

Stronger 141

Chapter 141: Shadow of the Black Soul Moves Unseen, White Snake Venom is Somewhat Sweet_2

"As expected, I can't hide from Daoist Zhao's Celestial Eye. Feiyan greets you. The four of us were not intentionally hiding here; it's just that the map indicated there were a few caves in this area, so we planned to find one to rest for the night. Unexpectedly, we saw Master Lin using the Black Soul Wondrous Jade, so we didn't dare to disturb."

Han Feiyan, who had a square face and thick eyebrows, walked out of the forest. She, Guo Xiu, and their two companions respectfully cupped their hands.

「A moment later, inside the cave,」

Han Feiyan furrowed her thick eyebrows. "So Guo Chui and Feng Zhulong have both gone to the Kun Branch gathering place! We had originally planned to take a detour, but fortunately, we ran into you two here. Otherwise, if we had run straight into them... I'm afraid the four of us would have been secretly silenced by Guo Chui and Feng Zhulong."

Lin Xuankong felt a bit emotional. He indeed shared some fate with these four, as he always seemed to encounter them near a cave.

Han Xiu then cupped his hands and said, "Daoist Zhao is indeed formidable; even Liy Ruofeng is no match for you."

Zhao Yufei replied, "It's also because in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, he couldn't exert his late-stage fourth-layer strength. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been so easy to subdue him!"

Han Feiyan sighed. "From what you two said, the Kun Branch gathering place must have already assembled hundreds of experts. Who will eventually get their hands on that Marsh Python Demon Pearl and Evil Sheep Demon Pearl? That mysterious Female Cultivator must be extremely terrifying to be willing to offer the Marsh Python Demon Pearl as a reward for the martial competition. Just what kind of Demon Pearls does such a Female Martial Cultivator possess? They must be among the top ten of the Demon Pearl ranking!"

Upon hearing this, Lin Xuankong secretly thought, No matter who she is, or how strong she is, she can be at most at the Perfection of the third layer in this Demon-Suppressing Valley. With my numerous trump cards, I should have a chance to get back that Marsh Python Demon Pearl! If worst comes to worst, I'll hide my identity and participate in the martial arts tournament, and then even use the Manluo Demon Pearl. Anyway, no one in Great Marsh Prefecture knows that the Conical Hat Guest has the Manluo Demon Pearl!

While they were chatting, none of them noticed that several miles away, on a small hill to the south, dozens of Martial Cultivators had already gathered silently.

At the top of the hill, hidden among the trees, San Gu observed the gently blowing south wind, a hint of excitement in his eyes. "The heavens are truly helping me! This south wind is perfect for using the Spirit Snake Gang's White Snake Venom."

The surrounding third-layer experts that San Gu had contacted all showed expressions full of dread upon hearing this. Feng Zhulong, a prominent figure on the Hero List, looked very serious. He apprehensively activated his Battle Armor, protecting his entire body, then moved some distance away from San Gu.

San Gu's six eyes gleamed as he took out a Jade Bottle from his bosom. Mindful of the wind's direction, he uncapped it. In an instant, a small wisp of faint white mist drifted out from the Jade Bottle. Caught by the south wind, this wisp of white mist drifted towards the cave several miles away. During this process, the white mist continuously expanded, quickly becoming a nearly imperceptible, faint mist covering an area hundreds of yards wide. As the white mist drifted along, the countless trees, shrubs, and grasses in its path withered silently in an instant, as if they had lost all their vitality.

A dozen or so breaths later, the vast expanse of faint white mist had already reached the cave.

Seeing this, San Gu's six eyes simultaneously shone with excitement as he murmured, "I thought we would have to fight a battle tonight and would need to coat my weapon with the White Snake Venom to kill Lin Xuankong. I didn't expect them to all be hiding in the cave without moving. Now that the White Snake Venom has reached the cave, Lin Xuankong is certainly doomed!"

Feng Zhulong's expression shifted slightly as he stared apprehensively at the Jade Bottle in San Gu's hand. "It's said that the White Snake Venom has an extremely low yield and is the number one rare poison in Great Marsh Prefecture, ranking among the top poisons of Great Xia. This White Snake Venom is very precious; Brother San Gu, you sure have a good relationship with Chu Qing!"

San Gu replied in a low voice, "Brother Guo and Brother Feng, need not worry. Even if Lin Xuankong dies immediately, you two came with me. Those two Sunflower Water Elixirs, a type of Meridian Opening Treasure Elixir, will still be shared between you. In the future, I'll still have many opportunities to obtain Sunflower Water Elixirs from the Holy Dragon Association!"

Upon hearing this, Feng Zhulong glanced at Guo Chui in the distance, then said to San Gu, "Brother San Gu is so generous. It truly makes one feel grateful. Rest assured, we won't take the Sunflower Water Elixirs for nothing. In the future, if Brother San Gu has other matters, Brother Guo and I will lend a hand."

San Gu nodded. "At this moment, the six people in the cave should all be dead. Let's wait for about ten more breaths, then go over and take a look. If everything's fine, we can leave!"

「Inside the cave,」

While listening to Han Feiyan speak, Lin Xuankong suddenly sniffed.

What is that smell? he wondered. It seems a bit sweet, with a hint of seafood!

At this moment, he suddenly saw the moss by a rock beside him turn from green to gray and wither away in an instant.

Simultaneously, Han Feiyan, Han Xiu, and their two companions, along with Zhao Yufei, all paled, their bodies trembling. The Qi Blood within the five of them rapidly seeped out. In an instant, it seemed that more than half of their Qi Blood had been exhausted. Even a good portion of their hair had gradually turned silver-white.

Seeing these strange occurrences, Lin Xuankong immediately understood that the five had been struck by some strange Demon Poison. But time was tight; he had no time to think about why the Demon Poison had suddenly appeared in the cave.

In a flash, he stepped to Zhao Yufei's side, reaching out to transfer the Qi Blood imbued with his Immortal Tier First Grade poison resistance into her body.

In an instant—

Chapter 142: Shadow of the Black Soul Moves Stealthily Without a Trace, White Snake Venom is Somewhat Sweet_3

Zhao Yufei's trembling body, which had been on the verge of death, began to recover. Her white hair returned to black, and her Qi Blood was no longer dissipating.

Lin Xuankong didn't stop; he continuously waved his palm, channeling Qi Blood into the meridians of Han Feiyan and her three companions. In the next moment, they also recovered.

Only then did Lin Xuankong slightly relax.

Recalling the scene where they had almost died, Zhao Yufei, Han Feiyan, and the others' faces changed dramatically.

Han Feiyan quickly walked to the cave entrance and looked outside. She saw countless plants in the distance turning yellow.

This square-faced Female Martial Cultivator couldn't help but turn her head towards Lin Xuankong and the others, exclaiming, "Everything withers, instant white hair... This is the foremost strange poison of Great Marsh Prefecture, White Snake Venom! But why is it here?"

Upon hearing the words "White Snake Venom," Han Xiu and her two companions, thinking of their near-death experience moments ago, felt their bodies tremble slightly again, clearly terrified of this legendary and terrifying poison.

"It shouldn't be White Snake Venom. Otherwise, how could my husband's mere infusion of Qi Blood into everyone dispel its toxicity?" Zhao Yufei glanced outside the cave, furrowing her brows in confusion.

Lin Xuankong activated his Battle Armor to protect himself and walked to the cave entrance, using his Celestial Eye to survey the surroundings.

The fact that he possessed Immortal Tier First Grade poison immunity is too astonishing; I definitely can't reveal it to Han Feiyan and the others...

While looking around, he spoke, "Perhaps it's not White Snake Venom... The most important question now is, who used this strange and potent poison nearby!"

Han Feiyan and her three companions looked at Lin Xuankong, their faces full of confusion.

That poison wasn't White Snake Venom? But this withering of everything, the instant white hair...

Yet, since Lin Xuankong had spoken, none of them said anything further. After all, they hadn't personally experienced White Snake Venom before.

Those who had experienced White Snake Venom didn't get the chance to tell others in detail what it felt like to be poisoned.

Especially Han Feiyan; thinking about her rapid recovery, she began to doubt her previous judgment. Maybe it really isn't White Snake Venom?

