

Stronger 81

Chapter 81: Demon Slaying Hero List Rankings, How Can Sparrows Understand the Ambitions of a Swan

It was noon, at the plaza of the Yin Talisman Sect's Great Marsh Branch.

Two hundred square tables were filled with various exquisite dishes. Strong wine was supplied unlimitedly. Jiang Yuran was indeed a straightforward person; he said he'd hold his birthday banquet six months in advance, and he did it!

The disciples of the Yin Talisman Sect were seated around the tables according to their positions. Over a hundred tables were occupied by disciples. Ten tables were for deputy stewards, five for stewards, and one table each for stewards and the grand chief steward.

Lin Xuankong, as the Silver Jade Steward, was seated at the third table of the two hundred tables, his status just beneath those of the stewards' and grand chief steward's tables.

Of course, if it were based purely on combat strength... Lin Xuankong could completely sit in the head seat at the stewards' table, pushing his boss aside, or even sit at the grand chief steward's table.

During the banquet, Ma Rusong, who was at the last stewards' table, glared gloomily at Lin Xuankong seated at the third table.

He felt frustrated, kept drinking his wine, and didn't even feel like eating a single peanut.

He only hoped time would pass quickly, so the Demon Slaying Conference would arrive soon, sparing him from watching Old Lin in such glory.

At this time, Steward Hu Shuo at the stewards' table, red-faced, said, "I heard that Zhao Renxiong of the Black Tiger Gang severely injured Liy Ruofeng after arriving at the Great Marsh Branch! The Black Tiger Gang recently raised the bounty on the Conical Hat Guest to thirty thousand taels of silver. As long as you have solid leads, you can claim the reward!

TSK TSK, in the hundreds of years of the Great Marsh Prefecture, this is probably the only time such a high price has been placed on a single head! It's truly astonishing!"

Ma Jiang added from the side, "Not entirely. I once read in sect records that two hundred years ago, a late-stage fourth-layer flying thief seriously injured one of our stewards. As a result, the Hall Master of the Great Marsh Hall immediately offered a bounty of one hundred thousand taels of silver to capture the thief. Finally, they found a lead a month later!"

Lin Xuankong, at the third table, couldn't help but feel speechless. Bounty for heads?

It seems his head wasn't worth much... yet...

Once he forges his Ruyi Profound Gold Rod and kills a Grand Chief Steward of the Black Tiger Gang, would his bounty reach a hundred thousand taels?

Steward Lin Jiao, who sat at the same table as Lin Xuankong, heard the stewards' discussions and laughed.

"As they say, a hefty reward is sure to attract valiant individuals, but this Conical Hat Guest is different. He's quite cunning. Every time he strikes, a wasteland is left behind. Not even a single hair remains. No matter how high the Black Tiger Gang raises the bounty, they can't catch him! They're just getting frustrated for nothing!"

Everyone laughed out loud, and Lin Xuankong couldn't help but smile.

Lin Jiao then turned to Lin Xuankong, leaned closer, and mysteriously pulled out a booklet from his chest.

"Steward Lin, recently the Great Marsh Prefecture City is teeming with top experts, with disciples from various sects gathering. The Feng Family is known for their well-informed network. They've released a 'Demon Slaying Hero List' booklet, ranking the martial cultivators participating in this year's Demon Slaying Conference. Guess where you stand on the list!"

Lin Xuankong couldn't help but be surprised. "There's such a booklet? What's the use of the rankings on it? Only a few dozen people survive each year."

Lin Jiao, who was originally full of enthusiasm, was stunned by his comment. "You really know how to talk!"

He shook his head. "Don't underestimate this booklet; it's quite valuable, costing twenty taels of silver per copy. To boost sales, the Feng Family set up a betting pool. Anyone can bet on whether a specific martial cultivator listed in the booklet will survive the Demon-Suppressing Valley!

My ranking is 412th. The information recorded is quite detailed: Lin Jiao, age 29, late-Second Layer. Highest achievement: killing one late-Tier Two Marsh Python Person. Odds: 1 to 18. That means if someone bets on me and I survive, their wager will be multiplied by eighteen! They could earn a big fortune, a very big fortune, a massively big fortune!"

Lin Xuankong raised an eyebrow. "So, the extremely well-informed Feng Family thinks you're highly unlikely, exceptionally unlikely, particularly unlikely to survive!"

Lin Jiao: ...

"Steward Lin, your mouth is really sharp. Look at yours: 1 to 22. My survival odds are still better than yours!

Lin Xuankong, ranked 628th, age 59, mid-Second Layer, cultivation technique unknown. Highest achievement: killing three Tier Two Marsh Python People with the Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand."

Odds of 1 to 22? Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up upon hearing this.

This is a great deal! Once he finished forging the Ruyi Battle Armor, he could use the remaining silver to place some bets! If he placed a bet of ten thousand taels... what was one times twenty-two again?

He wondered if it could be enough to get another Ruyi Battle Armor. Would the Feng Family owe him twenty-two Ruyi Battle Armors?

The Feng Family is fantastic, such good people!

The stewards at the stewards' table also heard Lin Jiao's discussion.

Xu Bei touched the silver token at his waist, glanced over arrogantly, "Steward Lin Jiao, what's my ranking?"

Lin Jiao didn't want to respond. However, given the public setting, he couldn't be disrespectful to a Steward of Xu Bei's position, so he muttered,

"Xu Bei, ranked 69th, age 33, equipped with the Profound Silver Scalp Sword, mid-Third Layer. Highest achievement: killing one mid-Tier Three Evil Sheep Liao Person. Odds: 1 to 1.2."

Xu Bei smiled arrogantly upon hearing this. "Looks like betting on myself surviving isn't profitable! But my Profound Silver Scalp Sword, forged from five hundred Forehead Scales, earned me the 69th spot among thousands of experts. That really brings honor to our Yin Talisman Sect!"

He finished, then looked pointedly at Lin Xuankong. "But someone else's ranking is laughably low, I never expected that!"

Chapter 82: Demon Slaying Hero List Rankings, How Can Sparrows Understand the Ambitions of a Swan_2

After Xu Bei finished speaking, the surrounding Stewards who were gossiping quietly immediately cast peculiar glances at Lin Xuankong.

Especially those Stewards in the late-Second Layer phase, they all shook their heads slightly.

Lin Xuankong, with his mid-Second Layer Cultivation, had acquired the position of Silver Jade Steward. Naturally, some were slightly dissatisfied. However, since the Silver Jade position was determined by the Chief Steward, none dared express it overtly. Now, with the Feng Family's ranking, it made a few Stewards who felt discontented in their hearts quite pleased.

Steward Zhao Yufei, with cold and beautiful eyes, looked at Steward Lin Jiao and asked, "Steward Lin Jiao, what about my ranking?"

Seeing everyone looking at Lin Xuankong with peculiar eyes, Lin Jiao already felt somewhat regretful, thinking he shouldn't have taken out the ranking list here.

But now, facing the Steward's question, he had no choice but to bite the bullet and respond, "Zhao Yufei, ranked 18th, age twenty-seven, equipped with Silver Hook Armor, Dragon Blood Fierce Dog, skilled in Eight Gates Celestial Eye... highest achievement: killing a late-stage Tier Three Demon People. Odds 1 to 1.1. Hmm, those ranked in the top fifty Martial Cultivators all possess full sets of Battle Armor and are in the late-Third Layer!"

Zhao Yufei's lips curled into a smile. "Oh, it seems my Silver Hook Armor is quite well-ranked among the various Battle Armors, 18th place... The Feng Family's information is indeed reliable!"

After speaking, she glanced at Lin Xuankong, her eyes full of disdain.

The surroundings fell silent once more. A Steward spoke up, "Steward Zhao's strength is indeed formidable among the Third-Layer Martial Cultivators, especially the Silver Hook Armor, crafted from eight hundred Forehead Scales and renowned in the Great Marsh. With this Battle Armor, it's only fitting for Steward Zhao to be ranked 18th! Steward Lin also has considerable strength, but his equipment is mediocre. Facing this pure battle of strength and equipment in the Demon Slaying Conference would indeed be tough for him; ranking lower is normal!"

In the crowd, Ma Jiang frowned tightly, abruptly stood up, and said, "What's the point of this damned ranking? It's not the Hero List of the Great Xia Dynasty's officials! All this talk, is there anyone among these thousand people who can compare with that hidden Nine-Seal Genius? Is there anyone among these thousand people who can compare with the Conical Hat Guest, who possesses the Twin Vine Demon Pearl and kills Third-Layer demons like chickens? Comparing the small differences between these thousand people, what's the blasted point? Besides, during the Demon Slaying Conference, is it already decided who will come out alive? If not, there's no need to talk so much nonsense beforehand! Xuankong, come have a drink with me. I want to see who the hell dares to speak nonsense again!"

When Ma Jiang, the strongest and most bad-tempered among the Stewards, spoke up, everyone fell silent.

Xu Bei's face turned ashen; he lowered his head without saying a word. Even the usually arrogant Zhao Yufei coldly snorted, somewhat irritably, and stopped talking.

Steward Hu, Lin Jiao, Nalan Yunzhu, and a few others frowned, looking worriedly at Lin Xuankong.

Lin Xuankong scanned the crowd, observing their varied expressions. Then, he stood up straight, holding a wine cup, and walked to Ma Jiang's side. "Boss, you're right. Let me toast first!"

After drinking the strong liquor, he chatted casually with Ma Jiang for a few moments before turning to leave.

Due to the low ranking and the disdain from Xu Bei and Zhao Yufei, I naturally felt somewhat unhappy. However, after hearing Ma Jiang out, I felt somewhat relieved... With my fiftyfold Cultivation Speed, Twelve Seals and Twenty-four Thunder Roots, and the Dual Beads in hand, what fun is there comparing myself with people like Xu Bei and Zhao Yufei? Crushing newbies, is it delightful? A few months later, being able to outdo a late-Fifth Layer expert like Cyan-Eyed Tiger Zhao Renxiong, now that's true joy! 18th place? 69th place?... How could a sparrow understand the ambitions of a swan! As for their prized Profound Silver Scalp Sword and Silver Hook Armor... There's even less need to care about these! Tonight, I'll secure the Forehead Scales, and tomorrow I can commission the forging of the Ruyi Battle Armor! Just... I hope that tonight's auction at Dragon Capturing Town, the largest town in the Outer City, doesn't encounter any trouble! This is too crucial for me; after all these efforts, just one last step left!

Dragon Capturing Town is located over three hundred miles from Great Marsh Prefecture. It covers a vast area and is more prosperous than many big cities under the jurisdiction of Great Marsh Prefecture.

As the largest town in Great Marsh Prefecture and a symbol of the officials' strength in the prefecture, Dragon Capturing Town has a population of more than eight hundred thousand, with various industries, and even a City Defense Array! It is said that during the founding Great Emperor of Great Xia, he had once imprisoned a Tier Nine Flood Dragon here using a Grand Array, Refining it daily, spending countless manpower and resources, and finally turned it into a Flood Dragon Puppet.

Later, although the Array Core of the Dragon Capturing Array was moved, three Array Hubs remained. Relying solely on these three hubs, it served as a City Defense Array sufficient to keep Demons below Tier Six outside the city. This was comparable to the Tier Six Grand Array of Great Marsh Prefecture. This town, originally established for imprisoning the Flood Dragon, gradually became the largest town in the Outer City.

