and Gao Family members felt chills run through every part of their bodies. It was as if their blood had stopped circulating, as if they had been frozen solid by a bone biting chill.

Qin Lie grasped the wooden sculpture as he watched the Demon King casually pad over. Deeply looking into the wolf king's eyes, he suddenly had an extremely strange feeling: The wolf king was coming for him!

Indeed, after the wolf king came closer, it continued walking straight towards him!

From the wolf king's eyes, a look of complexity that highly intelligent creatures possessed leak out. It seemed to be sighing as if it was thinking of a distant memory...

It was only looking at the wooden sculpture in Qin Lie's hand!

Qin Shan's sculpture!

Qin Lie's body shook as if an electric current had shot through every cell in his body. At this moment, he finally understood!

He finally understood why those three demon wolves had suddenly stopped their attack, and he finally understood the true motive of the wolf king!

"Everyone, everyone don't move! All of you, don't move!"

Qin Lie felt as if his heart was about to burst out of his chest. He gasped for air as he tremblingly ordered everyone behind him to stay their ground while he himself walked forward from amongst them.

Under the extremely shocked gazes of everyone, Qin Lie moved towards the Silver Winged Demon Wolf King, and just like the last time, he held the sculpture high up above him.

The giant, silvery wolf finally walked over!

Under everyone's perplexed eyes, the extremely terrifying wolf king slightly crouched down. Opening its mouth, it stuck out its tongue and, both gently and carefully, licked the sculpture...

Everyone froze as if they had been turned to stone.

.....

Chapter 40: Looting the Spoils of War

The silver Demon Wolf King stared reverently at Qin Shan's sculpture and licked it both gently and cautiously.

Qin Lie's eyes widened as he stared at the crouching Demon Wolf King, then at the sculpture in his hand. He finally realized that the one who recognized the sculpture wasn't just any ordinary Silver Winged Demon Wolf, but the king itself!

It was only now that his strained nerves had finally relaxed, and there was also that feeling that he had just narrowly escaped death.

Everyone else was completely pale. They stared stupidly at that terrifying demon wolf just a few feet away from them and felt that their brains had short-circuited. The scene that was unfolding before their very eyes only multiplied that shock tenfold.

"Ooo, ooo..."

The silver wolf king softly howled a few times in a low tone, and after giving the sculpture a slightly reluctant stare, it began to slowly retreat.

“Aooo!”

There was yet another loud and passionate howl in the distance. Finally, it turned its head completely and like a bolt of silver lightning, charged towards the direction of Shattered Ice Manor’s forces.

“Zing zing zing!”

Its silver wings spread wide, blades of dazzling white knives shot out rapidly from within and rained down upon Shattered Ice Manor’s defensive ring.

“Bang bang bang!”

A series of exploding sounds echoed out in rapid succession. The white knives were energy made tangible, and it smashed Shattered Ice Manor’s defensive line to near collapse.

Many Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners were struck down by the white blades, their flesh rent and blood spilt as if they had been cut to ribbons!

Even Yan Dewu had fear showing in his eyes and chills flooding out of his heart, as he watched the beast joining into the fray, he said with urgency, “We can’t stop them! Spread out and break through on your own accord! Make every life count!”

Every Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioner became shaken upon hearing those words, and they immediately dissolved their formation and ran away blindly like a bunch of homeless cur.

Before the Demon Wolf King’s arrival, their defensive line was tight and orderly enough to defend against the demon wolves’ rush. There were no major casualties that would be any cause for concern.

But when this Rank Three Demon Wolf King officially joined into the battle, the entire situation changed. Its fighting power alone was enough to tear down the entire Shattered Ice Manor defensive line!

Even Yan Dewu, a middle stage Natal Opening Realm martial practitioner knew that there was no chance he could match up against the Demon Wolf King, and to blindly defend in this kind of situation would only lead towards a dead end. To split up and flee was the only way to have even a sliver of hope at surviving.

—His order was not wrong.

At this moment, the Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners were fleeing their separate ways as they were being hunted down by the Silver Winged Demon Wolves. A

few of them were quickly bitten to death and shredded into pieces, and when their clothes were torn, a large number of Fire Crystals slipped out into the open.

The moment they saw those Fire Crystals, the Silver Winged Demon Wolves immediately become even more ferocious and hunted after the martial practitioners with greater madness and brutality than before.

