

Stronger 91

Chapter 91: Advancing to the Fourth Level is Too Easy, the 60th Birthday Second Talent

「The next day,」

From the second-floor window, Lii Xiaolan, having just awoken, glanced outside, and her lovely eyes immediately widened again. Her clear, bright eyes were filled with disbelief. At this moment, Lin Xuankong was strolling about the backyard pool. On the calm water surface, aside from the occasional faint ripples stirred by a gentle breeze, the water where his feet landed remained smooth and flat, without any sign of sinking. Seeing this, Lii Xiaolan's feelings were incredibly complex.

It was one thing for this guy to have no bottlenecks in the first, second, or third layers, but why was the process of enhancing his Heart Thought and explosive power with pills also so unnaturally smooth and fast! It was inhumane!

At this moment, Lin Xuankong stood on the water's surface, a smile playing on his lips. Although he had managed to project his Qi Blood outside his body the previous day, he still couldn't quite control his weightlessness when walking on water. He had stumbled and splashed into the pool several times, much to the amusement of the young lady on the second floor.

Today, after taking the second Nourishing Spirit Pill, he could finally walk on water effortlessly, without causing any ripples.

Moreover, his Realm had finally progressed from the Perfection of the Third Layer to the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer, reaching the same realm as the Grand Chief Stewards of the Yin Talisman Sect.

[Realm: Transcendence Fourth Layer Early Stage]

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Entering the Hall 226/300]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Attained Minor Success 1/280]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier Second Grade 0/12]

Lin Xuankong slightly raised his hand. A Divine Thunder, as thick as a thumb, instantly appeared in his palm, winding and weaving around his five fingers. This Minor Success Divine Thunder, though the same thickness as one at the Entering the Hall level, was at least four to five times brighter—dazzlingly so—and pulsed with terrifying power.

One could only imagine how much its power would increase if such Divine Thunder were used to unleash techniques like Aurora Shining Heaven or Divine Thunder Illusion!

Delighted, Lin Xuankong took out the Ruyi Profound Gold Rod. Grasping it with both hands, the entire rod instantly blazed with light, twenty-four Minor Success Divine Thunders coiling around it. He took a step, swinging the rod over the water's surface. If I were to strike Wu Sanlang, Pang Hu, or Sima Liuyun with this Ruyi Profound Gold Rod, now wreathed in Minor Success Divine Thunders, they'd be reduced to dust in a single blow!

At the second-floor window, seeing this scene, Lii Xiaolan sighed helplessly. Alas, this guy even has a talent for taking pills! In the future, in this household, my position... will my position definitely be beneath his?

Moments later, Lin Xuankong finished his cultivation and walked towards the wooden building. Lii Xiaolan leaned on the window sill, her eyes twinkling. "Oh my, I'm a bit hungry!"

Lin Xuankong looked at Lii Xiaolan, a smile appearing on his face. Now that he had reached the Fourth Layer, he couldn't help but reflect. How much had this young lady helped him on his cultivation journey? If it weren't for her, the grass on his grave would already be three feet tall!

"Then I'll go buy some stuffed cakes for you," Lin Xuankong said, walking out. "Old Zhang's health is quite good; after taking several doses of the medicine I gave him, he started setting up his stall again yesterday!"

Watching him go, Lii Xiaolan's heart skipped a beat, the corners of her mouth curling up, her eyes narrowing into crescents. He didn't get arrogant just because he reached the Fourth Layer. He's a good husband!

After Lin Xuankong left, her eyes flickered as she thought to herself:

My dear husband has already reached the Fourth Layer. His explosive power will only grow stronger. I must specifically temper his head and bones to enhance their endurance! Otherwise, with full-force outbursts, the bones slowly nurtured through the first three layers won't be able to withstand it!

I hope... his future cultivation will be smooth and increasingly rapid!

After all, on the eighth of September, my husband is going to challenge the Cyan-Eyed Tiger, a cultivator at the Late Stage of the Fifth Layer, in front of millions in Great Marsh Prefecture!