Lin Xuankong, now in mid-Tier Three with explosive power, covered the distance of over three hundred miles in just a few tea intervals. When he entered Dragon Capturing Town using his Yin Talisman Sect badge, the sky was just turning dark.

With the Demon Slaying Conference approaching and several auctions being held recently, Dragon Capturing Town was naturally much more lively than usual. Lin Xuankong walked along the street for a while, bought some special snacks for the Young Lady at home, and then arrived at Myriad Phenomena Pavilion.

The officials' auction was being held in Myriad Phenomena Pavilion, and Martial Cultivators participating in the auction were continuously entering. Lin Xuankong paid ten taels of silver at the door, received a private room number plate, and joined the crowd in entering.

Like Lin Xuankong, most of these Martial Cultivators wore veils or masks. With a Ghost Face Mask on his face, Lin Xuankong wasn't particularly noticeable among them.

Entering a private room in the last row, Lin Xuankong opened the auction catalog on the table and glanced through it, secretly clicking his tongue.

Indeed, the items selected by Great Marsh Prefecture officials for auction were all immensely valuable. Apart from the three hundred Forehead Scales that Lin Xuankong was most concerned with, other precious items like the Evil Lizard Demon Blood Pearl, Evil Sheep Demon Horn, etc., were all being auctioned in quantities of hundreds. There was also a batch of Nine Revolutions Qi Replenishing Soup materials, six hundred portions sold simultaneously, with a starting price of thirty thousand taels of silver. These pure materials were comparatively cheaper.

The extremely valuable treasures, such as three drops of Marsh Python Gall which could bring the dead to life and heal severe injuries, were clearly stated in the catalog to be auctioned only using Qi Replenishing Soup materials. The bidding started at four hundred portions, equivalent to one drop of Marsh Python Gall costing over ten thousand taels of silver!

Of course, the Marsh Python Gall, with its miraculous effects, can grant a Martial Cultivator an extra life. If I had ten thousand taels of gold, I'd definitely bid for it!

There's also an item called the Ghost Frog Pouch, reportedly capable of storing vast amounts of materials, comparable to spatial Treasures! Just one piece had a starting bid of fifteen hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup materials!

Moreover, there's a pair of Dragon-Defying Boots, reportedly crafted by the officials' Artifact Refiners, made from four hundred Forehead Scales, with a starting bid of four thousand taels of gold.

Flipping through half of the auction catalog, Lin Xuankong suddenly felt that the three thousand taels of gold he brought were entirely inadequate. I feel like a country squire encountering the royal treasury!

However, thinking about Treasures like Marsh Python Gall, Ghost Frog Pouch, and others that are worth thousands of gold, which could be obtained from Tier Three Demons within Demon-Suppressing Valley, a strong anticipation surfaced in Lin Xuankong's eyes. Once I secure the Forehead Scales today and forge the Ruyi Battle Armor, then advance my Cultivation to late-Third Layer or Perfection, and enter Demon-Suppressing Valley... It's impossible to be so unlucky as to not encounter a single Tier Three Demon. Even with the worst luck, I should at least encounter three to five Tier Three Demons, right? The more Demons inside, the better!

Chapter 83: Artifact Refining Freak Xiao Xiuyi, Great Xia's Supreme Battle Armor

Lin Xuankong pondered for a moment as the auction began, presided over by a rather beautiful Female Martial Cultivator.

Not knowing how much the Forehead Scales would fetch, Lin Xuankong naturally didn't dare to spend money carelessly, so he quietly watched the others spend extravagantly.

"Four thousand two hundred taels!"

"Four thousand five hundred taels!"

"Five thousand five hundred taels!"

Even though the Dragon-Defying Boots were not a full set of Battle Armor, they still fetched a price of over six thousand taels of gold in the end.

The Demon Slaying Conference was imminent. Those wealthy martial artists from various sects were spending lavishly on Exorcism Equipment, which made Lin Xuankong almost hallucinate. Were those six thousand taels they were bidding for actually six thousand pancakes?

You rich bastards, wait until I return from Demon-Suppressing Valley after slaying some demons! I'll make you bleed properly!

「More than half an hour later」

Lin Xuankong, wearing a mask, unexpectedly walked out of the private room via a secret passage.

Three hundred Forehead Scales... He had thought that with those wealthy bidders, they would surely drive the price sky-high—at least two thousand five hundred taels of gold, right? But in the end, he got them for only two thousand taels. He actually had nine hundred taels of gold left!

After a moment's thought, he understood the reason.

The truly wealthy martial artists were directly bidding for Exorcism Equipment. The remaining bidders who wanted the Forehead Scales also needed the extremely rare Demon People's Essence, which only appeared once every few years. How could so many people possess it?!

However, during the bidding for the Forehead Scales, one person kept raising the price. Lin Xuankong strongly suspected that this person must be the seller of the Forehead Scales!

No matter what, getting the Forehead Scales so easily still made him very happy!

Carrying the box containing the Forehead Scales, he quietly left Dragon Capturing Town.

If it were in the past, when he was only at the Second-Layer Cultivation, he certainly wouldn't have chosen to travel at night. However, now that he was at the Mid-grade Third Layer, with the Exorcism Hand at his waist, Thunder Techniques in his repertoire, and the Demon Pearl in his pouch, he was actually hoping to encounter a valuable Demon or two. He was no longer as worried.

After traveling for about Half a Cup of Tea Time, he bounded up a few times and reached the top of a nearby mountain, some tens of meters high. Then, his brows furrowed slightly, because on the other side of the hill, three men in black emerged from the bushes. Their movements were extremely swift,

each possessing Explosive Power on par with Zhao Dalong, at least Mid-grade Third Layer. Anyone daring to rob people at night in the Outer City must have at least this level of Cultivation!

One of the men in black suddenly sneered coldly, "You run fast, friend. What's in that box? I'll give you a choice: leave the box and go, or after you die, I'll open it myself!"

The other two scattered to the sides, surrounding Lin Xuankong.

A cold glint appeared in Lin Xuankong's eyes behind his mask. These three probably aren't specifically targeting the Forehead Scales; they're likely just randomly robbing anyone leaving the ongoing auction in Dragon Capturing Town with expensive items!

Then I'll use the three of you to test my Mid-grade Third Layer Explosive Power!

Lin Xuankong put down the box, and the Qi Blood within his body instantly surged. At that very moment, from the foot of the hill a hundred meters away, a muffled sound suddenly erupted, and the whole hill trembled slightly.

Then, a figure shot up from the foot of the hill like an arrow. After two leaps, accompanied by a gust of wind, she landed a few meters in front of Lin Xuankong. This Female Martial Cultivator, her back to him, looked at the bandit who had just spoken.

She was quite tall, her hair casually tied with a green cloth. She wore a black robe, carried a black Longsword on her back, and even her small boots were black. "He's mine! You three, get lost!"

The three bandits had been surrounding Lin Xuankong, ready to kill and rob. Suddenly seeing this woman's great strength, they retreated without hesitation, jumping down the hill. Her dominance scared away three Mid-grade Third Layer adversaries on the spot.

A hint of caution appeared in Lin Xuankong's eyes as well. Covering a hundred meters in two leaps—this kind of terrifying Explosive Power is beyond my own capability.

This woman must be at least at the Perfection level of the Third Layer... She is an extremely formidable, extremely fierce opponent!

It's worth using the Soul-Extinction Celestial Thunder Divine Technique!

"So, you're the one who bought my Forehead Scales, right?"

The woman turned around and looked at Lin Xuankong. She appeared to be around thirty years old, with a rather delicate and pure appearance and clear eyes. While not stunningly beautiful like a Young Lady, she exuded a transcendent aura.

"Your Forehead Scales! Are you the seller of the Forehead Scales?" Lin Xuankong's hand subtly touched the Demon Pearl.

The woman nodded. "Yes, I was the one bidding against you as well!"

"Don't worry, I didn't come to rob you of the Forehead Scales. I'm just interested in your Demon People's Essence and want to cooperate with you."

The woman in black spoke calmly, seemingly not intending to make a move. Lin Xuankong raised his eyebrows slightly. "You're certain I have the Demon People's Essence on me?"

The woman stared intently at Lin Xuankong. "Only you kept bidding against me. If you didn't have the Essence, why would you be so eager to get the Forehead Scales? Also, there's no need to secretly circulate your Qi Blood. I came to offer cooperation, to help you refine the Battle Armor!"

Lin Xuankong frowned. "You specifically came here to help me refine Battle Armor?"

「A moment later」

Lin Xuankong looked at the woman before him with a complex expression.

The woman's name was Xiao Xiuyi. According to her, her father was once a famous Artifact Refiner for the officials but unfortunately lost his life after offending a noble in Kyoto. Xiao Xiuyi had inherited her family's Artifact Refining Technique but, due to past events, no longer wished to serve the officials. So, she came to Dragon Capturing Town to secretly refine Battle Armor and delve deeper into her family's Artifact Refining Technique.

Xiao Xiuyi's eyes carried a trace of hatred. "The Great Xia officials have monopolized the Armor Refining Technique, forcing every Artifact Refiner to serve them and provide powerful Battle Armor for their martial artists! Yet I insist on refining my own and refusing to serve those so-called Royal Nobles!"

"To obtain Demon People's Essence for refining Battle Armor, I killed countless Demon People after arriving in Great Marsh Prefecture. Five years ago, I obtained two, but in the recent five years, I haven't gotten a single one. The Great Marsh Auction also had none."

"Recently, I've had some insights into the Artifact Refining Technique and plan to experiment with a new Armor Refining Technique, but I lack the Essence! So, I deliberately collected some Forehead Scales to sell at the Dragon Capturing Town auction, hoping to find a Martial Cultivator with Demon People's Essence to cooperate with. In previous auctions, the Martial Cultivators who bought my Forehead Scales were just hoarding supplies... But today, I finally encountered someone with Demon People's Essence!"

At this point, she looked at Lin Xuankong with a trace of expectation in her eyes.

Lin Xuankong began to ponder silently. This Xiao Xiuyi seems quite obsessed with Artifact Refining; she's truly a peculiar woman. She appears to be very angry at the Great Xia officials, which isn't an issue for me since I also look down on the officials of Great Marsh Prefecture for condoning the actions of the Black Tiger Gang... However, I'm not sure if she really can refine Battle Armor!

Xiao Xiuyi seemed to see through his concerns. "My unique new Armor Refining Technique has a twenty percent chance of refining the world's first Exorcism Armor to exceed eight hundred Forehead Scales. This would break the limitation on integrating Forehead Scales into Exorcism Armor and maximize the effectiveness of the Demon People's Essence in your possession!"

A twenty percent chance is too low! Lin Xuankong frowned.

Xiao Xiuyi continued, "In the past, a full set of Exorcism Armor could integrate up to eight hundred Forehead Scales. With Profound Iron, it would weigh over a thousand catties. If my experiment succeeds, the number of Forehead Scales could increase to a thousand, and the amount of Profound Iron could be multiplied several times. This would make your Exorcism Armor likely reach five thousand catties, possessing power far surpassing other armors and becoming a unique Battle Armor in the world!"

Five thousand catties!? That's half a Ruyi Golden Cudgel! If a five-thousand-catty rod is swung... its power would far exceed that of other one-thousand-catty Battle Armors!

If it could truly succeed, it wouldn't only be a unique Battle Armor in the world but also the strongest Battle Armor in Great Xia...

Lin Xuankong's eyes showed clear amazement. But he quickly frowned and asked, "What if it fails?"