「On the distant hillside」

Seeing Han Feiyan and Lin Xuankong chatting there, San Gu and the others were already "petrified" on the slope.

Instant death from White Snake Venom! How... how are these people completely fine?! This is absolutely impossible!

San Gu's six eyes stared fixedly at the cave entrance, completely unable to believe the scene before him.

The dozens of Tier Three masters also had faces full of doubt.

"When Chu Qing handed you this Jade Bottle, did he say it contained White Snake Venom?" Feng Zhulong frowned deeply.

"Of course it's White Snake Venom! As for why they didn't die... Perhaps the distance was too great, or the area of dispersal too wide, so the White Snake Venom's potency was reduced?" San Gu clutched the empty Jade Bottle, his voice laced with uncertainty.

After all, this was also his first time using White Snake Venom.

Everyone fell silent upon hearing this. Looking at the scene of withered woods before them, and then at the "lively" Lin Xuankong and his group at the cave entrance, they all felt an extremely eerie sensation.

At this moment, seeing that no more plants were withering in the distance, San Gu, who had been stunned for a moment, gritted his teeth and tossed the empty bottle aside. "Everyone, regardless, Lin Xuankong and his group are now alert. There's no chance for a sneak attack anymore. Let's go straight for them!"

"Everyone, remember one thing: Lin Xuankong's Thunder Technique is quite peculiar. If you see him raise his hand, close your eyes immediately to avoid being blinded!"

After saying this, he was the first to leap from the hillside, heading straight towards the cave.

Feng Zhulong frowned slightly upon hearing this. He stroked the black cat in his arms and said, "Blinded? According to my Feng Family's scouts, several months ago, Jiang Yuran used a Thunder Technique called Aurora Shining Heaven when fighting a Late Tier Four Demon. Could it be that Lin Xuankong also knows this Thunder Technique?"

Guo Chui suddenly said coldly, "Whatever Thunder Technique it is, since they were lucky enough not to be killed by the venom, then let them die at our hands!"

This warrior, ranked fourth on the Hero List, was clearly very confident in his own strength.

After saying this, he leaped from the hillside, and along with dozens of Martial Cultivators, headed towards the cave.

Lin Xuankong, standing at the cave entrance and observing the surroundings, saw dozens of Martial Cultivators, along with San Gu and the others, approaching quickly.

A look of realization dawned on his face. The Gu Yue Sect and the Spirit Snake Gang are birds of a feather. It's quite normal that San Gu could obtain that sweet-smelling White Snake Venom from the Spirit Snake Gang's people! But San Gu has gotten bold now? He ran like a rabbit before, and now he actually dares to come and intercept me... It seems he's found a few helpers to give him courage, has he?

"Guo Chui and Feng Zhulong! It's actually them!" Behind Lin Xuankong, Han Feiyan's voice, filled with dread, was heard.

Han Xiu and her two companions stood behind Han Feiyan, looking fearfully at the approaching crowd.

Zhao Yufei and Lin Xuankong's formidable strength made them seem mysterious and inspired deep respect in Han Feiyan's group. In contrast, Feng Zhulong and Guo Chui had once ruthlessly tortured them, leaving an indelible mark deep in their hearts, which naturally induced fear. Those are powerful experts ranked very highly on the Hero List, far more famous than Zhao Yufei!

Zhao Yufei stood beside Lin Xuankong, her eyes cold as she stared at the approaching San Gu and his cohorts.

When she first entered the Demon-Suppressing Valley, she had been wary of San Gu's strength. However, recently, with Lin Xuankong's help, her own strength had repeatedly broken through. The dread she once felt was gone, replaced by a brimming battle intent.

In the blink of an eye, dozens of Martial Cultivators bypassed the large area of withered yellow woods and reached the cave.

They dispersed, each taking out their Exorcism Equipment, and surrounded Lin Xuankong and his group.

Han Feiyan and her three companions' faces changed drastically upon seeing this.

Dozens of Tier Three Martial Cultivators, each holding Exorcism Equipment! They are evidently all elites participating in this Demon Slaying Conference! So many powerful fighters with Exorcism Equipment, and on top of that, Feng Zhulong and Guo Chui...

Han Feiyan gritted her teeth, her thick eyebrows knitting together. She spoke in a low voice, "Daoist Zhao, Master Lin, you saved our lives. We've already gained by living these extra few days. When the fight starts, you two should break out as quickly as possible and not worry about the four of us!"

Upon hearing this, Han Xiu and her two companions' Qi Blood surged; they were ready to perform the Blood Burst Technique at any moment.

Lin Xuankong felt rather speechless seeing Han Feiyan and her companions preparing to self-destruct, just as they had when he first met them.

Zhao Yufei, however, shook her double hooks, her eyes fixed on San Gu, glinting with battle intent.

Standing next to San Gu, Feng Zhulong clearly didn't consider Zhao Yufei—ranked eighteenth and in the Late Stage of Tier Three—worthy of his attention.

He looked at Lin Xuankong and smiled. "I heard that you, old fellow, killed a Tier Three Marsh Python! I didn't expect you to be such a wolf in sheep's clothing. You almost cheated my Feng Family out of twenty-two times the amount in silver coins... Today, we'll settle this account!"

After saying this, Feng Zhulong patted the black cat in his arms and chuckled, "Kitty, go and devour him. That old face of his is quite annoying!"

"MROW~~~"

Upon landing on the ground, the black cat suddenly expanded dozens of times in size, transforming into a giant feline as large as a tiger. Its fur was glossy and smooth, its four paws extremely thick and strong; it looked truly majestic.

The Spirit Cat meowed softly a few times, shook its black fur, and lazily ambled towards Lin Xuankong. This powerful Spirit Cat, which had once killed a Tier Three Ghost Frog King, stared at Lin Xuankong, its own eyes gradually beginning to gleam.

Chapter 143: The Kui Ox Drum, a Wondrous Treasure of the World – Who Dares to Slay Me, Guo Chui?

"This is a Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat! Be careful, Master Lin! It's said that the Feng Family has been raising it for decades. It's already at Mid-Tier Four and can easily control anyone below Fourth Grade Heart Thought. It's an extremely famous Exotic Spiritual Beast in Great Marsh Prefecture!"

When Han Feiyan saw the black cat fixated on Lin Xuankong, her square face filled with tension. After speaking, she looked at Zhao Yufei with a hint of hope. Han Feiyan had personally witnessed Zhao Yufei use her Celestial Eye to deal with the Tier Three Ghost Frog King. Now, facing an Exotic Spiritual Beast that could influence people's Heart Spirit, she naturally placed her hopes on Zhao Yufei. However, she wasn't sure if Zhao Yufei could actually do it. After all, Zhao Yufei had defeated a Tier Three Ghost Frog King, while this Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat was Mid-Tier Four...

"Don't look into its eyes! It has an Abnormal Technique that can control one's Heart Spirit!" Guo Xiu whispered, avoiding the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat's two green eyes.

San Gu and the others, along with the more than thirty Martial Cultivators all holding Exorcism Weapons, looked at the Spirit Cat with dread on their faces.

Anything that could affect a Martial Cultivator's Heart Thought—be it a Cultivation Technique, Treasure, Exotic Beast, or Demon—was a source of extreme dread. After all, it was extremely difficult for a Martial Cultivator to enhance their Heart Thought. They not only had to wait until the Late Stage of Third Grade, when their bodies were strong enough to take a Divine Protection Elixir, but they also needed to consume hundreds, even thousands, of these elixirs over time to slowly achieve improvement! Ordinary Martial Cultivators simply couldn't resist such Heart Thought attacks!

As everyone watched, Zhao Yufei fixed her gaze on the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat. A subtle change crossed her beautiful face as her Qi Blood suddenly surged, activating the Eight Gates Celestial Eye. Under the moonlight, her eyes flashed with an eerie red light, and the Blood Seal Double Pupils appeared. This spectacle instantly caught the attention of everyone present, as well as that of the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat!

Feng Zhulong sneered, "The Eight Gates Celestial Eye Technique relies heavily on Heart Thought. Zhao Yufei, how long has it been since you reached the Late Stage of Third Layer? Your Heart Thought is probably just at the First and Second Grades... How could such a weak Heart Thought possibly affect my Spirit Cat, which possesses a Fourth Grade Heart Thought? The gap is too vast!"