“...The Fire Crystals. So that’s why the Silver Winged Demon Wolves attacked them so furiously.” There was a flash across Qin Lie’s mind, and he hastily lowered his voice and told Liu Yan, “If you have any Fire Crystals or Fiery Solar Jade on you, then make absolutely sure that they’re hidden from view, especially from the Silver Winged Demon Wolves!”

“Huh? Why?” Liu Yan broke out of his reverie and questioned with a dazed look on his face. After a short pause, he said again, “The Fire Crystals on those Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners were the product of our excavation. After we got out of Celestial Wolf Mountain, I distributed them to the Gao Family martial practitioners, and when they were killed, Shattered Ice Manor took everything...”

“That very Celestial Wolf Mountain is the Silver Winged Demon Wolf den.” Qin Lie answered him.

Instantly, Liu Yan understood what he meant and looked towards Gao Yu hastily, signaling him to be very careful.

Gao Yu replied impatiently with a frown, “I’m not an idiot!”

“Qin Lie, why... why did the Demon Wolf King act that way towards grandfather Qin Shan’s sculpture?” Ling Ying asked excitedly with her little face blushing red, “Your sculpture, what kind of mystery does it hold?”

Qin Lie’s mouth twitched as he said indifferently, “I’m not too sure myself.”

“Hmph! You’re so petty, refusing to say anything and holding us out like this!” Ling Ying curled her lips into a frown and exclaimed with a huff.

“Regardless, it is all thanks to Qin Lie that we managed to survive until now.” Liu Yan held up a bright smile and slapped Qin Lie on the shoulders. He said kindly, “Don’t you worry, I have seen all your efforts with these two eyes, and when we get back to the pavilion, I will report the matter without missing even a single word! Hehe, just Shattered Ice Manor’s casualties alone would net you a great service!”

The moment they heard his words, Ling Yushi and the rest of the Ling Family were all smiles and brimmed with excitement.

Gao Yu snorted once, appearing somewhat dissatisfied, but he too did not say anything.

“As of now the men from Shattered Ice Manor are fleeing in every direction. Judging from the current situation, there shouldn’t be... too many people who would survive this incident.” Qin Lie kept a close watch on the happenings of Shattered Ice Manor.

Currently, heeding their leader’s call, the Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners everywhere were being hunted down by Silver Winged Demon Wolves.

The silver white wolf king itself was keeping a close eye on Yan Dewu, and it had already chased him deep into the forestry, looking like it wouldn’t stop until Yan Dewu was utterly destroyed.

Countless Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners were being bitten or shredded to death one after another after their team had scattered; it was a gruesome scene.

Not a single Silver Winged Demon Wolf had touched Qin Lie’s group because of the wolf king’s orders earlier. They would even avoid them on purpose, and since Qin Lie wasn’t sure how good the wolves were at differentiating between humans, he strongly cautioned the others not to spread out to hunt the remains of Shattered Ice Manor’s group. This was to avoid the Silver Winged Demon Wolves mixing them up and accidentally treating them as prey.

So, they simply watched from the sidelines, with cold eyes, as the martial practitioners from Shattered Ice Manor cried out horrifically before being bitten to death in a splatter of flesh and blood.

After being hunted and forced into a humiliating escape for such a long time, everyone was looking at these bastards dying tragically with faces full of satisfaction.

An hour later, there were no longer any Silver Winged Demon Wolves that could be seen around them. All that was left were twenty or so bloody corpses and Qin Lie’s group.

“These Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners should have decent items on them.” Liu Yan suddenly said with a light smile, “It would also appear that the Silver Winged Demon Wolves won’t be returning for a while. So, you may all start searching, and if you come across anything good, there’s no need to surrender it to us. Just keep it to yourselves. I’ll pretend that I didn’t see anything.”

The moment he finished, the crowd cheered. They screamed and charged towards the bodies that they had chosen a long while ago, ignored even the gory scenery, and excitedly looted all they could.

The Silver Winged Demon Wolves were only interested in fresh meat and blood, so they were completely uninterested in the weapons, spirit pills, spirit materials, spirit stones, and such on the dead bodies. And since the Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners were all Yan Dewu’s subordinates, every one of them had at least some kind of

cultivation material on their person. For nameless and small powers like the Ling and Gao Families, all this were incredibly attractive.

In the past, small forces like the Ling and Gao Families would at times be arranged by Nebula Pavilion to engage with the enemy.

However, they were not allowed to keep the spoils of war for themselves and had to submit them to Nebula Pavilion for review before they were distributed as rewards in accordance to credits, casualties, contributions, and so on.