Xiao Xiuyi raised her eyebrows. "If it fails, you will at least get an Eight Hundred Forehead Scales Armor!"

She drew the Longsword from her back and gave it a slight shake. The Longsword broke apart into countless moving Forehead Scales, transforming into a Battle Armor that covered her entire body. This armor was ink-black and streamlined, exuding a heroic spirit!

A moment later, she retracted the armor and handed the Longsword to Lin Xuankong. "You can try it!"

Lin Xuankong accepted the black Longsword with a surprised expression. "Aren't you afraid I'll run away with it?"

The woman's face showed a touch of confidence. "I still have another set of Battle Armor. Plus, you're at the Mid-grade of the Third Layer. You're no match for me; you can't run away!"

No, you are not my match!

Lin Xuankong held the Longsword, sensed it for a moment, and a smile appeared at the corner of his mouth. The Ruyi Battle Armor I want isn't in the shape of a Longsword... But if I could gamble on getting

a five-thousand-catty Ruyi Profound Gold Rod here, why not give it a try? After all, I wouldn't lose! This Xiao Xiuyi, who seems obsessed with Artifact Refining, is quite odd!

「More than two hundred miles outside Dragon Capturing Town, on Flying Dragon Slope」

Lin Xuankong, using the Exorcism Gloves and Profound Iron Whip to protect his body, followed Xiao Xiuyi into a hidden cave, his eyes vigilant.

Seeing how cautious he was, Xiao Xiuyi was a bit speechless. She pointed to the Profound Fire Furnace, Profound Iron Hammer, Engraved Saber, and other tools in the cave used for refining Battle Armor. "I have everything ready here. I also have the missing one hundred Forehead Scales, which you can take on credit at forty taels each. As for the Artifact Refining fee, if it succeeds, two hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup materials will suffice!"

Lin Xuankong glanced at the various crude living supplies in the cave, then at the exquisite Artifact Refining items. "You live out here alone?"

Living alone in the wild where Demons roam, she indeed is a peculiar woman!

But considering her strength and two sets of Exorcism Armor... it doesn't seem like such a big deal!

Xiao Xiuyi's brows raised slightly. "There's the Qingshui River below Flying Dragon Slope. This place has mountains and water; it's peaceful and elegant. No one disturbs me while I study Artifact Refining Techniques. It's much better than Dragon Capturing Town!"

"Alright, you've seen my refining cave. Now it's your turn to get ready. To refine the Thousand-Scaly Armor, you must at least help me hire more than a dozen Martial Cultivators at Tier Two Perfection to assist in turns!"

More than a dozen Tier Two Perfection Martial Cultivators to help? As expected, betting on a Ruyi Golden Cudgel isn't that simple!

"So many people?" Lin Xuankong frowned and asked.

Xiao Xiuyi said, "The new Refining Method I intend to test differs from ordinary techniques. It requires continuously drawing Qi Blood Runes on the Profound Iron and Forehead Scales for twenty-four hours nonstop, and even then, there's only a twenty percent chance of success! During the refining process, the consumption of Qi Blood is enormous. It will likely consume the amount of Qi Blood replenished by more than a hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup within those twenty-four hours! Even if I continuously take Nine Revolutions Qi Replenishing Soup, it won't be enough, as the body still needs time to absorb and convert it. Therefore, you must bring more than a dozen Tier Two Perfection Martial Cultivators to continuously infuse Qi Blood into me! Of course, if you can obtain dozens of Turtle-Poria Elixirs, that would also suffice to replenish the Qi Blood!"

Dozens of Turtle-Poria Elixirs? You're dreaming!

However, the Qi Blood Amount from over a hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup is equivalent to over three thousand Transcendent Qi Blood points, which is about eight hundred Perfect Level Qi Blood points! The consumption is indeed massive... Ordinary Tier Two Perfection Martial Cultivators might only have a storage capacity of a few dozen Qi Blood points at most, nowhere near enough to support such consumption!

Perfect Qi Blood: 3,266/100,000

He glanced at his own Life Plate, and his eyes flickered. "Alright, I'll take care of infusing you with Qi Blood. When should we start the refining?"

"As long as you're ready with the Demon People's Essence and bring along more than a dozen Tier Two Perfection Martial Cultivators, we can start at any time!"

Chapter 84: Mountain Opening, Land Cleaving, The Unmatched Ruyi Battle Armor!

In the Wutong Village Wooden House Outer Room,

Lii Xiaolan was somewhat surprised when Lin Xuankong finished speaking. "Is there really such an eccentric Artifact Refiner? Two hundred portions of medicinal ingredients for Qi Replenishing Soup as the Armor Refining fee? The fee is similar to other Artifact Refiners! Is she pretty?"

Was that last question serious? Does it matter? Does prettiness have anything to do with Artifact Refining?

Lin Xuankong was a bit speechless. "Her looks are average! Have you heard of any Artifact Refining Clan with the surname Xiao?"

Lii Xiaolan frowned. "There are only four Artifact Refiners in Great Marsh Prefecture, none with the surname Xiao. But that lady said she came from Kyoto. How would I know the refiners from Kyoto! But even if she is somewhat eccentric, so what? At worst, we can go together... If there is any problem, we can beat her up and steal her Exorcism Armor. Doesn't she have two sets? One set for each of us!"

Lin Xuankong looked at Lii Xiaolan speechlessly. His young wife is always ruthless when dealing with beautiful women; this was going to be a clean sweep!

"I think she has more than just two sets of Exorcism Equipment; it seems her boots are also Exorcism Equipment..."

Lii Xiaolan nodded heavily. "Women's boots won't look good on you, so they are mine! By the way, if we are to refine the armor, which Martial Cultivators do you plan to invite? As the Silver Jade Steward, organizing a few Stewards to help shouldn't be a problem, right?"

Lin Xuankong smiled. "No need!"

「The next day, at dawn,」

After finishing their respective Cultivation, they left Great Marsh Prefecture and went straight to Flying Dragon Slope.

As soon as they arrived outside the hidden cave, Xiao Xiuyi, dressed in black and with a tall figure, came out to greet them.

She glanced curiously at Lii Xiaolan, who was following Lin Xuankong. "Why did you only bring one Martial Cultivator... Hiring several Second Layer Martial Cultivators at Perfection for a couple of days shouldn't cost much silver tael! When do we start Refining?"

Lin Xuankong said, "We will start Refining today. I have recently taken many Turtle-Poria Elixirs; it should be enough to support your consumption!"

Xiao Xiuyi frowned. "Many? Only if dozens of Turtle-Poria Elixirs take effect simultaneously can it supply the consumption! Can you really do it?"

Lii Xiaolan glanced at the elegant Xiao Xiuyi and frowned. "Of course my husband can do it!"

"Husband?" Xiao Xiuyi looked at the silver-haired Lin Xuankong, then at the tender-skinned, sixteen or seventeen-year-old Lii Xiaolan.

"Yes!" Lii Xiaolan slightly raised her chin, seeming to declare her inviolable sovereignty.

Xiao Xiuyi looked strange.

Then she frowned at Lin Xuankong. "If there is a problem with Refining the Exorcism Armor due to insufficient Qi Blood... you need to consider it carefully. The Demon People's Essence is extremely hard to come by. Wasting it once, who knows when we'll get it again."

"I brought the refining fee. I hope you can succeed! If you are ready, then let's begin. There will be no problems on my side," Lin Xuankong said.

Xiao Xiuyi frowned at Lin Xuankong for a while.

But seeing Lin Xuankong always wearing a confident expression, anticipation gradually appeared in her eyes. "Then let's begin!"

「Moments later,」

Fire sparks flickered in the cave.

Xiao Xiuyi kept waving the Profound Iron Hammer, connecting the Profound Iron Components she had prepared last night. These extremely heavy and exquisite Profound Iron Components joined tightly, forming an integral whole. Soon, the full one thousand Profound Iron Components formed the shape of the Golden Cudgel, as Lin Xuankong had described in advance. At this moment, the Profound Iron Golden Cudgel was several feet in diameter, like an extremely large, solid piece of Profound Iron!

She then picked up the carving knife and quickly started engraving.

The intricate Runes, resembling complex characters, were skillfully engraved by her. These Runes connected to each other, all drawn with a single stroke!

With the engraving of the Qi Blood Runes, the Profound Iron Rod glimmered, gradually becoming slightly thinner!

For each Rune engraved, she would attach a Forehead Scale to the Ruyi Golden Cudgel, then use Qi Blood to engrave complex Runes on the white Forehead Scale as well.

After more than half an hour, Xiao Xiuyi's face turned slightly pale. She glanced at Lin Xuankong, who immediately nodded, mobilizing his Qi Blood and lightly pressing both palms on Xiao Xiuyi's back.

Lii Xiaolan watched the point of contact between the two with a vigilant expression.

With the infusion of Qi Blood, Xiao Xiuyi's slightly pale face instantly turned rosy again.

She did not have time to marvel at Lin Xuankong's abundant Qi Blood; her eyes were fixated on the Ruyi Battle Armor, and her hands continued to engrave the Runes without stopping.

「Time passed quickly.」

More than five hours later, although Xiao Xiuyi was still controlling the engraving of each Rune, her heart was already full of doubts.

Lii Xiaolan, who was standing nearby, also had a strange expression on her pretty face.

She had long known her husband's monstrous Talent and had already been awed into submission by comparison!

But seeing Lin Xuankong infusing Qi Blood nonstop for over five hours, she still couldn't help but be amazed!

Five hours! Her old husband had lasted for so long! After a certain age, Martial Cultivators must take special Treasure Medicines to prevent the decline of Qi Blood to some extent... But not only had her old husband's Qi Blood not declined, it was instead dozens of times more abundant than that of ordinary Martial Cultivators! Ah! What a monstrous husband! I'm so demoralized... Where are those pies? I need something to help me recover!

「Twelve hours later,」

Xiao Xiuyi's face showed signs of exhaustion.

Even though she was already a Martial Cultivator at the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer and had begun to temper her head, her Divine Soul Strength far exceeded that of Third Layer Martial Cultivators. Yet, maintaining high-intensity mental concentration for twelve hours still made her Heart Spirit somewhat dazed!

She gritted her teeth to control her Heart Spirit, trying her best to keep the carving knife in her right hand absolutely steady. Her left hand touched her belt, took out a Divine Protection Elixir, and quickly swallowed it. Feeling her spirit starting to recover, she let out a sigh of relief!

Lii Xiaolan saw this and involuntarily touched the small scented pouch at her waist containing several Divine Protection Elixirs. Xiao Xiuyi is indeed also a Fourth Layer Martial Cultivator!

「Twenty-two hours later,」

Lii Xiaolan frowned deeply, looking at Lin Xuankong with worried eyes. "Do you really not need me to replace you for a while?"

Infusing Qi Blood nonstop for twenty-two hours... Even a giant Blood Ox would be exhausted and run dry by now, right?

Lin Xuankong was calm and relaxed. "No need! But are you hungry? Maybe you should go buy some pies; Old Zhang is probably open for business at this time!"

Lii Xiaolan was speechless.

She decided to mind her own business and ignore this monster!

Time passed slowly.

As the moment of success drew near, the trio's hearts grew ever more tense.

Twenty-three hours passed.

Another tea's-worth of time passed.

Then another two tea's-worth of time passed.

Finally, Xiao Xiuyi's expression changed. With her carving knife, she etched the final, exquisite Rune onto the last Forehead Scale of the Ruyi Battle Armor!