At this moment, almost no one noticed that black Double Pupils had appeared in Lin Xuankong's eyes. In the very next instant, the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat, which had been creeping towards Zhao Yufei, suddenly straightened its tail, all its black fur bristling.

"MEEEEEOOOW!" The Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat let out a terrified screech and frantically retreated.

Lin Xuankong's Fifth Grade Heart Thought, channeled through his Eight Gates Celestial Eye, was potent enough to instantly affect even masters, Demons, or Exotic Beasts with Fifth Grade Heart Thought, let alone an Exotic Beast with a Fourth Grade Heart Thought. If it weren't such an exceptional Exotic Spiritual Beast, with its Heart Thought already at Fourth Grade and sufficiently strong, it would likely have collapsed like Liy Ruofeng, pissing itself in terror!

Seeing this, the Martial Cultivators who had been watching Zhao Yufei's Blood Seal Double Pupils and the Spirit Cat suddenly turned pale. Feng Zhulong, who had just been brimming with confidence in his Spirit Cat, widened his eyes and frowned. "Impossible! How could Zhao Yufei's Eight Gates Celestial Eye affect my Spirit Cat!"

Just then, the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat's body suddenly stiffened. It was caught by a pair of black hands that abruptly emerged from the ground, grabbing its legs. From the earth, a shadow writhed and rose, its two arms seizing the cat's hind legs. It then swung the creature violently and smashed it onto the ground! The Shadow of the Black Soul, wielding Lin Xuankong's full Power, unleashed an incredibly fierce burst of strength!

BOOM! A large crater appeared in the ground. The Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat, panic-stricken and utterly defenseless in its terror, shrieked even more miserably!

The Shadow of the Black Soul lifted the cat by its tail and, with a powerful leap, landed beside Lin Xuankong. Lin Xuankong, already poised for action, suddenly manifested a torrent of Divine Thunder from his left arm. He seized the cat's head. BZZZZT! Countless bolts of Divine Thunder erupted, instantly draining the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat of its Qi Blood. In the next instant, deprived of its Qi Blood, the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat's flesh and blood were incinerated by the rampaging lightning, transforming it into a charred cat!

The meat of an old cat would be too tough, definitely not as tasty as frog meat! Lin Xuankong thought, withdrawing his hand and brushing off the cat-charcoal stuck to it.

Zhao Yufei looked wordlessly at her biting sarcasm husband, retracting her Blood Seal Heavy Pupils.

The jungle fell into silence. The assembled Martial Cultivators stared at the scene, their eyes filled with utter bewilderment. This battle had ended too swiftly. Who could have imagined that the majestic Spirit Cat, renowned for its soul-devouring ability, would turn into charcoal in the blink of an eye?

Feng Zhulong, snapping out of his profound shock the moment the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat turned to charcoal, became entirely covered in Battle Armor scales and charged at Lin Xuankong. "AHHHH! My Spirit Cat!" Feng Zhulong's face contorted, all traces of his former refined and amiable smile vanishing completely.

To raise this Spirit Cat, he had expended countless resources and Demon Beast blood, painstakingly nurturing it to Mid-Tier Four. Yet, Lin Xuankong had turned it to charcoal in half a breath's time! How could he not be utterly consumed by fury!

Feng Zhulong, now clad in Battle Armor, activated the Feng Family's Seven-Seal Hand Martial Dao. He furiously attacked Lin Xuankong, determined to tear the old man to pieces instantly. However, the Shadow of the Black Soul beside Lin Xuankong flickered and, in a flash, intercepted Feng Zhulong, blocking him in his tracks! No matter how furiously or desperately Feng Zhulong attacked, the shadow remained like a steadfast boulder in a raging river, unmovable, completely nullifying his assault.

Chapter 144: Kui Ox Drum, a strange treasure of the world, who dares to kill me Guo Chui_2

Even though he was struck by countless attacks from Feng Zhulong in the span of a few breaths, this shadow continued to flicker incessantly, maintaining its fierce onslaught, making it impossible for Feng Zhulong to advance a single step.

The Shadow of the Black Soul, a Spiritual Object manifested from the foremost wondrous Treasure of the Great Marsh, naturally possessed unique qualities. Ordinary punches and kicks could not inflict any damage on it!

Looking at Feng Zhulong's crazed expression, at the charred Spirit Cat, and at the shadow blocking the expert from the Hero List, Han Feiyan, who had just been full of apprehension, was now completely shocked. This... this...

San Gu's six eyes were wide open, filled with surprise and dread. When Lin Xuankong's left arm had just begun to show signs of lightning, he had wisely closed his eyes. As a result, no terrifying blinding light appeared. When he opened his eyes again, the cat had turned to charcoal, and Feng Zhulong was half-mad, being battered by a shadow. This outcome was truly beyond his expectations! That incredibly powerful Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat turned to charcoal just like that? Lin Xuankong actually possesses the Black Soul Wondrous Jade?

"Brother Guo!"

Previously brimming with confidence, he suddenly lost his nerve and turned to Guo Chui, the strongest among the many experts present and ranked fourth on the Hero List.

Guo Chui didn't hesitate, reaching for the Ghost Frog Pouch at his waist. In the next moment, a small, black, fist-sized drum covered in countless intricate Runes appeared in his hand.

"Zhao Yufei, the Eight Gates Celestial Eye indeed has some merit, managing to deal with the Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat. With your skill, you are worthy of dying by the Kui Ox Drum!"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yufei's Battle Armor suddenly squirmed. After the Silver Hooks protected her entire body, another set of Nine-Scaly Armor squirmed out, covering her once more. A trace of dread flickered in her eyes. Facing Guo Chui, the fourth-ranked hero of Great Marsh Prefecture's Demon Slaying Association, no amount of caution could be too much.

The Feng Family, Guo Family, and Huang Family of Great Marsh Prefecture were all powerful families possessing Demon Pearls and Fifth or Sixth Layer experts. Among them, the Feng Family was considered a rising star, while the Guo Family was an almost millennium-old established family, its heritage second only to the Yin Talisman Sect. A family like this, enduring for a thousand years, would naturally have accumulated numerous Treasures. One of the Guo Family's three most famous Treasures was this very Kui Ox Drum.

Apart from grassroots individuals like Lin Xuankong, who had only risen in the past few months and knew little of such legends, everyone else present had heard of the Kui Ox Drum's fame.

Relying on this Kui Ox Drum, Guo Chui was ranked fourth, beneath Young Gang Leader Chu Qing of the Spirit Snake Gang, the female disciple Ding Rui of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect, and Prefect Liy's son, Liy Changming.

He not only surpassed several notable Late Stage Fourth Layer experts but even outranked Han Xunde, a Late Stage Fourth Layer Martial Cultivator who possessed a Plant-type Thorn Demon Pearl. This demonstrated the Kui Ox Drum's power.

Lin Xuankong was equally cautious. After protecting his entire body with Battle Armor, he stood near Zhao Yufei and the others, secretly activating the Eight Gates Celestial Eye towards Guo Chui. Simultaneously, Zhao Yufei's pupils flashed with red light as she activated her Blood Seal Heavy Pupils.

But to Lin Xuankong's surprise, his usually flawless Eight Gates Celestial Eye Illusion failed to take effect. Instead, a jade hanging from Guo Chui's necklace suddenly flashed, emitting a crisp, melodious chime.

Zhao Yufei's red-flashing Blood Seal Double Pupils were quite conspicuous, drawing everyone's attention to her once more. Guo Chui gently stroked the Jade at his neck and spoke coldly to Zhao Yufei, whose eyes still glinted red, "My Soul-Stabilizing Jade is infinitely mysterious. With it guarding my Heart Thought, how could your Pupil Technique possibly affect me? The Treasures of my Guo Family are exceedingly powerful! And your Zhao Family? Nothing but a declining household. It's utterly laughable that you actually rejected my marriage proposal back then!"

After speaking, his Qi Blood surged. The Qi Blood on his palm flashed, forming ancient and intricate Runes, and he slapped the Kui Ox Small Drum.

THUMP!

A deep drumbeat suddenly rang out, and waves of air rippled instantly outwards from the Kui Ox Drum's position.