A case like this one, where Nebula Pavilion kept to themselves completely and allowed the looters to keep all the spoils, was incredibly rare.

Therefore, not only had the males rushed out with wild joy, even Ling Yushi and Ling Ying had excitedly joined in looting without a care for the gory scene or the fact that they would get blood on themselves.

Out of the entire crowd, Gao Yu and Qin Lie were the only ones who did not move, simply continuing to stand beside Liu Yan.

“Qin Lie, why didn’t you join them?” Liu Yan could not help but ask in surprise.

Gao Yu was the young master of the Gao Family, and compared to the Ling Family, they were also much wealthier. Moreover, Gao Yu and his two sisters were also working at Nebula Pavilion, and they had accumulated quite the number of cultivation materials for him throughout the years. So it did not come as a surprise to Liu Yan that Gao Yu would not be interested in those items. But it didn’t make sense that Qin Lie would choose not to act as well.

Out of all of Nebula Pavilion’s subordinate forces, the Ling Family would be among the poorest and most miserly...

“Since everyone in the Ling Family had gone over, they should do just fine without me. After all, there is only one Gao family member who’s in the fray as well, so in the end, the majority of the benefits will still fall to the Ling Family,” Qin Lie said coolly while returning a smile. Then he requested solemnly, “Big Brother Liu, the Silver Winged Demon Wolf den is at Celestial Wolf Mountain, and every May or June they would enter the deeper parts of the Arctic Mountain Range to pay their respects to the Icestone Snow Wolf King before returning in July. If Nebula Pavilion absolutely must obtain the Fiery Solar Jade, then I must request that they postpone it until next year, until after the wolves have left before excavating...”

The Silver Winged Demon Wolves did save their lives this time, and the way the Demon Wolf King stared at his grandfather’s sculpture convinced Qin Lie that it loved and respected his grandfather very much. Therefore, he did not wish to see these Silver

Winged Demon Wolves killed one by one when Nebula Pavilion excavates the Fiery Solar Jade.

“They went to pay their respects to the Icestone Snow Wolf King?” Liu Yan’s face turned serious and he exclaimed in a low tone, “You are sure of this?”

Qin Lie nodded his head.

Liu Yan inhaled and with a deep frown and said, “I will report this to the higher ups. If it is really as you say, then... I think that Nebula Pavilion will have to give up on the excavation of the Fiery Solar Jade. Even if the wolves are gone during May and June, we will not go to Celestial Wolf Mountain any longer.”

“Why?” Gao Yu, who had been silent and cold-faced this whole time, could not help but ask.

“This pack of Silver Winged Demon Wolves alone would be a headache for Nebula Pavilion to deal with, and we will have to report this to Dark Asura Hall and borrow their power before we can continue the excavation safely. Of course, if we simply excavate after they have left next year, then we won’t need to go through Dark Asura Hall.”

Liu Yan stopped at this point and turned quiet for a moment. Then, he finally shook his head and smiled bitterly, saying “But if these wolves are descendants of the Icestone Snow Wolf King, then... we may as well forget about it. Nebula Pavilion aside, I don’t think even Dark Asura Hall can afford to offend it.”

“The Icestone Snow Wolf King commands this much respect?” Gao Yu exclaimed.

Liu Yan nodded and replied helplessly, “I’m not sure about the exact situation either. At any rate, the higher ups had laid down orders that if we’re going through the Arctic Mountain Range, we must circle around the ice mountains and glaciers in the deeper region. We are not to disturb those powerful spirit beasts from cultivating, and the Icestone Snow Wolf King is one of the most powerful of the lot!”

Liu Yan added after a moment’s ponder, “As far as I know, the order was handed to us by Dark Asura Hall, but... not even they are the last line of command.”

“Then who gave the orders?” This time even Qin Lie was surprised.

“Dark Asura Hall is just a Black Iron ranked power, and although it commands Nebula Pavilion, Shattered Ice Manor, and other powers, even they... need to depend on someone else, just like how we, the Nebula Pavilion, have to depend on them to cultivate and survive.” Liu Yan’s smile was bitter as he continued, “The forces that can command Dark Asura Hall, our levels are just too far apart. Those kind of forces are just... completely out of our reach. So we don’t need to think too much about it. We

simply have to follow the higher up's orders because only then will we be able to survive. Otherwise, a single mistake might cause us to be wiped out completely.

Qin Lie and Gao Yu listened quietly and felt a kind of shock and awe blooming inside their hearts, as their understanding of the world's hierarchy and its cruel laws had grown just a bit deeper.

.....