「In the next instant,」

The Ruyi Profound Iron Rod, now reduced to the thickness of an adult's wrist, released a brilliant light. Thousands of Qi Blood Runes on it sparkled dazzlingly, illuminating the entire cave. Profound and powerful auras continuously emanated from the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod!

"BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ!"

The Ruyi Profound Iron Rod trembled slightly.

The light retracted, and the profound, powerful aura also diminished, leaving only the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod standing there, a dark gold color, with four large Profound Gold characters emblazoned on it: Ruyi Battle Armor!

"It's done!" Lii Xiaolan's face was filled with joy.

"It's done?" Lin Xuankong was even more jubilant.

"It's done!" Xiao Xiuyi gazed at the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod in a daze.

Generations of inheritance... My father's lifelong dedication... My own twenty-plus years of relentless study... I thought the chances were only twenty percent, almost impossible, yet it unexpectedly succeeded on the first try!

"This is the first set of armor in the world surpassing Eight Hundred Forehead Scales!

This is the world's only set of five-thousand-jin Ruyi Battle Armor!

Moreover, it can change size at will! Its defensive capability and speed of dispelling Demon Qi are indisputably the best in the world!"

Xiao Xiuyi's eyes held a touch of pride, her face brimming with excitement.

This eccentric Artifact Refiner was more excited than Lin Xuankong, the owner of the Ruyi Battle Armor!

「A moment later,」

She suddenly thought of something and turned sharply to look at Lin Xuankong.

"I know why it succeeded on the first try!

According to my previous plan, I intended to invite over ten Martial Cultivators, at least at Second Layer Perfection, to help by providing Qi Blood in turns.

But Martial Cultivators have different Cultivation Techniques and slightly varied Realms, so their Qi Blood infusions naturally differ, which would affect the stability of the Qi Blood Runes.

However, this time, it was just you infusing Qi Blood. It was extremely stable and consistent, making the Qi Blood Runes I etched immensely stable, and thus success was naturally to be expected!"

She looked at Lin Xuankong puzzledly.

"But how did you achieve such abundant Qi Blood? Even among the countless prodigies I've seen in Kyoto, none possessed such rich Qi Blood! If not for this, this world's greatest armor could never have been Refined!"

Lin Xuankong smiled and said, "My Qi Blood is nothing significant. However, Miss Xiao, your Refinement of this Great Xia's first Thousand-Scaly Armor is truly unprecedented and commands admiration!"

At this moment, Lin Xuankong genuinely admired this rather eccentric Artifact Refiner.

He once thought the five-thousand-jin Ruyi Golden Cudgel was just an extravagant hope. After all, the strongest Battle Armor in the entire Great Marsh Prefecture, and even all of Great Xia, was only around a thousand jin!

Lii Xiaolan, witnessing the mutual admiration between the two, couldn't help but roll her eyes.

She stepped forward and grabbed the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod. "Let me try it and see what this Ruyi Battle Armor is really like!"

"Hmm?" Lii Xiaolan was surprised. Despite her strength now surpassing Lin Xuankong's by quite a bit, the Iron Rod still felt immensely heavy!

"So heavy!" Lii Xiaolan frowned slightly, the Qi Blood within her subtly circulating.

「The next moment,」

With a "BUZZ" sound, she lifted the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod single-handedly.

She activated her Qi Blood and stepped quickly towards the cave's entrance, smiling. "Let me test its power!"

Lin Xuankong, seeing her so delighted, also followed her outside.

Xiao Xiuyi, however, frowned slightly and hurried after them. "Test this Battle Armor's might somewhere farther away, to avoid attracting attention and disturbing my peace here!"

"No problem!" Lii Xiaolan replied.

The three exited the cave, quickly traversing over thirty miles.

Lii Xiaolan held the Profound Iron Rod, looking at a small mountain forty to fifty zhang high not far away. "That's the one!"

She infused her Qi Blood into the Iron Rod.

Instantly, the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod, originally just over four chi long, began to grow with the wind, extending continuously. Within the blink of an eye, it was over three zhang long and as thick as a bowl, glowing with a dark golden light filled with a powerful aura!

She activated her Qi Blood, charged forward quickly, leaped dozens of zhang high, and swung the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod towards the small mountain!

"BOOM!"

Smoke and dust billowed, rocks splattered, and a deafening roar shook the heavens.

The entire small mountain was devastated by this single blow, losing almost half its peak.

Furthermore, a massive crack tore through the mountain, extending deep into the earth, its full depth unknown!

The surrounding land shook violently.

This tremor swiftly propagated, and within moments, countless wild beasts within a radius of tens of miles fled in panic...

「Moments later,」 in Dragon Capturing Town, over two hundred miles away, amidst the bustling streets, some Martial Cultivators felt slight tremors underfoot. They all looked towards the east, their expressions suddenly changing!

Some powerful Martial Cultivators leaped onto the roofs of pavilions or onto the city walls, gazing towards the distant east.

「In Dragon Capturing Town, within the City Lord's Mansion,」

Several imposing figures flashed out, streaking over countless buildings and heading rapidly towards the east...

The Ruyi Battle Armor...

The power of a single strike could split mountains, cleave the earth, and startle the four corners of the wilderness.

This Battle Armor seemed not of the mortal world—no armor could compare, none could reach its level!

Chapter 85: Divine Thunder Refining Body, Tremendous Increase in Combat Power, Conical Hat Guest Versus Grand Chief Steward

The dust settled.

Lii Xiaolan, holding the Profound Iron Rod which had now reverted to just over four feet in length, walked over to her two companions. Her eyes were full of joy. "This Ruyi Battle Armor is truly of boundless power! It's a pity my strength hasn't yet reached a higher realm; otherwise, smashing this small mountain in one blow would be no problem at all!"

Xiao Xiuyi's face was full of confidence. "This Battle Armor's power is limitless. The stronger the person who wields it, the greater the power unleashed!"

Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up. "Let me try!"

To his surprise, Lii Xiaolan and Xiao Xiuyi both shook their heads.

Lii Xiaolan said, "You're at the Mid-grade of the Third Layer. Picking it up isn't an issue, but wielding it freely, as if it were an extension of your arm, is certainly beyond your current capabilities! To use it as you wish, you must at least reach the Late Stage of the Third Layer. By then, your explosive power will increase several times over! Huh, you don't believe me? Then give it a try!"

She thrust the iron rod into the ground, and a large part of it was instantly embedded in the earth.

With anticipation in his eyes, Lin Xuankong went over and grabbed it with one hand. His expression flickered. How heavy!

He activated the Qi Blood throughout his body, grasped the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod with both hands, and then forcefully lifted it. The Profound Iron Rod shone with a BUZZ as he raised it. However, because the weight on him had suddenly increased tens of times, the ground beneath Lin Xuankong's feet sank a bit.

His eyes gleaming with joy, he held the rod with both hands and swung it a few times, wielding it with fierce vigor.

After swinging it a dozen times, he thought to himself, With this terrifying iron rod in hand, coupled with Double Vine and the Manluo Demon Pearl, neither Zhao Dalong nor Zhao Erlong would stand a chance; they'd all be crushed into meat pulp under one swing!

But feeling the extremely heavy Ruyi Profound Iron Rod in his hands, he had to admit that he currently couldn't wield it at an incredibly high speed like the Young Lady, nor could he fully unleash its true power—let alone lift it and leap dozens of feet!

It's not that I'm not strong enough... Initially, I only wanted to create an Exorcism Armor weighing over a thousand pounds! With my current strength, I could wield a Profound Iron Rod of over 1,000 pounds with ease! Who would have thought I'd meet the Artifact Refining Genius Xiao Xiuyi, who directly crafted the greatest for me: a 5,000-pound, world's first Battle Armor!

At this thought, his desire for realm improvement grew stronger.

Late Stage of the Third Layer, then I can freely use the Ruyi Battle Armor... It shouldn't take long!

After testing the power of the Ruyi Battle Armor, the three returned to Xiao Xiuyi's "cave dwelling."

Lin Xuankong was naturally extremely grateful to this Artifact Refiner who had created such a powerful Battle Armor for him. He intended to give all three hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup ingredients he had brought to Xiao Xiuyi—two hundred portions as the refining fee, and an additional one hundred portions because Xiao Xiuyi had helped him acquire a hundred Forehead Scales.

Although Lin Xuankong didn't have many medicinal ingredients and was usually quite frugal, he never held back for those who had genuinely helped him! Besides, someone like Xiao Xiuyi, who was so purely dedicated to Artifact Refining and could craft such unique Battle Armors, was definitely worth befriending!

To Lin Xuankong's surprise, Xiao Xiuyi didn't accept the extra hundred portions of ingredients. When seeing him and Lii Xiaolan off, she looked at Lin Xuankong earnestly and said, "I have very few friends. Consider those hundred Forehead Scales as a token of our friendship! If I have the chance to buy Demon People's Essence in the future, I only hope you can help me once more and refine a Thousand-Scaly Armor for me!"

Lin Xuankong laughed. "It's a small matter. If I get the chance to obtain Demon People's Essence in the future, I'll surely seek out Miss Xiao for help."

After their farewell, on the way back to the Great Marsh Prefecture, Lii Xiaolan glanced at Lin Xuankong, who was carrying the Profound Iron Rod, and said with a playful glint in her eye, "Miss Xiao treated you so well, helped you refine the world's first Battle Armor, and even said she wanted to be friends. You didn't even invite her to our place to get acquainted and show her where we live?"

Lin Xuankong paused. "Ah, I forgot to mention it! But it shouldn't be hard for her to find me in the Great Marsh Prefecture if she comes in the future. She should be able to find our place!"

"HMPH!" Lii Xiaolan frowned. "Aiya, since she crafted such a good Battle Armor, let's order twenty dishes when we get back! No, I want thirty dishes!"

Lin Xuankong was stunned. "Thirty dishes?"

Seeing Lin Xuankong's slightly pained expression, Lii Xiaolan finally laughed.

「 」

「Half a cup of tea time later,」

Several Martial Cultivators from the Great Xia Dynasty's Government Office landed before the small mountain that had its top smashed off and was split in two.

One of them, an official Martial Cultivator with a particularly imposing aura, respectfully cupped his hands and said, "Prefect Liy, there's no remnant of Demon Qi. It shouldn't have been caused by a powerful demon's advancement. It appears to be a Martial Cultivator who used an Exorcism Weapon to shatter this small mountain! But the power of such a weapon is too fierce and terrifying, truly unprecedented. Even if I used my Exorcism Nine-Ring Saber, a hundred strikes wouldn't be enough to split the entire mountain into two!"

The Prefect of Great Marsh Prefecture, clad in a Python Robe, a formidable figure at the Sixth Layer of Transcendence, squinted his eyes. "Judging by the traces, it was a single strike. A single strike split the mountain, and the residual power spread for over two hundred li... There is no Demon Qi here, no remnant true qi. The one using the Battle Armor must not be a Martial Cultivator at the Fifth or Sixth Layer! Even for a Martial Cultivator at the Third or Fourth Layer, using the strongest Battle Armor of Great Xia, it should not be possible to unleash such fierce power... In Kyoto, I personally saw the Bright Light Dragon Armor. It weighs 1,850 pounds, possesses numerous mystical functions, and is acclaimed as Great Xia's First Battle Armor! But even the Bright Light Dragon Armor, if used by Third or Fourth Layer Martial Cultivators, absolutely could not—far from it—unleash such earth-shattering power!"

Could there actually be a Battle Armor in this world many times stronger than the Bright Light Dragon Armor?