By then, will my dear husband return victorious and become the most envied hero in all of Great Marsh Prefecture?

Thinking of this, Lii Xiaolan felt a mix of joy and worry in her heart.

「Several days later,」

At the entrance of the Feng Family Mansion on Peace Street, over a hundred Martial Cultivators were crowded around the Feng Family Steward's table, ready to place bets. In some distant food and wine establishments, many Independent Martial Cultivators were pointing in this direction.

Lin Xuankong looked at Steward Lin Jiao, who had brought him over. "You're betting that you'll come out alive? How many silver taels are you planning to wager?"

Lin Jiao was startled, then grinned widely. "I don't have much confidence I'll make it out alive! I'm just planning to bet two thousand silver taels here at the Feng Family's today!"

This Lin Jiao and Steward Hu seem like decent people. If I can lend a hand in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, I naturally will, Lin Xuankong thought, then said aloud, "Why not wager more? If you're about to die anyway, keeping silver is useless! If you're gone, it's all over!"

Lin Jiao was speechless for a moment. "I have a sixty-something-year-old mother and a brother who isn't quite right in the head to support. I must leave them some silver to live on!"

Lin Xuankong frowned slightly upon hearing this. "Don't worry, you should be able to come out of the dangerous Demon-Suppressing Valley alive!"

Suddenly, a Martial Cultivator beside them sighed, "Alas, with countless Demons in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, getting out alive is no easy feat!"

"That's right! If you ask me, the only ones almost guaranteed to make it out of the Demon-Suppressing Valley are probably the top fifty who possess a full set of Battle Armor!" someone else chimed in softly.

"Do you think the Conical Hat Guest will participate in the Demon Slaying Conference?" another person asked.

At the mention of the Conical Hat Guest, the surrounding Martial Cultivators immediately became animated, discussing how the Conical Hat Guest had slain the Four Great Stewards in an instant.

"Speaking of the Conical Hat Guest, the power of his weapon is truly terrifying. I was asleep at the time, and the wooden building shook so violently I nearly thought it was an earthquake!"

"Heh, I tell you, if that Conical Hat Guest enters the Demon-Suppressing Valley, he could rampage through it relying on that weapon alone!"

As everyone was discussing, Lin Xuankong and Lin Jiao had already reached the Feng Family Grand Steward's table.

Lin Jiao wagered two thousand silver taels, while Lin Xuankong placed a large chest on the table. "One thousand taels of gold, six hundred portions of Nine Revolutions Qi Replenishing Soup, all betting that I, Lin Xuankong, will come out alive!"

The moment he spoke, the surrounding Martial Cultivators, who had been chattering amongst themselves, instantly fell silent, their gazes fixed in astonishment on the items on the table.

"A thousand taels of gold! Six hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup!"

"Lin Xuankong... who is he? Is he very strong? Are his chances of survival high?"

"Six hundred portions of Qi Replenishing Soup! Good heavens, that's so many medicinal ingredients! It would be far better to leave them for his family. If he dies in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, wouldn't it be a colossal loss!"

A noisy discussion erupted among the crowd. The Grand Steward of the Feng Family looked at Lin Xuankong. "Yin Talisman Sect Silver Jade Steward Lin Xuankong, fifty-nine years old, Second Layer Mid-grade. He once killed three Tier Two Demon People using the Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand. Ranked 628. The odds are 1 to 22. Are you sure you want to wager all these items?"

Lin Xuankong shook his head and took a Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand from the box. "I'll bet another Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand!"

Hearing this, Lin Jiao's face changed dramatically. "Steward Lin, if you wager your Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hand, what will you use to fight the Demons? Don't be impulsive! This is a huge mistake, a terrible mistake!"

The expressions of the surrounding Martial Cultivators shifted, and they shook their heads one after another. Twenty-two times the payout... With such a low survival rate, it's almost certain death! Betting anything is just giving it away to the Feng Family!

Lin Xuankong looked at the Feng Family steward. "What, you can't bet equipment?"