Meanwhile, Lin Xuankong, Zhao Yufei, Guo Feiyan, and the others standing before Guo Chui suddenly felt their Qi Blood stagnate, as if suppressed by some terrifying power. This oppressive force, while not as dreadful as the Grand Array of Demon-Suppressing Valley which could lower their Realm, still caused their Qi Blood to congeal, temporarily rendering them unable to activate their Martial Dao Techniques.

As for the thirty-plus formidable Third Layer Martial Cultivators standing behind Guo Chui, including San Gu, their eyes instantly became bloodshot after the ripples from the Kui Ox Drum swept over them. Their muscles bulged, their Qi Blood circulated at high speed, and their auras surged. At that moment, their strength suddenly increased severalfold.

"AAAAHHHHH! Kill Lin Xuankong!"

San Gu, who had originally been looking at Lin Xuankong with dread, now had his aura amplified by the Kui Ox Drum. Battle intent flared in his eyes as his six arms, wielding six weapons, transformed him into a swift shadow charging forward.

"KILL! KILL! KILL! KILL! KILL!"

The already somewhat crazed Feng Zhulong's face twisted further. His Qi Blood circulation sped up several times as he frantically attacked the shadow blocking him with terrifying speed and Explosive Power.

"Crush Lin Xuankong!"

"Get rid of Zhao Yufei!"

"SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!"

"AAAAHHHHH!"

Those thirty-plus Martial Cultivators holding Exorcism Weapons felt their Qi Blood surge wildly. Their battle intent overflowed as they unleashed Explosive Power they normally couldn't muster, stomping the ground with resounding thuds and charging at Lin Xuankong and Zhao Yufei.

Among them, even the few weakest, Early Stage Third Layer Martial Cultivators, erupted with power approaching that of the Late Stage Third Layer...

Chapter 145: The Kui Ox Drum, a Wondrous Treasure of the World – Who Dares to Slay Me, Guo Chui_3

For a moment, as the Kui Ox Drum vibrated, Lin Xuankong and the others' Qi Blood stagnated, while the strength of the numerous powerful enemies opposite them surged several times. The tide of battle turned sharply against them! This Kui Ox Divine Drum, as a treasure of legacy, truly possessed profound power!

Han Feiyan's expression changed drastically, and she shouted, "Daoist Zhao, Master Lin, retreat quickly! Under the Kui Ox Drum, our strength wanes while theirs waxes! All enemies will have their strength boosted, and they have too many experts on their side. Don't fight head-on; it's better to live to fight another day!"

Zhao Yufei's delicate face turned stern. The Silver Hook in her hand flashed with brilliance, and with a determined look, she stood beside Lin Xuankong, her gaze fixed on the rapidly approaching San Gu.

At this very moment, BOOM...

A large amount of Demon Qi billowed out. A gigantic Ghost Frog King materialized before the charging San Gu. From its enormous frog-like mouth, hundreds of tentacle-like red Long Tongues suddenly shot out, lashing towards the wide-eyed San Gu!

Although San Gu's battle intent was soaring, he still retained some rationality. He was shocked to see such a colossal demon appear before him. Seeing countless Long Tongues whipping towards him, his eyes filled with horror. He roared and swiftly dodged to the side!

Suddenly, the sky brightened!

Standing beside the enormous Ghost Frog King, Lin Xuankong's right hand blazed with an intensely brilliant light!

Aurora Shining Heaven!

"Damn!"

"AH!"

"Crap!"

The thirty-plus Martial Cultivators, whose power had surged and whose battle intent had been soaring, all cried out in alarm, clapping hands over their eyes which burned with excruciating pain. Lin Xuankong's timing was impeccable!

Just as everyone's attention was riveted on the suddenly appearing Ghost Frog King, in that critical instant, he unleashed the Aurora Heaven-Brightening Technique!

Even San Gu, who had been wary of Lin Xuankong potentially using a flash attack, was caught off guard due to the distraction, let alone those Martial Cultivators who were less vigilant!

Feng Zhulong, San Gu, Guo Chui, and the others all suffered corroded eyes and were instantly blinded. Even Zhao Yufei, Han Feiyan, and Han Xiu, who had focused their attention on the Ghost Frog Demon, were momentarily blinded!

Zhao Yufei and her group were slightly better off, as Lin Xuankong was the one who had activated this Thunder Technique. However, the Martial Cultivators on the opposing side were utterly horrified!

Now blind, the crowd was immediately terrified, their morale more than halved. The numerous Martial Cultivators retreated without hesitation, moving even faster than when they had charged forward!

Guo Chui and Feng Zhulong quickly fumbled for the Jade Bottles at their waists, intending to retrieve the Marsh Python Juice prepared by their elders and apply it to their eyes!

"AHHHH~~~~~"

San Gu's bloodcurdling scream suddenly pierced the air. Though abruptly blinded, he had managed to evade the first assault of the Ghost Frog King's hundreds of Long Tongues with his agile reflexes. However, he couldn't evade Lin Xuankong, who had used the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique to close in. Countless Divine Thunder attacks, crackling with terrifying power, struck the six eye-slits exposed on his Battle Armor, rapidly depleting his Qi Blood!

"Ah, I am unwilling..."

San Gu's voice died abruptly. With his Qi Blood swiftly exhausted, his six eyes and six arms turned to ash on the spot, his body charred to a husk!

Even in his dying moments, this six-eyed Cultivator, who had once intimidated everyone in the Xun Branch Gathering Place and had become a disciple of the Holy Dragon Association, couldn't accept it. Why had the Great Marsh's foremost poison, White Snake Venom, failed? Why was Feng Zhulong's Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat incinerated upon a single encounter? Why was this Lin Xuankong so lucky to have obtained not only the Marsh Python Demon Pearl but also an even fiercer Ghost Frog Demon Pearl? In the instant his Divine Soul lost consciousness, he suddenly realized that perhaps the biggest mistake of his life was stealing that old man's Marsh Python Demon Pearl!

Elsewhere, Feng Zhulong, having just retrieved his Marsh Python Gallbladder Bottle, cried out in shock. He was about to open the bottle when his hand suddenly became empty; the bottle had been snatched away by the Shadow of the Black Soul opposite him. Feng Zhulong, in turn, was swallowed whole by the enormous Ghost Frog King leaping over!

Sounds of THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! emanated from the Ghost Frog King's belly. However, those fierce sounds of attack were merely Feng Zhulong's futile struggles before he was reduced to bloody water!

Immediately afterward, the Ghost Frog King bounded towards the thirty-plus fleeing Martial Cultivators. These Martial Cultivators, their strength greatly increased by the Kui Ox Drum, were running at extreme speeds. Yet, they were in the rugged mountain jungle, filled with giant trees, shrubs, small hills, and other obstacles. The blinded warriors stumbled as they ran, crashing into giant trees or tumbling over small hills, significantly hindering their escape speed.

The Ghost Frog Demon suddenly opened its huge mouth, its hundreds of Long Tongues shooting out, instantly extending for many tens of feet, aiming in all directions. These Long Tongues swiftly ensnared the Martial Cultivators, who were running around like headless chickens, and dragged them, amidst their desperate cries, into its giant maw!

The entire jungle was in absolute chaos. The frantic footsteps, screams, and impotent, furious curses of the third-layer Martial Cultivators echoed everywhere. One after another, they were caught by the Long Tongues and swiftly pulled into the giant frog's mouth. Its belly seemed like a terrifying, insatiable abyss...

「After six breaths,」

The forest finally fell silent!

The once terrifyingly fierce sixth son of the Feng Family from the Zhen Branch Gathering Place, Feng Zhulong, was dead. The once menacing San Gu from the Xun Branch Gathering Place was dead. Several four-armed Martial Cultivators were dead. All those Martial Cultivators San Gu had secretly gathered had also turned into bloody water in the Ghost Frog King's belly!

Six breaths. This was far from Lin Xuankong's true limit; he hadn't even used Treasures like the Twin Vine Demon Pearl, Manluo Demon Pearl, Soul-Extinction Celestial Thunder, or Ruyi Battle Armor. If he had used all his Treasures...

In the forest, Guo Chui, who was running fast, was the only one left alive. The next moment, as he was fleeing frantically, his steps suddenly faltered, and he stopped!

After being blinded, he had just taken out his Jade Bottle of Marsh Python Gall when a spreading shadow snatched it away. Thus, this Eldest Young Master of the Guo Family had not recovered his sight and was still blind.