For a moment, a trace of bewildered doubt appeared in the eyes of this Prefect Liy of Great Marsh Prefecture, a man who commanded billions of people and held a status not inferior to Elder Hua of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect.

「 」

「In the blink of an eye,」

Ten days passed.

On this day, after finishing his Cultivation of the Pine Crane Longevity Technique, Lin Xuankong was cultivating the Yin Talisman Thunder Heart Method, tempering his body with the Divine Thunder Root.

Suddenly, his expression changed, and he couldn't help but look at the Life Plate in his Brain Mansion.

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Entering the Hall 146/300]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Entering the Hall 76/150]

At this moment, he discovered that after the Yin Talisman Technique had entered the Entering the Hall Realm and the Divine Thunder Root within his body had grown to the thickness of a thumb, using the True and Illusory Divine Thunder Root to course through his meridians for tempering was surprisingly faster than tempering his body with Pine Qi Blood!

Looking at the two techniques, both at the same realm yet with completely different progress, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but marvel inwardly. The difference in compatibility indeed impacts the speed of basic Cultivation. My Pine Skill was cultivated two months earlier than the Yin Talisman Technique, and now, after just over a month, the progress of the Yin Talisman Technique has already surpassed that of the Pine Skill! From now on, tempering my body and advancing in the Transcendence Realm will be entrusted to the Yin Talisman Technique, which will surely be much faster than the Pine Skill! My original Cultivation Speed was already far beyond others, and now it will be even faster! According to the daily increase of 4 proficiency points in the Yin Talisman Technique, in six days, I estimate I'll reach the Late Stage of the Third Layer. There are twenty days left until the Demon Slaying Conference; by then, I estimate I'll have achieved Perfection in the Third Layer and will be able to find a way to advance to the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer! This progress is much faster than I originally anticipated! Of course, the longevity-enhancing effect of the Pine Skill must not be abandoned, but in the future, its role will only be to nourish my foundation and extend my Lifespan!

With this thought, Lin Xuankong concentrated his spirit, circulating the Divine Thunder Root within his body at high speed.

The speed of lightning—how swift it is! Instantly, every pore on his skin emitted fine lightning. Every strand of his hair, his eyes, ears, mouth, and nose were all wreathed in extremely fine lightning. This was especially true for his heavily tempered legs, which were densely covered with countless fine bolts of lightning, shining brilliantly! This scene was strikingly similar to that of the Thunder God standing tall in the illusion; though its power was incomparably weaker by countless orders of magnitude, the aura was remarkably consistent!

Occasionally, some lightning would drift away from his feet and strike the nearby Old Willow Tree. The trunk of the Old Willow Tree trembled slightly, its branches swayed, and it gradually began to absorb some of the stray Body Tempering Divine Thunder...

「 」

「In a flash,」

Another ten days passed.

That day, Lin Xuankong had just finished Cultivating in the backyard and returned to the outer room of the wooden building when the anxious voice of Deputy Steward Yang Shan sounded from outside the door.

"Steward Lin, are you there? Trouble has arisen at Piaoxiang Tower! Steward Hu Shuo and Steward Lin Jiao are confronting Grand Chief Steward Sima Liuyun of the Black Tiger Gang over there. It looks like things might escalate!"

Lin Xuankong frowned upon hearing this. He opened the door and looked at Yang Shan. "Piaoxiang Tower is located within the territory of the Yin Talisman Sect. How did people from the Black Tiger Gang come here to cause trouble?"

Yang Shan bowed and said, "Steward, you've been busy Cultivating and rarely come by... There have been rumors in the sect that Zhao Renxiong recently had Elder Hua from the Celestial Sect use the Spiritual Words Technique. It's said that the Spiritual Words Technique, one of the three great Divine Techniques of the Celestial Sect, can deduce events and obtain a prophetic phrase from things that have already happened! Elder Hua, as the only expert in the Celestial Sect who has mastered the Spiritual Words Technique, activated it and obtained a prophetic phrase concerning the identity of the Conical Hat Guest. It consists of eight characters: 'Old husband, young wife; fiftieth year of knowing fate!' Therefore, the Black Tiger Gang has recently been searching the entire city for old men over fifty with young wives, in their own territories as well as those of the Spirit Snake Gang, the Feng Family, the Guo Family, and others. Those old men who married young wives have all met with misfortune. Regardless of whether they are Martial Cultivators, wealthy merchants, or ordinary people, almost all have been captured or killed by the Black Tiger Gang. It's said that many have already died, and the commotion is growing larger! Steward Hu and Steward Lin Jiao were dining at Piaoxiang Tower when they saw people from the Black Tiger Gang come into our territory to capture an old man selling leek-stuffed pancakes.

They went to stop them and ended up in a standoff with the Grand Chief Steward of the Black Tiger Gang and his men! That Sima Liuyun is said to be at Perfection in the Third Layer, even more powerful than Steward Ma Jiang..."

Lin Xuankong listened, and his heart sank. One of the three great Divine Techniques, the Spiritual Words Technique, can deduce events and obtain prophetic phrases! Elder Hua of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect? This Spiritual Words Technique is indeed somewhat mystical. 'Old husband, young wife; fiftieth year of knowing fate'—isn't that describing me? Zhao Renxiong is really pressing relentlessly! That damned Elder Hua is also to blame, aiding a tyrant! But... an old man selling leek-stuffed pancakes! Old Zhang? Did he marry a young wife too?

Lin Xuankong suddenly stood up. "Did you notify Steward Ma and the hall?"

Yang Shan bowed. "I sent Little Hu to Steward Ma's residence. They should have received the news by now. I'll go notify the hall immediately!"

After speaking, Yang Shan hurried away.

Lin Xuankong pondered briefly, then turned and went back to his small room. He circulated his Qi Blood and, with a single hand, picked up the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod, which had shrunk to about half a foot in length.

Twenty days of Cultivation had passed. His strength had surged; he had already reached the Late Stage of the Third Layer and was advancing towards Perfection in the Third Layer! Previously, he had to mobilize all his Qi Blood and use both hands to even wield the Profound Iron Rod. Now, however, he could lift the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod with a single hand. Though it still felt heavy, once he switched to using both hands to swing it, the power would undoubtedly be ferocious, nearly matching the power the Young Lady had displayed when she wielded the rod!

Realm: Transcendence Realm Third Layer Late Stage

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Entering the Hall 186/300]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Entering the Hall 116/150]

Grand Chief Steward Sima Liuyun of the Black Tiger Gang, at Perfection in the Third Layer? I wonder if he has the Heart Method to nurture the Black Soul Wondrous Jade. I was just pondering which Grand Chief Steward of the Black Tiger Gang to deal with these past few days. Now one comes bouncing right to my door! Since you want to capture the Conical Hat Guest, then the Conical Hat Guest will come to meet you. Let's see if you can catch me, and whether you can withstand a blow to the head from the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod!

Chapter 86: Frenzied Tiger's Ferocious Roar Echoes for Twenty Miles, Conical Hat Guest Shatters the Long Street

The Piaoxiang Tower, usually bustling with patrons, was now completely deserted. At the street corner, several hundred martial cultivators had gathered. Among these cultivators, a small portion were Yin Talisman Sect members, likely subordinates of Steward Hu Shuo; the larger portion consisted of hundreds of elite Black Tiger Gang members. Both sides had already drawn their swords and were facing off at the street corner.

At the center of the street corner, Sima Liuyun stood before five Black Tiger Gang stewards. A cold smile played at the corner of his lips. "Steward Hu Shuo, he's just an old man selling pancakes. Do you think the Black Tiger Gang can't capture him? Besides, with your Mid-grade Third Layer cultivation, do you really think you can stop me, Sima Liuyun?"

Hu Shuo's face turned crimson, his eye twitching, clearly a mix of shame and anger. "We both have Third Layer cultivation, who's afraid of whom? As for that old man selling leek pancakes, he's obviously just a commoner, without a shred of Martial Arts Cultivation. You're recklessly arresting people, stirring up widespread resentment in Great Marsh Prefecture! I can't control what happens elsewhere, but Yin Talisman Sect territory is no place for you to run wild!"

With that, Hu Shuo helped Old Zhang to his feet. "Old Zhang, don't worry," he said. "Since you've paid the street protection fee to the Yin Talisman Sect, you're safe! Hurry and leave this place!"

Old Zhang, the leek pancake seller, already pale with fright, trembled as he scrambled off into the distance.

But from behind him came Sima Liuyun's voice, "Safe and sound, you say? I'm curious to see if you have the ability to keep him safe!"

His words had barely faded when a loud shout echoed from the street corner.

"Sima Liuyun, you've got some nerve, causing trouble in Yin Talisman Sect territory! Do you still remember how I thrashed you until you were crying for your parents back then?!"

With the loud shout, a figure shot through the air, swiftly leaping to the street corner and landing beside Hu Shuo. It was Ma Jiang, who had already activated his Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand.

Seeing Ma Jiang approach with a murderous glint in his eyes, having already activated his famously formidable Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand, Sima Liuyun's face gradually darkened.

"It's been three years. Today is different from the past, Ma Jiang. This time, it will be you crying to your parents!"

He pressed down slightly with his feet, circulating his Qi Blood. The Dragon-Defying Boots on his feet transformed, completely encasing his legs and feet!

At the same time, Qi Blood surged within him, and his abdomen suddenly swelled to an incredible degree, making him look like a giant toad!

The expressions of the many elite Black Tiger Gang members behind Sima Liuyun shifted upon seeing this, and they quickly began circulating the Black Tiger Golden Claw Heart Method.

Opposite Sima Liuyun, Ma Jiang and Hu Shuo's expressions also changed upon seeing his state. They frantically circulated their Qi Blood.

Hu Shuo shouted to the more than three hundred Yin Talisman Sect disciples behind him, "He's mastered the Black Tiger Gang's Celestial Tiger Ferocious Roar Skill! Retreat quickly! Circulate your Qi Blood to protect your heads—"

Unfortunately, before he could finish speaking:

"ROAR~~~~"

A tremendous tiger roar erupted from Sima Liuyun's mouth.

In an instant, the terrifying roar from Sima Liuyun produced countless ripples in front of him. These soundwaves surged toward the more than two hundred Yin Talisman Sect disciples at terrifying speed!

All around, the countless buildings along the long street trembled slightly from the dreadful roar, and numerous screams echoed from within the many wooden structures!

In a blink, the more than two hundred Yin Talisman Sect disciples began to scream in agony. Blood flowed from each disciple's ears, and their eyes became bloodshot.

Dozens of Yin Talisman Sect disciples who hadn't even reached the First Layer of Transcendence collapsed to the ground, instantly knocked unconscious by the terrifying roar!

It wasn't that these disciples were weak; the Celestial Tiger Ferocious Roar Skill was simply too formidable. Even Steward Lin Jiao, at the Late Stage Second Layer, couldn't help but clutch his excruciatingly painful head and shout, "Damn you! Roaring so loud, you nearly shattered my head!"

Old Zhang, who had stumbled more than a hundred zhang away, didn't escape either. His body stiffened, and he fainted on the spot, blood trickling from his nose and mouth. Even at a distance of over a hundred zhang, he still sustained internal injuries!

It wasn't just within a hundred zhang. In the dozens of nearby alleyways, countless residents clutched their buzzing ears in pain.

Far off, even ten to twenty miles away, both commoners and martial cultivators heard the faint echoes of the roar and couldn't help but glance curiously in this direction!