Feng Cai, a steward at the Mid-grade of the Fourth Layer, frowned. The man before him was indeed the first to wager equipment, and Exorcism Equipment at that, which was extremely valuable. Although this man's strength was low and he was almost certain to die, if he somehow managed to come out alive... compensating him with twenty-two Wandering Dragon Exorcism Hands would cost the Feng Family—the foremost of the Four Great Families of Great Marsh—half their fortune!

"Bet, why not bet!" a voice called from the Feng Family courtyard.

A handsome young gentleman, cradling a small black cat with fur as smooth as satin, walked to the entrance, a smile on his face. "Since our Feng Family is open for business, how could we refuse anyone?"

We certainly welcome every fellow practitioner! Feng Cai, issue a receipt and apply your seal for this Lin Xuankong!"

The handsome gentleman smiled. The black cat in his arms regarded Lin Xuankong with its gemstone-like eyes, tilting its head slightly.

Moments later, Lin Xuankong walked away with the receipt and seal, the anxious Lin Jiao by his side.

「In the Feng Family Mansion,」

Steward Feng Cai walked into the courtyard with the young gentleman from the Feng Family. Feng Cai cupped his hands. "Sixth Young Master, this Exorcism Equipment is incredibly valuable. What if that Lin Xuankong actually manages to survive?"

The young gentleman gently stroked the black cat in his arms. "Have you forgotten that I will also be participating in the Demon Slaying Conference? What's my rank?"

Feng Cai cupped his hands. "Sixth Young Master, you are at the Mid-grade of the Fourth Layer, possess the Seven-Phase Battle Armor, and are ranked tenth, just behind Vice Hall Master Liy Ruofeng of the Black Tiger Gang!"

The young gentleman smiled. "Given that, would dealing with someone ranked 628 in the Demon-Suppressing Valley be difficult for me?"

Feng Cai's eyes widened at these words. He paused, then smiled. "Never mind one Lin Xuankong; even a thousand of them would be no match for you, Young Master!"

The Sixth Young Master of the Feng Family walked towards the inner hall, still holding the black cat. "For those who have recently bet on themselves to survive with odds greater than five to one, compile a list of their names and prepare their portraits.

"Once in the valley, if they aren't devoured by Demons, I, along with several of our family's protectors, will secretly eliminate them near the gathering points within the Demon-Suppressing Valley!"

"Ants like Lin Xuankong, dreaming of making profits several or even dozens of times over from my Feng Family—it's pure delusion, utterly laughable!"

Standing at the entrance of the inner hall, the Sixth Young Master of the Feng Family paused.

It's a pity no one knows the true identity of the Conical Hat Guest, nor whether he will participate in the Demon Slaying Conference! I hope to encounter him in the Demon-Suppressing Valley. This Soul-Devouring Spirit Cat, which I've secretly nurtured for over a decade, possesses mysterious superpowers. Anyone whose Heart Thought has not reached Mortal Tier Fourth Grade will find it impossible to resist! If I can encounter the Conical Hat Guest and ensnare his Heart Thought, I can surely obtain his weapon and any Demon Pearls he has. Then, my Feng Family will be destined for great prosperity!

「Returning to his wooden building,」

The image of the Feng Family's young master and his black cat surfaced in Lin Xuankong's mind, and his eyebrows gradually furrowed. That black cat appeared ordinary, yet its eyes were agile and full of Spirituality... Moreover, for it to be held by a young master of the Feng Family, the foremost of the Four Great Families, it couldn't be an ordinary pet; it had to be an Exotic Beast with strange abilities! The various families and sects of the Great Marsh Hundred Cities indeed harbored numerous experts, each with their unique and marvelous techniques. Although I've already reached the Early Stage of the Fourth Layer, once I'm in the Demon-Suppressing Valley, I must be exceedingly cautious and avoid recklessness!

As he was deep in thought, Lii Xiaolan's voice suddenly came from behind him, "What are you thinking about? Are you pondering what delicious food you'll have for your sixtieth birthday tomorrow?"