At this moment, Guo Chui, his eyes festering, heard footsteps blocking his path and said hatefully, "That Thunder Technique of the Yin Talisman Sect is utterly shameless! It's truly a despicable method!"

Zhao Yufei, who had regained her sight using Marsh Python Gall, walked up to him, her eyes coldly staring at him. "Shameless? The Martial Dao and Abnormal Techniques themselves have no high or low morality; it only depends on the person using them! The most laughable thing is that you actually know the word 'shameless'! You wantonly slaughtered Martial Cultivators in Cold Fragrance Valley—wasn't that shameless? You wantonly abused those Female Martial Cultivators in Cold Fragrance Valley—

wasn't that shameless? The word 'shameless' coming from your mouth is the true shamelessness! You think you're worthy of proposing to me?"

Guo Chui's face twisted, his expression growing even more sinister. "Zhao Yufei, so what if you've won? You don't dare to kill me; neither you nor Lin Xuankong dares to kill me, because you know the consequences if I die! I am the most valued descendant of the entire Guo Family. The priceless Kui Ox Valley and Soul-Stabilizing Jade are both on my person. If I die here, once the Demon Slaying Conference ends, my father will definitely use the Guo Family's most powerful Treasures to directly identify the murderer! My Guo Family has a legacy of nearly a thousand years, possessing countless Treasures and innumerable methods to find the true culprit!"

After speaking, a hint of arrogance appeared on Guo Chui's face. He spread his arms wide, adopting a stance of complete surrender. "If you don't believe me, you can try killing me now! If you truly dare to kill me, in the future, you will wish for death but find no release! The Zhao Family and the Yin Talisman Sect will be uprooted by my Guo Family's countless Martial Cultivators!"

Hearing this, Zhao Yufei's brow furrowed slightly, a trace of apprehension in her eyes. Everyone has a weakness, and the hundreds of lives in the Zhao Family, along with its future, were hers.

Just then, Lin Xuankong walked past her, his expression calm, carrying a Silver Saber as he approached Guo Chui.

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Lin Xuankong's calm voice, tinged with a chill, reached Guo Chui's ears, causing his expression to constantly change. "You can kill me, but why can't I kill you? Just because you're a descendant of the Guo Family! If I don't kill you, you'll go back to the Guo Family and immediately become a saint, sparing me and Yufei? How laughable! That Conical Hat Guest has killed countless Black Tiger Gang experts. Zhao Renxiong even requested Elder Hua from the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect to help find him. If your Guo Family truly had a treasure that could track people and easily find the culprit, why didn't Zhao Renxiong ask your Guo Family for help? Why, even now, can Zhao Renxiong of the Black Tiger Gang still not identify who the Conical Hat Guest is! In this world, such a treasure might indeed exist, but your Guo Family definitely doesn't have it!"

Upon hearing this, Guo Chui's expression continually shifted. The Guo Family indeed had numerous treasures, but they were all for enhancing combat power; none could pinpoint the culprit. Unfortunately, I had just managed to bluff Zhao Yufei, but this sly old fox didn't fall for it!

At that moment, Guo Chui suddenly felt countless long tongues simultaneously binding him.

「In the cave,」

Zhao Yufei carefully counted today's loot. "Three, four, five... sixteen, seventeen, eighteen... twenty-four! Those thirty-odd Martial Cultivators brought twenty-four pieces of Exorcism Equipment. From Feng Zhulong, San Gu, and Guo Chui's Ghost Frog Pouches, there are four pieces. Counting the ones collected from the Zhen and Xun Branches, that makes a total of forty-one pieces of Exorcism Equipment!"

"Additionally, today we also got four Ghost Frog Pouches, four complete sets of Exorcism Armor, two hundred and ten Divine Protection Elixirs, seventy-two Nourishing Spirit Pills, and about forty thousand catties of Demon Flesh!"

Lin Xuankong was naturally pleased, but thinking about his invaluable Ruyi Battle Armor, his expression calmed. "So many elite Martial Cultivators came, so aggressive, and this is all we've got?"

"This is all?" Zhao Yufei's small mouth fell slightly agape. What in the world? With that disdainful tone of yours... Those are pieces of Exorcism Equipment! A full forty-one pieces of Exorcism Equipment, plus those complete sets of armor! Even the richest harvests from past Demon Slaying Conferences never yielded so much loot! Those who possess Exorcism Equipment and complete sets of Exorcism Armor mostly belong to major forces and form alliances; they wouldn't kill each other recklessly. Especially those with complete Exorcism Armor—how many of them are there in the entire Demon Slaying Conference!

Near the cave entrance, Han Feiyan and the other three onlookers could only stare, utterly bewildered.

The short Han Xiu's face was filled with frustration. Beside him, Han Feiyan secretly mused, Master Lin and Lady Zhao's harvest is so overwhelming it's maddening, but thinking it over, it makes sense! After all, these two reversed roles and killed off all the top experts from the Black Tiger Gang, the Feng Family, the Guo Family, the Gu Yue Sect, and anyone else they managed to gather. Usually, during the Demon Slaying Conference, major forces secretly ally to harvest and divide the participating Martial Cultivators. This time, however, these two nearly wiped out those major forces, so the harvest is naturally shocking! And that's not to mention the plethora of demons they slew...

Still, Han Feiyan found Master Lin's tone when speaking of the Exorcism Armor hard to stomach. It was as if those pieces of Exorcism Equipment and sets of armor were not priceless treasures, but handkerchiefs for wiping one's nose...

She looked at the small and pitiful piece of Exorcism Equipment in her hand, her thick eyebrows on her square face knitting together. Next to her, Han Xiu and the other three looked at their dull Profound Iron Weapons, their hearts aching. The difference between people is greater than that between people and dogs!

Lin Xuankong, meanwhile, began calculating silently. Complete sets of Exorcism Armor... I got the Black Scale Armor from Shangguan Si, the Green Flute Armor from Guo Lan, and the Silver Blade Armor from Feng Baoyi. Later, the Nine-Scaly Armor from Liy Ruofeng. Now, from San Gu, the Six-Armed Battle Armor; from Feng Zhulong, the Silver Patterned Armor; and Guo Chui had two sets of Golden Patterned Armor. From this trip into the Demon Valley, I've obtained a Ghost Frog Demon Pearl, Black Soul Wondrous Jade, over one hundred thousand catties of Demon Flesh, eleven Ghost Frog Pouches, plus eight complete sets of armor of immense value and dozens of pieces of Exorcism Equipment. Not counting my original armor and Demon Pearls, the harvest just from Demon-Suppressing Valley is equivalent to the resources of a top family in Great Marsh Prefecture! One person's resources, approaching those of a top-tier family... If anyone were to kill me now and take these things, they'd probably die of happiness on the spot! Oh yes, and after leaving the valley, there's still the compensation of twenty-two pieces of Exorcism Equipment from the Feng Family!

Lin Xuankong opened a Ghost Frog Pouch, took out twenty Nourishing Spirit Pills, and handed them to Zhao Yufei. "Don't take Divine Protection Elixirs anymore. After we leave the valley, I'll buy you better elixirs. For now, make do with these Nourishing Spirit Pills!"

"Also, here's an extra Ghost Frog Pouch for you. Use your old one for storage; this one can be a backup!"

"A backup too!" Zhao Yufei smiled as she accepted them.

Han Feiyan and the other three exclaimed inwardly in shock.

Han Xiu looked at Zhao Yufei with extreme envy, then couldn't help but sneak a peek at his sister Han Feiyan's square face. He thought to himself, I wonder what kind of women Master Lin likes? Though my sister's face is overly square and a bit plain, her build is sturdy. The key is, her robust physique can withstand rough treatment, definitely not like Lady Zhao, who always appears weak and frail each

morning! Master Lin is quite old now; I don't know if he has any descendants. If my sister could be with Master Lin, surely she could bear him several healthy sons. But alas, this is just my wishful thinking!

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Han Feiyan turned her head to look at Han Xiu. "Why do you keep staring at my face?"

Han Xiu coughed. "Nothing, I just think it's time for you to find a partner at your age, Big Sister!"

Han Feiyan's thick eyebrows shot up. "Get lost!"

...