With a single roar, hundreds, perhaps thousands, were injured. Even Late Stage Second Layer experts were in severe pain. The roar could be heard from twenty miles away; the Celestial Tiger Ferocious Roar Skill, one of the Black Tiger Three Techniques, was indeed devastatingly powerful!

At the street corner, only Ma Jiang and Hu Shuo fared slightly better.

Hu Shuo, his Qi Blood surging and his face grim, shouted to the disciples who hadn't fainted, "Quick! Take the unconscious disciples and retreat!"

Ma Jiang, protecting his body with his Qi Blood, endured his headache and bellowed, "What are you squawking about!"

He took a step, leaping several zhang, and swung his Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand—wreathed in thumb-thick arcs of lightning—towards Sima Liuyun's face.

"ROAR! ROAR! ROAR!"

A cold sneer touched Sima Liuyun's lips as he retreated quickly. The tiger roars from his mouth were continuous, countless soundwaves battering Ma Jiang before spreading outwards.

Ma Jiang, at the forefront, circulated his Qi Blood to suppress the tremors in his organs and head as he pursued Sima Liuyun. However, despite his ferocious Yin Thunder Technique, Sima Liuyun gave him no opportunity to get close. This once-defeated opponent, Sima Liuyun, now relying on the Tiger Roar Technique, had actually gained the upper hand!

In the blink of an eye, under the relentless assault of the Tiger Roar Technique, Ma Jiang's ample Qi Blood was rapidly being depleted.

A flicker of anxiety crossed Ma Jiang's eyes. Sima Liuyun was kiting him with the Tiger Roar Technique. If this continued, not only would he be defeated, but who knew how many Yin Talisman Sect disciples and civilians in their territory would be killed!

The intermittent screams from the numerous wooden buildings surrounding the long street had significantly diminished. It was clear that most of the innocent, affected civilians had been knocked unconscious by Sima Liuyun's terrifying Tiger Roar Technique!

Oddly enough, the Black Tiger Gang members employing the Black Tiger Golden Claw Heart Method were completely unharmed.

The five Black Tiger Gang stewards watched the Yin Talisman Sect disciples writhing and clutching their heads in agony. They sneered, their faces filled with smug satisfaction.

The five stewards gestured in unison. The Black Tiger Leaders and Gang Members roared as one and charged toward the Yin Talisman Sect disciples. The face of every Black Tiger Leader and Gang Member was contorted with ferocity, triumph, and murderous intent!

A one-sided slaughter of the Yin Talisman Sect members was about to begin!

At that very moment, muffled sounds erupted one after another from the depths of the long street. A figure, treading upon the long street, rushed toward them at high speed. He was dressed in black, wearing a conical hat and a Ghost Face Mask, and holding a Profound Iron Rod more than four feet long!

"Sima Liuyun, didn't you want to bring people to capture me? I'm here!!"

Before his voice faded, Lin Xuankong leaped up. Carrying the five-thousand-jin Profound Iron Rod, he crossed a distance of fifty to sixty zhang and landed heavily before the Black Tiger Gang members. His heavy stomp made the bluestone beneath his feet give way with a loud BANG! as it instantly shattered into countless pieces.

Conical Hat Guest!

The many Black Tiger Gang Leaders and Gang Members hurriedly dodged the flying stones, their faces changing dramatically. Of course, they had been following Sima Liuyun everywhere, searching for the Conical Hat Guest. But now, actually facing him, none of these hundreds of Black Tiger Gang members, these dozens of Black Tiger Leaders, these several dignified Black Tiger Stewards, dared to make a move!

Not only that, but of the hundreds of gang members who had looked so ferocious moments before, not one dared to stand their ground. They all scrambled back in retreat!

These hundreds of men, who had charged forward like man-eating demons, now retreated with faces full of fear, scurrying away like frightened dogs!

Just then, three figures suddenly flew out from a distant tavern, landing at the street corner. One had fierce, leopard-like eyes, his face full of viciousness. Another was eight feet tall and as round as a ball. The third stood nine feet tall, with a broad and powerful build!

The man with the leopard-like eyes stared at Lin Xuankong and sneered, "Vice Hall Master Li was right. The most likely hiding places for the Conical Hat Guest were the territories of the Huang Family and the Yin Talisman Sect—our Black Tiger Gang's adversaries! We just began searching this area, and you've already shown yourself!"

Among the Yin Talisman Sect disciples, the red-faced Steward Hu gasped when he saw these three. "Li Hu Wu Sanlang, Shihu Huqing, and Pang Hu Shan Xiong! With Sima Liuyun, the Black Tiger Gang has sent four Grand Chief Stewards!"

His expression flickered, his heart pounding like a drum. Li Hu Wu Sanlang reached the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer half a month ago! Shihu Huqing is at the Perfection of the Third Layer! Pang Hu Shan Xiong is at the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer! And Sima Liuyun is at the Perfection of the Third Layer! If I faced such a lineup, I'd be killed in an instant. Even against a single Early or Mid-grade Fourth Layer fighter, I'd be pushed into a corner, and the slightest mistake would lead to defeat and death... Because these four are notoriously formidable! Not only are they masters of the Black Tiger Shattering Golden Claw, but each also wields one of the powerful Black Tiger Three Techniques. Their combat prowess is far greater than that of ordinary cultivators at the Perfection of the Third Layer or Early Stage of the Fourth Layer!

Lin Xuankong merely raised an eyebrow. Just as I suspected, this is indeed a trap set for the 'Conical Hat Guest.' It's likely that each time Sima Liuyun conducted a search, the other three powerhouses were hiding nearby! So what? With the Manluo Demon Pearl in hand, even if the Black Tiger Gang's Liy Ruofeng or Zhao Renxiong were here, I could definitely control the situation, whether to fight or flee! As for these Four Great Stewards, they're a perfect opportunity to test the might of this world's number one Ruyi Battle Armor!

As Lin Xuankong pondered, the Yin Talisman Sect disciples, still clutching their heads in pain, quickly retreated. This included Hu Shuo and Lin Jiao; none dared to remain, fearing involvement in the battle between the Black Tiger Gang's Four Great Stewards and the Conical Hat Guest!

Even Ma Jiang, who had been chasing Sima Liuyun, quickly halted his pursuit and retreated dozens of zhang. He glanced at the overwhelmingly menacing aura of the Black Tiger Gang's Four Great Stewards, his expression changing slightly. He couldn't help but shout, "Conical Hat Guest, the Black Tiger Gang has strength in numbers! There's no need to clash with them head-on now that they're prepared!"

Li Hu Wu Sanlang, his leopard-like eyes glaring, shouted coldly, "Ma Jiang, do you intend to represent the Yin Talisman Sect and provoke another war with our Black Tiger Gang?!"

Ma Jiang's eyes hardened as he stared at Wu Sanlang.

Just then, Lin Xuankong circulated his Qi Blood, and his slightly raspy voice rang out, "Thank you for the warning, but this is a grudge between me and the Black Tiger Gang. The Yin Talisman Sect need not interfere!"

With that said, he inverted his grip on the Profound Iron Rod and walked towards Li Hu Wu Sanlang, step by step.

At this, Ma Jiang, Hu Shuo, and the numerous retreating Yin Talisman Sect members watched with changing expressions. As he continuously retreated, Hu Shuo kept shaking his head. "The Four Great Stewards of the Black Tiger Gang's Great Marsh Hall have been famous for a long time. They are all exceptionally talented and incredibly powerful top-tier experts in Great Marsh Prefecture. The Conical Hat Guest is in grave danger!"

Chapter 87: The Ruyi Jingu Bang Shakes the World, Four Great Stewards Are As Insignificant as Clay Chickens and Pottery Dogs

At this moment, facing the formidable power of the Black Tiger Gang's Four Great Stewards, Hu Shuo and the others had already retreated at great speed. Hu Shuo, the red-faced Steward, was indeed kind-hearted. Seeing the pie-seller Old Zhang had fainted on the ground, he picked up the old man and urged his disciples to carry the other unconscious civilians, continuing to retreat further back!

At the street entrance, the Black Tiger Gang members who had retreated tens of zhang were initially filled with fear. But seeing the Four Great Stewards approaching, their expressions relaxed, and they looked on with hope.

Li Hu Wu Sanlang walked towards Lin Xuankong. The other three followed closely, circulating their Qi and Blood as they surrounded him. Among them, Li Hu Wu Sanlang and Shihu Hu Qing both began to

emit low tiger roars from within their bones. Their already tall statures suddenly grew even larger. Wu Sanlang became over four meters tall, his entire body swelling enormously, and his fierce claws extended over sixty centimeters, pitch black as ink! Beside him, Hu Qing's aura was equally ferocious. Their Mad Roar Bone Technique had clearly reached a profound level, vastly more formidable than Bearded and Zhao Dalong!

Sima Liuyun took a deep breath, his abdomen inflating like a balloon. Pang Hu Daxiong's whole body swelled up. He was already round and balloon-like, and now, using his Fierce Roar Technique, he became as round as if drawn with a compass, his limbs retracting! His Celestial Tiger Ferocious Roar Skill of the Transcendence Realm was evidently even deeper than Sima Liuyun's.

Standing not far away, Ma Jiang observed this scene with deep apprehension. He couldn't defeat any of these four Grand Chief Stewards individually. A careless mistake could lead to certain death! He looked worriedly at the Conical Hat Guest. Even if the guest is at the Early or Mid-grade of the Fourth Layer, this time will be hard to handle without expertly using his Twin Vine Demon Pearl! Otherwise, he will be defeated in an instant! Unfortunately, I came too hastily and should have notified the Chief Steward first...

At this very moment, "ROAR! ROAR!" Two terrible tiger roars exploded. Countless ripples instantly assaulted Lin Xuankong. If Lin Xuankong hadn't recently gained a fortune and replaced all his clothing with black python skin, merely these two tiger roars would have shattered all his clothes, mask, and conical hat, leaving him stark naked on the spot!

Simultaneously, Wu Sanlang and Hu Qing charged towards Lin Xuankong, each step they took leaving large pits in the ground! The Four Great Stewards' eyes showed determination. The Conical Hat Guest indeed had a great reputation, but his power and speed just now were only at the Late Stage of the Third Layer, not the Fourth Layer as the Hall Master had guessed. With such strength, if not for his Twin Vine Demon Pearl, any of the four were confident they could defeat him alone.

Charging forward, Wu Sanlang's leopard-like eyes widened. He swung his claws towards Lin Xuankong's already raised iron rod, shouting, "Die!"

At that exact instant, he saw the iron rod in the Conical Hat Guest's hand, over four chi long, suddenly extend, becoming fully five zhang long, its head swelling to the thickness of a waist! It smashed down on him like a giant mountain or a falling star, sending countless ripples through the air!

"Damn—" Originally over a zhang tall and formidable, Wu Sanlang's pupils contracted violently. He only had time to utter one word before the five-thousand-jin Ruyi Golden Cudgel smashed down on his head! His strong defense and the terrifying power of his Fierce Tiger Roar Bone offered no resistance whatsoever... He simply disappeared from the spot!

BOOM!

The Ruyi Rod smashed deep into the ground, a full three to four zhang deep. Where Wu Sanlang had stood, a large pit suddenly appeared, four to five zhang deep and several zhang wide! The pit was so large that a two-story wooden building from the side of the street could have been thrown into it. The entire long street shook violently, and a huge crack appeared, extending nearly a hundred zhang! The nearby Piaoxiang Tower shook a few times and then, with a crash, half of it collapsed!