「Moments later, outside the cave」

Lin Xuankong gazed at the ravaged forest.

The Martial Cultivators who came to end his life were all devoured by the Ghost Toad, every last one transformed into blood to nourish the Ghost Frog Demon. As long as there are no witnesses to testify, even if a few individuals know San Gu brought people to ambush me, it will be mere unsubstantiated claims. Besides, what if they do have proof? In about ten days, when it's time to leave the valley, I'll likely be at the Late Stage of the Fourth Layer. My Heart Thought, in particular, should reach the Sixth Grade! The only ones capable of dealing with me would be those at the Mid-grade or Late Stage of the Fifth Layer, and their Heart Thought would need to be at the Seventh Grade or higher! There certainly aren't many such individuals in Great Marsh Prefecture. Plus, I have numerous Treasures...

Han Feiyan and the other three looked at Lin Xuankong, whose expression had grown solemn. Their own expressions also became somewhat complex.

Han Feiyan had never imagined that Great Marsh Prefecture's renowned Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat, dozens of Third Layer elites, and Guo Chui, who carried two powerful Treasures, would only manage to resist Zhao Yufei and Lin Xuankong for a mere six breaths. Such combat power was simply terrifying! However... thinking of the factions behind those who had died, her heart grew heavy.

At this moment, Lin Xuankong turned to Han Feiyan and said, "Today's events involve many powerful factions. The four of you must remember not to divulge this to anyone else!"

Han Feiyan's heart sank immediately. When she turned to look at Han Xiu and the other two, she saw their expressions had also become solemn, all traces of their earlier ease gone.

They all understood one thing: they knew too much! They had personally witnessed and heard how prominent figures from Great Marsh Prefecture's major powers—Guo Chui, Feng Zhulong, and San Gu—had died at the hands of Master Lin and Lady Zhao. Priceless items like the Soul-Stabilizing Jade, the Kui Ox Drum, several sets of Exorcism Armor, and the Sunflower Water Elixir had also fallen into their possession. Furthermore, this Master Lin had, at some unknown point, obtained an incredibly precious Ghost Frog Demon Pearl, one ranked highly among Demon Pearls! All of these were matters that demanded secrecy!

Thus, seeing Lin Xuankong's grave expression as he suddenly spoke, Han Feiyan felt a growing unease. Would Lady Zhao and Master Lin choose to ensure this information never saw the light of day, to prevent future trouble?

Lin Xuankong, however, had already withdrawn his gaze and was looking into the distance. He had merely spoken casually, intending to give the four a reminder. Though he hadn't spent much time with them, he could tell they were all straightforward and resolute individuals. He was just giving them a heads-up.

However, with his current strength and the things he possessed, he was long past being an ordinary Martial Cultivator. How could others possibly take his casual words lightly?

A truly powerful individual could make ordinary Martial Cultivators feel suffocating pressure with just a nonchalant remark.

Han Feiyan remained silent for a moment, her unease growing with each passing second.

Shortly, a glint of determination flashed in Han Feiyan's eyes. She abruptly stood up and cupped her hands towards Lin Xuankong and Zhao Yufei.

"Lady Zhao, Master Lin, you both saved our lives. You don't need to worry about us leaking any information. Though our strength is insufficient, our Heart Nature is firm!"

Lin Xuankong nodded slightly.

Han Feiyan then turned to Han Xiu and the other two. "If I were in Master Lin's and Lady Zhao's position, I might make a decisive move to ensure this troublesome information is never revealed! For the four of us not to cause difficulties for our benefactors, we can only swear an oath!"

Lin Xuankong was somewhat taken aback and looked at Han Feiyan.

We were just chatting amicably, why the sudden talk of swearing an oath? If I didn't trust the four of you, I wouldn't have waited until now, nor would I have bothered to heal your injuries! This Han Feiyan is certainly a rather blunt individual! Besides, people's hearts are fickle; can oaths truly be relied upon?

Zhao Yufei, however, seemed to have thought of something. Her expression shifted subtly, and she frowned as she looked at the four women.

Han Feiyan then led Han Xiu and the others directly to the Blackwater Lakefront.

She knelt solemnly by the lakeside, faced east, and declared, "I, Han Feiyan, swear by my Divine Soul and body, with the Zhi God above Great Xia as my witness, that I will never disclose any of Lady Zhao's and Master Lin's secrets to anyone. Should I break this vow, may my body and Divine Soul be annihilated, and may I never achieve rebirth for all eternity!"

Han Xiu and the other two also knelt at the cave entrance, each making their solemn vow.

Lin Xuankong frowned slightly as he watched. Judging by their expressions, it seems oaths truly can affect reality in this Martial Arts World. What is this Zhi God above Great Xia? And why didn't Zhao Yufei mention this kind of oath when she made me swear one back then?

A heavy expression appeared on Zhao Yufei's delicate face. When the four women returned, she said, "You four truly possess resolute hearts, to make such grave vows!"

Han Feiyan's square face was earnest. "Swearing such a solemn oath is better than causing trouble for our benefactors. This way, everyone can be at ease."

A short while later, the four women left the lakeside, intending to build some treehouses in the nearby woods.

Returning to the cave, Lin Xuankong looked at Zhao Yufei with a puzzled expression. "Do these oaths actually work? That Zhi God above Great Xia..."

Zhao Yufei suddenly pressed a finger to his lips, silencing him.

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"This kind of oath might be effective, or it might not. However, it's certain that Han Feiyan and the others dared to make such an oath, indicating their determination. Even if it costs them their lives, they wouldn't leak the information because they couldn't face the terrifying consequences if the oath were to take effect!

"As for those above the Great Xia... My ancestor's notes said that some names shouldn't be invoked lightly. Such beings exist among both the Human Race and the Demon Race! To those powerful entities, the countless disputes within the Great Xia Kingdom are perhaps no more significant than ants squabbling by the roadside!

"Where are these unspeakably powerful beings located? Can Martial Cultivators truly cultivate to such a level of strength? My ancestor's notes were vague on this!

"Perhaps when our Martial Cultivation reaches higher levels, we'll gradually uncover some of the truth our ancestors once glimpsed. For now, pondering such things is useless!"

Hearing this, Lin Xuankong's heart skipped a beat. He thought of his poison resistance advancing to the First Grade of the Immortal Tier. Could those mighty beings be the true Immortals?

However, even if they were real Immortals, being able to sense someone swearing an oath by their name from thousands of miles away... such an ability is overwhelmingly powerful!

After silently marveling for a while, Lin Xuankong suppressed his shock and doubt. He decided to follow Zhao Yufei's advice and not dwell on these matters for now. After all, without enough strength, one wouldn't even have the opportunity to encounter such Immortals. The life-and-death struggles of ordinary Martial Cultivators probably wouldn't even register with them!

What I need to do, he thought, is practice diligently to enhance my Martial Dao strength. With the various Talents bestowed by my Vigorous in Old Age Life Plate, I'm certain that one day I will stand at the pinnacle! Since true Immortals exist in this world, why can't I, Lin Xuankong, achieve what they have? Not only will I achieve it, but I'll also lead my wife and children to build an extraordinary Immortal Martial family, treading an Immortal's path that is wider and more unique! By then, families like the Guo Family, Feng Family, the Black Cat Gang, and the Spirit Insect Gang... I could send a mere grandson to wipe them all out!

"What are you daydreaming about?" Zhao Yufei asked, noticing his silence.

Lin Xuankong, currently filled with drive and ambition, looked at his stunningly beautiful wife and smiled, "Nothing!"

When we get home, he thought, I'll find a way to coax my dear into agreeing to let me pass the Pine Crane Longevity Technique to Yu Fei. That way, you two can accompany me for several hundred years, and then you both can give me dozens of children. Now that's what I call a grand family!

After a moment of pleasant daydreaming, he reined in his thoughts. From the Ghost Frog Pouch, he took out the Soul-Stabilizing Jade, the Kui Ox Drum, and two elixirs Zhao Yufei had called Meridian Opening Treasure Elixirs. These three items were the most important part of today's harvest.

Zhao Yufei sat beside him, picked up one of the elixirs, and studied it closely.

"In the thousand-plus years since the founding of the Great Xia Dynasty," she began, "aside from some Frontier Prefectures occasionally being harassed by Demons, the kingdom has always dominated countless sects within its borders!

"One of the key reasons for the Great Xia Royal Family's might—besides the National Guardian Celestial Sect and their monopoly over Exorcism Armor—is this very Meridian Opening Treasure Elixir!

"Before the Great Xia Dynasty, Martial Cultivators who reached the Perfection of the Fourth Layer had to seek various Spiritual Objects and Spirit Grasses with the Sunflower Water Attribute to open the Sunflower Water Strange Vein and convert their Qi Blood into True Qi!

"Yet, even with the best Innate Spiritual Objects in the world, the success rate of opening a Strange Vein wouldn't exceed one in twenty!

"Crucially, as the number of Martial Cultivators increased, these Innate Spiritual Objects became scarcer. They were mostly found in perilous Secret Realms and were extremely rare. Ordinary Martial Cultivators had little chance of acquiring enough Innate Spiritual Objects for Opening Veins!

"Later, the founding emperor of the Great Xia Dynasty passed down a highly mysterious Alchemy Technique.

"Since then, Alchemists in the Royal Family have been refining Sunflower Water Elixirs, Wood Elixirs, Thick Earth Elixirs, Li Fire Elixirs, and Geng Metal Elixirs. All of these allow Martial Cultivators to open a Strange Vein with a high success rate upon reaching the corresponding Realm. Some even succeed with just one elixir!

"For instance, Chief Steward Jiang broke through his bottleneck to reach the Perfection of the Fourth Layer and, by consuming just one Sunflower Water Elixir, directly advanced to the Early Stage of the Fifth Layer!

"Therefore, despite the many powerful sects within the Great Xia Dynasty, they all need to garrison various regions for the Great Xia to earn rewards in the form of these Opening Veins Elixirs!

"These Opening Veins Elixirs are crucial to the future of every Fourth, Fifth, Sixth Layer, and even stronger Martial Cultivator, making them extremely valuable and difficult to obtain!"

Lin Xuankong listened and nodded joyfully.

"Now that I have two Sunflower Water Elixirs," he said, "when I reach the Perfection of the Fourth Layer, I can directly advance to the Fifth Layer without worrying about elixirs becoming a bottleneck!"

As for the success rate, he thought, with the bonus from my Vigorous in Old Age Life Plate when consuming elixirs, it's bound to be high. I'll definitely advance with just one!

At this moment, a trace of doubt appeared on Zhao Yufei's pretty face.

"However," she continued, "according to my ancestor's notes, if cultivators from our family obtain an Innate Spiritual Object, they should still try to use it. The notes say that the Great Xia Dynasty's Meridian Opening Treasure Elixirs have both advantages and disadvantages!

"My ancestor's records state that if a Martial Cultivator advances using an Innate Spiritual Object, they can continue to use Innate Spiritual Objects for future advancements. But once they use a Meridian Opening Treasure Elixir, they can only use such elixirs to advance thereafter!"

Lin Xuankong nodded.

So, this is one of the ways the Great Xia Dynasty controls the Martial Arts Sects of the world? he mused. It will still take some time for me to reach the Perfection of the Fourth Layer. If I get a chance to obtain Innate Spiritual Objects before then, I should try using them first...

After putting away the Sunflower Water Elixirs, he examined the Soul-Stabilizing Jade in his hand. The jade was a vivid, moist green and felt exceptionally smooth to the touch. Countless Runes seemed to flicker in and out of existence within it.

A Soul-Stabilizing Jade like this, capable of resisting even my Fifth-Grade Heart Thought Entering Illusion, is clearly a highly mystical treasure, Lin Xuankong thought. Although its offensive power doesn't match the Black Soul Wondrous Jade, it's extremely potent for defending against Heart Thought attacks! The Guo Family, which Guo Chui belonged to, truly has deep foundations and numerous treasures...

Finally, Lin Xuankong's gaze fell upon the Kui Ox Drum. Using this drum, much like the Black Tiger Gang's Black Soul Wondrous Jade, required the Guo Family's unique Heart Method. The source of this Heart Method was, naturally, Guo Chui.

That Guo Chui was a perverse and ruthless man—but only towards others. When he was stripped of the Soul-Stabilizing Jade, subjected to two bouts of the Eight Gates Celestial Eye's Entering Illusion, and licked repeatedly by hundreds of Long Tongues, he caved immediately. Consequently, Guo Chui divulged in detail how to use Qi Blood to condense the special Runes and how to activate the Kui Ox Drum.

Once the Kui Ox Drum is struck, it not only causes an opponent's Qi Blood to stagnate, temporarily reducing their strength, but can also unleash a Kui Ox Sound upon oneself or designated targets. This grants an explosive burst of power several times greater than one's normal strength for a short period! Such a treasure, with its profound abilities, far surpasses ordinary Exorcism Equipment; it's practically a super-weapon in group battles!

At this moment, Lin Xuankong wondered if its augmenting effects could stack with the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique and the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique.

If they can stack... he pondered. First, I'll use the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique to boost my strength. Then, I'll enhance it further with the more potent Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique. Finally, I'll strike the drum for myself. Just how potent would my Explosive Power become then?

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If these three enhancements can be stacked... what terrifying Explosive Power! Wielding the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod, its might would be incalculable. A single strike could instantly kill countless Same Tier enemies! And if my Explosive Power increases significantly, the Demons and shadows summoned by Treasures like the Ghost Frog Demon Pearl and Black Soul Wondrous Jade will also be enhanced, their strength skyrocketing! Then, even a single shadow could easily defeat four, five, six, seven, or even eight of my current shadows!

Thinking of this, Lin Xuankong immediately decided to give it a try. He followed the method Guo Chui had mentioned, rapidly channeling some Qi Blood to his palm, and quietly began forming Runes according to the Kui Ox Drum's runic patterns.

Manipulating the Kui Ox Drum's Runes was rather complicated. However, it was simpler compared to the Runes of the Yin Talisman Sect's thousand-year heritage, the Soul-Extinction Celestial Thunder Divine Technique. Having experience forming the Divine Thunder Root into a Rune, Lin Xuankong's speed in condensing Runes with Qi Blood had improved significantly.

In less than the time it takes to drink three cups of tea, a bright red Qi Blood Rune appeared in the center of Lin Xuankong's palm. He walked to the cave entrance, first activating a Shadow of the Black

Soul, letting it move at full speed for a moment to test its current speed and Explosive Power before retracting it. He then pressed that mysterious Qi Blood Rune onto the Kui Ox Drum.

A soft DONG sounded. The Kui Ox Drum emitted extremely mysterious ripples, which acted directly upon Lin Xuankong.

The next moment, Lin Xuankong felt his whole body's Qi Blood surge. The speed of its circulation increased by several folds, and his might also temporarily skyrocketed. He immediately channeled the rapidly flowing Qi Blood into the Black Soul Wondrous Jade.

In the next instant, a new shadow appeared. This shadow was even darker than the previous Shadow of the Black Soul, almost as if it could draw one's gaze into it. When it started moving, it shot out several hundred meters in the blink of an eye. It crossed the surface of the Black Water Lake—a lake so vast ordinary people couldn't even see its edge—to the other side in just eight breaths. Its speed was more than three times faster than before!

Lin Xuankong couldn't help but show a hint of joy in his eyes. He took advantage of the remaining effect of the Kui Ox Drum and activated the Qi Blood-consuming Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique. Instantly, a howling sound came from his bones. Then, he started the even more Qi Blood-consuming Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique.

Instantly, the already rapidly circulating Qi Blood within his body became even more fluid, circulating with incredible speed. Lin Xuankong raised his eyes to look at Black Water Lake, stepped on the ground, and his body turned into a shadow. He rushed across the lake's surface at a speed many times faster than the shadow, reaching the other side in just over one breath!

By the lakeside, Han Feiyan and her three companions, who had set up the treehouse, were watching from afar. Seeing Lin Xuankong's current burst of speed, they couldn't help but reveal expressions of horror, rubbing their eyes vigorously, almost believing they were hallucinating! They found to their shock that within Demon-Suppressing Valley, where they were all suppressed to the third Realm, Lin Xuankong's speed was incomparably faster than theirs. His movement was like lightning streaking through the sky, almost impossible to catch with the naked eye!