This terrible tremor caused pots, bowls, cups, and rice bowls in restaurants and taverns several li away to jump and clatter. The diners stumbled, their faces changing drastically as they grabbed their heads and fled outside.

At the street entrance, in the pit, Wu Sanlang lay with severed tendons and fractured bones, a mangled mess. His upper body had vanished!

At the pit's edge, Lin Xuankong gripped his iron rod tightly and looked at Shihu Hu Qing behind him.

"..." Having rushed to within a zhang of Lin Xuankong's back, Shihu's eyes widened in shock. He suddenly stopped, not daring to move another step forward!

On either side, Pang Hu and Sima Liuyun, who had just finished their tiger roars and were inhaling, found their Qi in disarray, nearly choking! Wu Sanlang, a Grand Chief Steward at the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer, killed with one blow, and the long street had collapsed? What kind of weapon is this iron rod? Its power is so terrifying! The faces of the three Grand Chief Stewards changed dramatically; the determination in their eyes vanished, replaced entirely by horror!

"Retreat!" The three decisively retreated rapidly in different directions.

WHOOSH! The sound of the Ruyi Profound Iron Rod breaking through the air rose again. This time, Lin Xuankong didn't smash from above but unleashed all his power, sweeping the five-zhang-long Ruyi Profound Iron Rod horizontally!

SMACK! Shihu Hu Qing, the closest, was entangled by the Twin Vine Demon Pearl at his feet. Unable to dodge, he took the hit directly. After the man-thick iron rod swung past, his tough body bent grotesquely, snapping in two, his head touching his ankles!

Immediately after, the Twin Vine Demon Pearl entangling Shihu vanished, reappearing under the feet of the fleeing Sima Liuyun. On the other side, Pang Hu frantically swung his claws, attacking the Twin Vine Demon Pearl that had already entwined him! Lin Xuankong stared at the two and raised the iron rod.

"AWOOO~~~~" The two screamed wildly, channeling all their Qi and Blood to protect every part of their bodies.

BOOM! BOOM! After two more strikes, the two were completely silent, and two more huge pits appeared on the ground! Two enormous fissures reappeared, almost turning the whole long street into ruins. Piaoxiang Tower, already more than half collapsed, overturned completely into one of the huge pits, burying Pang Hu Daxiong!

At this moment, throughout the entire Great Marsh Prefecture, countless civilians and Martial Cultivators felt the continuous tremors under their feet. Countless people showed fear in their eyes, and those who reacted quickly had already started shouting, "It's an earthquake, run!" Some abandoned their wives and daughters, rushing out of their houses without a backward glance. People on the streets rushed into houses to rescue their children. Others dashed into their houses to retrieve hidden silver taels. Especially in the dozen or so streets near Yangchang Street, where the shaking was strongest, countless civilians fled in panic, as if the end of the world had arrived!

And at the entrance of Yangchang Street, it was deathly silent! In the middle of the street entrance, only the figure holding the iron rod reversed remained!

The fight, from beginning to end: Lin Xuankong, four strikes, one breath of time! In just one breath, of the Black Tiger Gang's Four Great Stewards, who had dominated Great Marsh for years, three were dead and one severely wounded. The latter was only because Lin Xuankong intended to leave a living witness! The powerful bodies and defensive strength of Martial Cultivators at Third Layer Perfection and Fourth Layer Early Stage, even with the Demon Vine's assistance, were surprisingly fragile under the absolute terrifying might of the Ruyi Golden Armor!

In the next moment, Lin Xuankong retrieved his iron rod. He took Sima Liuyun's Exorcism Boots, then landed beside Shihu, who was bent in two. Lifting him, Lin Xuankong looked towards the trembling Black Tiger Gang members. "Tell Zhao Renxiong to stop searching for me everywhere. Otherwise, for every person he captures, I will kill one Black Tiger Gang Leader. I will kill until the Black Tiger Gang has no one left! Four months from now, on the eighth of September, I will go to Hill City to find him. If he wants revenge for his son, I will seek him out to settle the score for the commoners he has killed! We will clear all accounts then!"

The hundreds of Black Tiger Gang members and Leaders, along with Qian Liu and the other four Stewards, trembled upon hearing this, utterly at a loss. Some of the more timid ones even retreated, inadvertently falling into the huge fissures created by the Ruyi Rod.

Lin Xuankong then leaped up and floated away.

Now, the street entrance was left in shambles, along with those few enormous pits! Ma Jiang stood nearby, looking at the scene, speechless for a long time.

Standing afar, Lin Jiao and the more than two hundred Yin Talisman Sect disciples were all dumbstruck. Even those disciples who had previously been clutching their heads in pain now lowered their hands, staring blankly at the three large pits at the street entrance and the remnants of Piaoxiang Tower that had fallen into one of them!

Steward Hu Shuo quickly ran to Ma Jiang's side. Recalling his earlier remarks about the Conical Hat Guest being in danger, he was overwhelmed with mixed emotions. "The Black Tiger Gang's Four Great Stewards... just... just gone like that? They were the Four Great Stewards, second only to the Vice Hall Master of the Black Tiger Gang! From now on, the Black Tiger Gang Great Marsh Hall will only have one Grand Chief Steward left?"

"What kind of damned weapon was that iron rod! It was monstrously powerful, incredibly fierce, utterly insane!" Lin Jiao, also snapping back to reality, couldn't help but shout loudly.

In the distance, Jiang Yuran, clad in a moon-white Daoist robe, led four Yin Talisman Sect Grand Chief Stewards and six Stewards, leaping towards them. Jiang Yuran frowned slightly at the ruined streets and the pits that looked as if created by meteor strikes. "What happened? Didn't Sima Liuyun bring people here to cause trouble?"

"Sima Liuyun? Not just Sima Liuyun. Wu Sanlang and Shan Xiong also died in those pits!" Hu Shuo mumbled.

Xu Bei glanced at Ma Jiang, who had walked to the edge of a pit, his expression changing. "All dead? Steward Ma... he actually managed to kill three Black Tiger Gang Grand Chief Stewards all by himself?"

Several Yin Talisman Sect Grand Chief Stewards, and Stewards like Zhao Yufei, immediately turned to look at Ma Jiang upon hearing this.

Ma Jiang's face was a picture of disbelief. "Xu Bei, I'll bet ten thousand silver taels that you're deliberately trying to humiliate me!" He then added, "However, I can tell you all one thing: come the eighth of September this year, there's going to be a massive spectacle! It will absolutely be a sensational, world-shaking event, watched by countless millions!"

Chapter 88: A Quick Leap in Strength, This Monstrous Genius is Too Monstrous

In the dense forest near Lishui Street, Lin Xuankong gazed thoughtfully at the few large trees before him. Just over two months ago, Ma Xiong and several members of the Black Tiger Gang were buried under these trees. Now, the trees' crowns were particularly lush, standing tall like canopies!

On the treetops, a few small birds chirped. One of them looked rather familiar, seemingly the very bird he had released from Ma Xiong's birdcage!

He recalled how he used to be terrified when facing a Martial Artist like Ma Xiong, who hadn't even entered Transcendence. Now, however, the person he was about to bury under these trees was Shihu Huqing, the Grand Chief Steward of the Black Tiger Gang, renowned and highly esteemed in the Great Marsh Prefecture!

At this moment, Lin Xuankong was quite satisfied. Shihu also had a piece of Exorcism Equipment on him—the Wandering Dragon Exorcism Breastplate. During their fight, the battle had shifted dramatically, and Shihu was defeated before he could even activate the breastplate!

Moreover, Shihu had forty Nourishing Spirit Pills on him. He had already begun using these pills after reaching the Perfection of the Third Layer.

These were Nourishing Spirit Pills, their effects similar to that of Mid-grade Divine Protection Pills!

Martial Cultivators with average backgrounds, like those Loose Cultivators, including young ladies like Xiao Xiuyi, could usually only buy Lower Grade Divine Protection Elixirs outside! Although these elixirs were quite beneficial for cultivating at the Perfection of the Third Layer and the Fourth Layer, their effects were significantly inferior to those of Mid-grade Divine Protection Pills and Nourishing Spirit Pills!

It was said that only Middle-tier Alchemists in Kyoto could refine a small amount of such Nourishing Spirit Pills. And only a high-ranking official like Shihu, a Grand Chief Steward of the Black Tiger Gang with his connections, could afford to purchase them from Kyoto at a considerable cost!

Having obtained such a Treasure Medicine, Lin Xuankong was naturally overjoyed. He was currently in the late stage of the Third Layer and would reach Perfection in a few days, at which point he would definitely need the Nourishing Spirit Pills!

Of course, Lin Xuankong had long since obtained the refining method for the Divine Protection Elixir, but he had been too busy with cultivation and various other affairs to buy a pill furnace or medicine cauldron!

[Divine Protection Elixir: Entry Level 0/20]

Even if he wanted to refine them, it would likely take some time to advance to a Middle-tier Alchemist. Now, unexpectedly obtaining so many extremely precious Nourishing Spirit Pills was a pleasant surprise indeed!

Additionally, Lin Xuankong was somewhat surprised to find that Shihu Huqing did not know the Nourishing Heart Method for the Black Soul Wondrous Jade. According to Shihu, only the Hall Master and Vice Hall Master were qualified to wear the Black Soul Wondrous Jade, and only they, along with someone like Zhao Dalong, the Hall Master's son, knew the Heart Method.

However, under Lin Xuankong's combined soft and hard tactics, Shihu, before his death, gave him some good news: Vice Hall Master Liy Ruofeng was going to attend the Demon Slaying Conference. Not only did Liy Ruofeng know the Nourishing Heart Method, but he also carried the Black Soul Wondrous Jade—the Jade Gourd—with him. Additionally, Liy Ruofeng would be bringing the famous Nine-Scaly Armor to the conference!

This made Lin Xuankong look forward to the Demon Slaying Conference even more: the Nine-Scaly Armor, the second Black Soul Wondrous Jade, the Nourishing Heart Method...

Although Liy Ruofeng was in the late stage of the Fourth Layer, his power would be suppressed to the Perfection of the Third Layer within the Demon-Suppressing Valley. With his numerous rare treasures and Great Xia's First Battle Armor, Lin Xuankong was confident in dealing with him!

After burying Shihu near Ma Xiong and the others, Lin Xuankong, carrying his numerous gains, headed quickly toward Wutong Village. His eyes were full of battle intent. In four months, on the eighth day of September, his strength should be at least in the late stage of the Fifth Layer or even the Sixth Layer. At that time, wielding the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod, Aurora Shining Heaven, Soul-Extinction Celestial Thunder Divine Technique, Twin Vine Demon Pearl, and Manluo Demon Pearl, let's see how many breaths Zhao Renxiong and the Black Tiger Gang's experts can withstand against him!

As for the upcoming Demon Slaying Conference, he hoped to achieve great results, which would make him even more formidable, allowing him to kill with greater satisfaction!

「...」

At the Black Tiger Gang Great Marsh Hall, several Stewards stood pale-faced below. Zhao Renxiong, the Hill City Hall Master who had stirred up the entire Great Marsh Prefecture, sat imposingly at the head, twirling an ink-black Demon Pearl. At this moment, however, his face had a slightly ashen tint, and his cyan eyes glowed with fierce anger.

Everyone said the Cyan-Eyed Tiger could turn the Great Marsh Prefecture upside down, yet before he could do that, the Conical Hat Guest had already done it!

In today's battle, all four renowned Stewards of the Black Tiger Gang perished.

In today's battle, the Great Marsh Prefecture City shook to its foundations.

It was conceivable that from this day forward, the name of the Conical Hat Guest would undoubtedly resound throughout the Great Marsh, its power increasing severalfold...

Vice Hall Master Liy Ruofeng's face was equally ashen. He looked at the Stewards and frowned, "Are you saying that, based on his movements, the Conical Hat Guest should only be in the late stage of the Third Layer?"

Steward Qian Liu swallowed hard, recalling Steward Ma Sandao's tragic death for misjudging the Conical Hat Guest's strength. He felt that guessing the Conical Hat Guest's cultivation was no trivial matter!

He hesitated a bit and said, "That should be the case, but the five of us are not completely certain. However, his weapon's power is terrifying, far surpassing any set of Battle Armor I've ever seen. Of this, I am completely certain!"

Having said that, this dignified Steward of the Black Tiger Gang could not help but recall the immense, earth-shaking rod he had witnessed, his face once again showing strong fear.

Another Steward also showed fear in his eyes. "I've heard that among the great figures in Kyoto, there are eight sets of Battle Armor, each weighing over seventeen hundred catties, known as the Eight Famous Weapons of Great Xia! However... With all due respect, even those Eight Famous Weapons of Great Xia should be far inferior to that terrifying rod, which can extend more than thirteen meters in length! That rod that glowed with a dark golden light,"

Chapter 89: Rapid Progress in a Moment, This Monster is Too Monstrous_2

It was completely unlike any mundane weapon; how could mere human strength possibly resist it?

Four Grand Chief Stewards were defeated in a single breath!

Liy Ruofeng frowned and looked at Zhao Renxiong.

"Among Sima Liuyun's four, the weakest is at the Perfection of the Third Layer, and each possesses profound Black Tiger Skills.

"Even I, with my Battle Armor and Black Soul Wondrous Jade, would need at least a full breath's time to kill any one of them!

"This Conical Hat Guest managed to kill four people in a single breath... Aside from the control exerted by the Twin Vine Demon Pearl, that terrifying long staff played the most crucial role!

"But can a weapon truly exist in this world that so far surpasses the power of armors like the Nine-Scaly Armor and the Cyan Tiger Battle Armor? Such a weapon..."

Zhao Renxiong suddenly clenched the Demon Pearl in his hand, a trace of hatred and hope glinting in his eyes.

"If we were to obtain such a weapon and present it to the Great Xia Royal Family, we would surely gain their trust and support.

"Then the Black Tiger Gang becoming the second Sect of Great Xia would be just around the corner. Our Cultivation of the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Layers would then no longer be hampered by worries about obtaining the Royal Family's Meridian Opening Treasure Elixirs!"

Having said this, he rose to his feet and proclaimed loudly:

"Pass my orders!

"First, increase the personnel for the upcoming investigation, but ensure it is conducted in secret!

"Second, raise the reward for the Conical Hat Guest's head and any information about him to one hundred thousand taels!

"Third, announce to every single person in every corner of Great Marsh Prefecture that I, Cyan-Eyed Tiger Zhao Renxiong, will be waiting for the Conical Hat Guest in Hill City on the eighth of September!

"If he is not a coward, if he truly dares to come to the Hill City Branch, then I, Zhao Renxiong, will challenge him to a one-on-one duel in front of the countless Martial Cultivators of Great Marsh Prefecture. I will not rely on the strength of others, nor will we gang up on him!

"Spread the word! I, Zhao Renxiong, do as I say and will not break my word. It is only a matter of whether the Conical Hat Guest is a true man!"

Qian Liu and several other Stewards immediately clasped their fists in salute, all responding in affirmation.

After they had left the hall,

A fierce light flickered in Zhao Renxiong's cyan eyes.

"I want to see if this Conical Hat Guest can withstand the combined assault of three Hall Masters and the Gang Leader—four Late Stage Fifth Layer experts—come the eighth of September!

"I want to see if this Conical Hat Guest can withstand the simultaneous assault of four sets of Battle Armor, four Black Soul Wondrous Jades, and four Demon Pearls!

"If he dares to come... A mere Late Stage Third Layer? Even if he were Late Stage Fourth Layer, or even Late Stage Fifth Layer, the eighth of September will be his doom!"

Vice Hall Master Liy Ruofeng's expression shifted upon hearing this, and he laughed, "Hall Master Zhao truly has the makings of a great hero, a man destined for great accomplishments. Ruo Feng is deeply impressed!"

...

「Three days later,」

Lin Xuankong stood by the pond in the backyard, looking at Lii Xiaolan, who was dressed in green.

Lii Xiaolan then gave a light leap towards the pond and began to walk leisurely across its surface.

The surface of the water where it met her boots remained perfectly smooth, as if she were treading on solid ice rather than liquid water.

A few playful fish darted around beneath her boot soles. The scene was like something out of an Immortal Trace!

Lii Xiaolan said as she walked,

"For a Martial Cultivator to unleash their full potential, the power must originate from the legs.

"If the ground beneath you gives way when you exert force with your legs, a significant portion of your explosive power will be lost.

"However, if you can improve your control over your Qi Blood, channeling it out from your feet to solidify the ground beneath them, you can naturally ensure that every step is firm, allowing you to unleash your full strength!

"Mastering this will significantly impact not only your current explosive power but also your explosive power when you reach the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Layers!

"Generally, Martial Cultivators at the Mid-grade Fourth Layer, through long-term consumption of Divine Protection Elixirs, will have enhanced their Heart Thought intensity enough to achieve Walking on Water!

"If you cannot achieve Walking on Water, then even if you advance to the Mid-grade Fourth Layer, or even the Fifth or Sixth Layer, you'll merely be a half-baked practitioner of those realms!"

With that, she leaped lightly and landed on the edge of the pond.

"From today onward, you must take one Divine Protection Elixir or Nourishing Spirit Pill daily to gradually improve your Heart Thought's control over your Qi Blood.

"Consuming these elixirs and the gradual improvement of your Heart Thought will be a part of every single day of your Martial Dao cultivation journey!

"Improving Heart Thought control over Qi Blood is not something achieved overnight. Projecting Qi Blood outside the body is exceedingly difficult.

"Without consuming hundreds, or even thousands, of Divine Protection Elixirs and Nourishing Spirit Pills, it is virtually impossible to achieve!

"I myself had to consume hundreds of such pills before I could manage Walking on Water. I estimate you'll also need to take several hundred before you can do so.

"After all, enhancing Heart Thought intensity isn't something that can be improved solely through Comprehension and Talent. It relies primarily on these medicinal elixirs!

"Oh, and by the way, you absolutely must not overconsume Divine Protection Elixirs or Nourishing Spirit Pills. Otherwise, their potent medicinal properties could harm your Heart Spirit, forcing you to recuperate for several months before you can resume your cultivation!"

Having finished speaking, she adopted the air of a little master, gave Lin Xuankong a nod, and then headed towards the wooden building.

Once Lii Xiaolan had entered the wooden building, Lin Xuankong recalled the sight of her Walking on Water, and a look of anticipation filled his eyes.

He took out a Nourishing Spirit Pill and thought to himself:

Improving control over Qi Blood and projecting it outside the body is crucial for increasing explosive power and overall strength. But it relies solely on elixirs and requires consuming hundreds, even thousands of them... The Young Lady made it sound so incredibly difficult. I wonder if that's truly the case. The Young Lady said it took her over a year and hundreds of pills! How many will I need to consume, and how long will it take before I can achieve Walking on Water?

As he pondered, he placed the Nourishing Spirit Pill into his mouth.

Instantly, the pill dissolved into a cool liquid that flowed down into his abdomen.

Soon, he felt his spirits lift. Every one of his senses became sharper, and the objects within his field of vision appeared exceptionally clear and vibrant.

Chapter 90: Momentous Increase in Strength, This Monster is Too Monstrous_3

The most unique aspect was that after consuming this extremely precious Nourishing Spirit Pill, his perception of the Qi Blood within him became much clearer; it was as if every strand of Qi Blood now had a closer connection to his Heart Spirit!

Immediately after, a line of large text suddenly appeared in his mind:

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 1/300]

In the next moment, the four large words [Vigorous in Old Age] flickered slightly, and the text changed:

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 1/6]

Lin Xuankong was momentarily stunned. Just by taking this Nourishing Spirit Pill, his Life Plate had actually registered a 1-point increase in Heart Thought strength!

Moreover, his Life Plate now displayed his current Heart Thought Grade. Most critically, it seemed [Vigorous in Old Age] could also accelerate the enhancement of his Heart Thought strength!

A moment later, as the medicinal effects gradually took hold, his Heart Thought strength continuously increased:

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 1.5/6]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 2/6]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 2.4/6]

Finally, it became:

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier First Grade 3/6]

His Mortal Tier First Grade Heart Thought strength had progressed to the halfway point!

At this point, Lin Xuankong carefully sensed his condition. Indeed, his five senses had become much sharper; he could even hear the wingbeats of a mosquito flying past the wall tens of meters away.

Additionally, the connection between every strand of Qi Blood within him and his Heart Spirit was now immeasurably tighter than before he took the elixir!

Overjoyed, Lin Xuankong quietly circulated his Qi Blood, attempting to channel it towards his feet.

The next moment, BOOM!

A strand of Qi Blood suddenly burst through the soles of his boots, instantly shattering the bricks beneath his feet.

Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up with intense joy. Could it be? Is directing Qi Blood outside the body this simple? The progress of my Mortal Tier First Grade Heart Thought has only reached the halfway mark, yet I can already direct Qi Blood outside my body! Previously, I could only circulate Qi Blood within my body; it was absolutely impossible to expel it!

Lin Xuankong mused, With the Life Plate's assistance, the speed at which my Heart Thought improves its control over Qi Blood is extraordinarily fast! Unfortunately, the Yin Talisman Technique clearly states, and the Young Lady also instructed, that elixirs like the Divine Protection Elixir and Nourishing Spirit Pill possess mystical effects and potent medicinal strength, so they can only be taken once daily. If not for this, I would definitely take another to see if my Heart Thought strength could immediately break through to Mortal Tier Second Grade! However, even if I can only take one per day... with [Vigorous in

Old Age] boosting my progress, my Heart Thought strength will improve many, many times faster than any other Martial Cultivator!

...

On the Second Layer of the wooden building, Lii Xiaolan was leisurely leaning by the window, just about to munch on some sunflower seeds. However, when she saw Lin Xuankong direct his Qi Blood and shatter the bricks, the few sunflower seeds she was holding unconsciously fell to the ground.

Her small mouth fell slightly agape, her mind filled with question marks. What did I just see?! Directing Qi Blood outside the body... Shouldn't that require consuming at least hundreds of elixirs to achieve?! Could it be that the Nourishing Spirit Pill is that much stronger than the Divine Protection Elixir? No, no matter how strong the Nourishing Spirit Pill is, a single elixir couldn't possibly cause an immediate Metamorphosis of the Heart Spirit! But this monster... he just took one Nourishing Spirit Pill, and it seems he can already direct Qi Blood outside his body? His Talent is great, so it's understandable that he has no bottlenecks at the First, Second, and Third Layers of cultivation. But increasing Heart Thought strength and improving Qi Blood control relies on consuming God-Protecting Elixirs! Could there actually be a Talent specifically for consuming elixirs in this world? No way, I must have seen it wrong!

She blinked her lovely eyes, looking again carefully.

A moment later, her lovely eyes widened in disbelief!