If they were outside the Demon-Suppressing Valley, where their Realms wouldn't be restricted, to what extent would Master Lin's speed increase...

Han Feiyan swallowed a mouthful of saliva and exclaimed in shock, "In the world of Martial Dao, speed is paramount. With such speed and Explosive Power, if Master Lin attacked, the four of us wouldn't have time to react before he took our heads. We wouldn't even have time to self-detonate. No wonder the powerful and terrifying Lady Zhao is so enamored with him!"

When Lin Xuankong returned across the water, Han Feiyan and her three companions quickly approached. All four of them had faces full of reverence and envy. Han Feiyan cupped her hands and said, "Master Lin is indeed extraordinary. Although suppressed to the third Realm, your speed can explode to such a terrifying degree. It is truly unbelievable!"

Having tested that the three enhancements could stack, Lin Xuankong was in a great mood and nodded, "The Kui Ox Divine Drum's ripples act on a Martial Cultivator and can increase their strength by several folds. I was also fortunate to learn an Abnormal Technique that can temporarily increase a Martial Cultivator's Explosive Power. When the speeds of these techniques are combined, it is indeed a little fast!"

The short Han Xiu was speechless. So fast I couldn't even see it, and he calls that 'just a little fast'? If he attacked like that, he'd land hundreds of blows in a single breath!

No wonder the powerful and terrifying Lady Zhao always looks so drained and listless every day!

Upon hearing this, Han Feiyan seemed to think of something and said, "Master Lin, in Martial Dao, speed and Explosive Power are crucial. This Kui Ox Divine Drum and those explosive techniques are indeed powerful! The Ye Family, who are quite close to my Han Family in Ba City, also have a Blood Burning Technique that grants an explosive effect for a moment, and it is equally fierce!"

Upon hearing this, Lin Xuankong frowned and asked, "Blood Burning Technique? Similar to your Han Family's Blood Burst Technique?"

Han Feiyan replied, "Master Lin is mistaken. The Blood-Burning Secret Technique is not like our Han Family's mutually destructive Blood Burst Technique. The Ye Family's Blood Burning Technique instantly consumes a large portion of one's Qi Blood to temporarily increase Explosive Power by several folds. However, although the Blood Burning Technique is powerful, it has a downside: it immediately consumes as much Qi Blood as twelve portions of Qi Replenishing Soup. Therefore, even a fourth-Realm Cultivator can only sustain a short burst. If the enemy isn't killed on the spot, death is inevitable! Because of the excessive consumption of Qi Blood, Martial Cultivators below the fourth Realm do not

have enough Qi Blood to perform it. Therefore, even though the Ye Family has this powerful Secret Technique, very few in their family can actually use it!"

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Lin Xuankong listened, his expression subtly shifting.

Currently, the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, Kui Ox Drum, and Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique I possess can all stack their benefits to enhance the body's explosive power. Overall, they can increase my explosive power and speed by more than tenfold! If there were another cultivation technique that could consume Qi Blood to further increase explosive power and could be stacked, my explosive power and speed would surely soar even higher! As for what Han Feiyan mentioned about consuming the Qi Blood equivalent of twelve portions of Qi Replenishing Soup in one breath, this would indeed be a great disadvantage for other fourth-layer Martial Cultivators. However, for my Life Plate, which already has Qi and Blood reserves of over a hundred thousand, is it really a disadvantage? Nonexistent!

Lin Xuankong spoke, "It sounds like a good secret technique for explosive power, but since it is someone else's inherited secret technique, I fear it won't be easily shared, right?"

Han Feiyan replied, "If Master Lin is truly interested, I have a very good relationship with the Ye Family and can act as an intermediary! The six Martial Cultivators from the Ye Family were all assigned to the Kun Branch gathering place. This is also one of the reasons why the four of us ventured to the Kun Branch gathering place in the first place. I can guarantee that as long as the Ye Family members haven't encountered any accidents in the Demon Valley, I can certainly persuade them to trade the Blood Burning Technique with Master Lin!"

「The next morning,」

In the cave, the exhausted Zhao Yufei, after resting for a while, took out all sorts of miscellaneous items from her Ghost Frog Pouch and busied herself beside Lin Xuankong. This young lady of the Zhao Family, having been well-read in various tomes from a young age, was naturally somewhat adept in the skills of disguise.

According to her, even if no one from San Gu's group escaped, there might still be those who knew he brought people out to deal with Lin Xuankong, especially since Guo Chui mentioned before his death that San Gu was already a disciple of the Holy Dragon Association. After some discussion, the two decided to disguise themselves before heading to the Kun Branch gathering place to avoid any trouble.

After a while, Lin Xuankong, who once had a head full of silver hair, an aged face, and was dressed in a Daoist Robe, had been transformed by Zhao Yufei's skilled hands into a middle-aged man with black hair. He had also changed into a Python Skin Robe commonly worn by Martial Cultivators.

Zhao Yufei also put on makeup to cover her fair features, transforming herself into the appearance of a middle-aged woman.

After finishing their disguises, the two left the cave, met up with Han Feiyan and the other three, and headed straight for the Kun Branch gathering place.

Two to three hours later, just before noon, the six of them arrived at the foot of Luoxia Slope, where the Kun Branch gathering place was located.

Han Xiu, along with two Martial Cultivators from the Han Family, chose a relatively quiet spot outside the gathering place and started constructing stone buildings using giant stones. Han Feiyan headed towards the crowded areas of the gathering place to inquire about the whereabouts of the Ye Family members.

Martial Cultivators are naturally efficient. In about the time it takes to drink two cups of tea, two simple two-story stone buildings constructed with hundreds of large stones stood erect.

The three members of the Han Family went to another stone building, while Zhao Yufei entered her own stone building to clean and organize. Lin Xuankong sat silently cultivating in a corner of the first floor of the stone building. Moments later, during his silent cultivation, his eyes moved.

He stood up, his Qi Blood surging. In the next moment, a low tiger roar emanated from his entire skeletal structure.

Instantly, with the rapid consumption of Qi Blood, his originally seven-foot-tall body rapidly swelled, becoming tall and grand, quickly approaching twelve feet. At this moment, every part of him, whether arms, legs, or body, had become extraordinarily robust, resembling a small giant!

[Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique: Integration 1/50]

[Blood Eating Technique: Integration 16/50]

With the support of vast quantities of Qi Blood, under the influence of the Vigorous in Old Age Life Plate, these days of cultivation had rapidly advanced his Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique from the Initial Glimpse to the Realm of Integration.

If the Martial Cultivators of the Black Tiger Gang knew that the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique, one of the Black Tiger Three Techniques they had spent years barely mastering, had been rapidly cultivated to the Realm of Integration by the Conical Hat Guest they deeply resented, they would likely be so ashamed they would vomit three liters of blood!

Standing in the stone building, Lin Xuankong tightly clenched his fist, sensing carefully, and subsequently revealed a hint of joy on his face.

Originally, when using the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique at the Initial Glimpse, it only offered a bit more than twice the increase in explosive power. Now, with the improvement of his realm, it already provides more than a threefold increase in explosive power, nearly matching the group enhancement of the Kui Ox Drum! If he continues with rapid cultivation, the enhancement of explosive power by the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique will become increasingly higher!

At the same time, once the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique was activated, the amount of Perfect Qi Blood consumed per breath also increased greatly, reaching more than four points per breath.

For those third and fourth-layer Martial Cultivators from the Black Tiger Gang, if they activated this Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique, they would likely drain all their Qi Blood in just over ten breaths, rendering them unable to maintain it.

These abnormal techniques that enhance explosive power certainly don't come without a cost. Even the explosive power enhancement of the Kui Ox Drum causes Martial Cultivators to consume an additional three to four points of Qi Blood per breath.

An ordinary Martial Cultivator, if activating the Fierce Tiger Roar Bone Technique along with the effects of the Kui Ox Drum, would burn through all their Qi Blood in mere breaths, making sustained combat impossible.

The Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, which consumes even more Qi Blood and provides a greater boost to explosive power, depletes four to five points of Qi Blood with each strike, making it impossible for ordinary Martial Cultivators to sustain.

Generally, when a Martial Cultivator chooses an abnormal technique to enhance explosive power, they must quickly finish the fight. Otherwise, once their Qi Blood is exhausted, it will be a "tragedy"!