At her words, Lin Xuankong turned to look at Lii Xiaolan. We're clearly in the same Realm, so how can she still sneak up behind me so silently? Also, am I really turning sixty?

"I'm turning sixty?" Lin Xuankong's eyes showed a hint of joy.

"Yes, your sixtieth birthday is coming up!" Lii Xiaolan said with a smile.

Lin Xuankong thought for a moment. According to his birthdate, at 3:45 AM tomorrow, he would indeed turn sixty. He had been so busy with cultivation and various other matters recently that he'd completely forgotten to check! Sixty years old!

Under the effect of the Vigorous in Old Age Life Plate, will my cultivation speed increase dramatically again, perhaps to sixtyfold? Will there be other mystical changes?

"How do you plan to celebrate your sixtieth birthday? A grand feast, a hearty celebration?" Lii Xiaolan asked.

Lin Xuankong shook his head slightly. "We'll just order a few more dishes. Having you celebrate with me is enough. At most, we can invite Steward Ma, Steward Hu, Lin Jiao, Yang Mountain, Li Er, and Little Hu over."

Lii Xiaolan nodded immediately. "Alright! Then I'll make sure to order plenty of dishes!"

Once Lii Xiaolan returned to her room, Lin Xuankong sat on his small bed, waiting expectantly. If my cultivation speed truly increases sixtyfold, it means that whether it's the Pine Crane Longevity Technique, the Yin Talisman Technique, or my Heart Thought enhancement, everything will accelerate again...

Time trickled by as Lin Xuankong waited in anticipation.

「Night fell,」

The moon hung at the corner of the eaves.

「First watch, second watch...」

Until finally, the clang of the fifth watch drum echoed through the street.

Suddenly, Lin Xuankong felt the words 'Vigorous in Old Age' within his Brain Mansion Life Plate erupt with a brilliant purple-gold light. In the next instant, the progress of his various Cultivation Techniques abruptly changed. At the same time, several new lines of text appeared within his Brain Mansion Life Plate, introducing a second talent associated with his Life Plate.

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Lin Xuankong observed the many changes within his Brain Mansion, a look of delight spreading across his face. After turning sixty, his Cultivation Speed had indeed increased by sixty times!

Moreover, not only had the progress of his various Cultivation Techniques changed and a second Life Plate Talent emerged, but a Cultivation Technique called 'Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique' had also appeared within his Life Plate. Proficiency and progress in skills like Culinary Arts and Embroidery were now listed as well.

Life Plate: [Vigorous in Old Age]

First Talent of the Life Plate: [Old and Wise] Increases Cultivation Speed based on age; current age 60, Cultivation Speed increased by sixty times.

Second Talent of the Life Plate: [Wives, Children, Elders, and Youngsters] Continuously gain comprehension and proficiency in Cultivation Techniques and skills of wives and children. Wives and children are influenced by your Life Plate, increasing their Cultivation Speed by thirty times. (This influence on targets can be canceled).

Perfect Qi Blood: 3,689/500,000

[Realm: Transcendence Fourth Layer Early Stage]

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Entering the Hall 247/250]

[Yin Talisman Technique: Attained Minor Success 25/232]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier Third Grade 6/10]

[Divine Protection Elixir: Entry Level 0/16]

Wife Lii Xiaolan: Primordial Strange Vein

[Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique: Attained Minor Success 6/450]

[Embroidery: 6/10]

[Culinary Arts: 4/10]

Originally, to advance the Pine Skill, the required proficiency was 300, but now it only took 250 to advance!

Other Cultivation Techniques, such as the Yin Talisman Technique and Heart Thought, had their proficiency requirements reduced significantly! This meant that as long as he cultivated daily without fail, the time needed to elevate his techniques to the Returning to the Essence Realm and advance to higher Tiers would be greatly shortened!

By the eighth of September, his strength would absolutely have a great chance of reaching Fifth Layer Perfection or even higher, becoming one of the top experts in Great Marsh Prefecture, surpassing Zhao Renxiong's Realm!

After reveling in his delight for a moment, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but ponder.

This Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, Embroidery, and Culinary Arts... are these due to my second Talent, [Wives, Children, Elders, and Youngsters]?

So, the proficiency in the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, Embroidery, and Culinary Arts actually comes from my wife, Lii Xiaolan?

But this Culinary Arts skill is a bit much. The Young Lady can't cook at all! So, 'Culinary Arts' must refer to the ability to discern and appreciate fine food!

Just as this occurred to him, Lin Xuankong felt a surge of extensive comprehension regarding embroidery and discerning fine food flood his mind, especially numerous insights and secrets about the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique.

These insights and secrets forcibly entrenched themselves in Lin Xuankong's memory, continuously pouring in.

He couldn't help but frown slightly, closing his eyes to perceive.

It took several cups of tea's worth of time before Lin Xuankong opened his eyes again, a look of clarity and joy in them.

No wonder the Young Lady always managed to appear so quietly behind me.

It turned out that the Cultivation Technique she cultivated, which consumed a considerable amount of Qi Blood, was this Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique. It allowed her to conceal her presence and approach targets silently. The higher her Cultivation Level, the greater the concealment. At extremely High Realms, she could even transform into an invisible primordial form!

Moreover, this Cultivation Technique could unleash extremely fierce attacks in a very short time, pursuing a one-hit kill. It was an incredibly powerful and mystical Cultivation Technique!

However, this Cultivation Technique could only be practiced by Cultivators with a Primordial Strange Vein!

Thinking of this, Lin Xuankong secretly activated the Heart Method of the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique. He discovered that while he could indeed use his Qi Blood to conceal his presence and enhance his Explosive Power according to the Primordial Heart Method, he could not convert his Qi Blood into Primordial Qi Blood!

He thought. My Young Lady must be a genius with a special Strange Vein! Other Martial Cultivators can't practice this Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, nor can they obtain Primordial Qi Blood to temper their bodies. But with my Vigorous in Old Age Talent, I can directly gain the Cultivation Realm

and proficiency from my wife's Primordial Technique. I can both conceal myself and unleash explosive power!

This second Talent is simply too powerful!

With such an incredible Talent, I could gain my wife's Cultivation Realm and abilities even if I just lay around all day!

After comprehending this point, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but laugh to himself.

With a smile on his face, he stood up and began to operate the Primordial Heart Method, silently heading to the second floor.

As he walked, he was surprised to find that his steps made no sound. His Qi Blood manipulation caused not even the slightest fluctuation in the air. His heartbeat, breath, the sound of his blood flowing—even his entire presence—were completely concealed!

Upon reaching the second floor, where the wooden door was wide open, he raised his eyes. He saw that the Young Lady had already risen and was sitting at the desk, reviewing the Secret Manual of the Divine Protection Elixir in the early morning light.

Lin Xuankong quietly walked behind the Young Lady without a sound. He stood there for a while, even reaching out towards her fair neck, yet she remained utterly unaware! He thought. If I were to snap her neck now, the Young Lady wouldn't even have time to activate her Qi Blood for defense. She'd die without knowing how!

After wandering around the Young Lady's room unnoticed, Lin Xuankong finally walked out.

Back downstairs, exhilaration shone in his eyes. As a Fourth Layer Cultivator, he knew how keen the senses of a Fourth Layer Martial Artist were. This was especially true for a Cultivator like the Young Lady, who could perform feats like Walking on Water and possessed incredibly sharp senses. Yet, he had just moved around quietly and left silently, and the Young Lady, despite being in the Fourth Layer Realm, hadn't noticed a thing!

The effectiveness of the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique in concealing one's presence was truly astounding. It was absolutely the ultimate Martial Skill for stealth and assassination!

He had never practiced such a Cultivation Technique before, nor did he possess the Primordial Strange Vein. Yet, simply because Lii Xiaolan was his wife, he had directly become a Minor Success Realm expert in the Annihilation Technique!

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Of course, the second Talent, 'Wives, Children, Elders, and Youngsters,' wasn't just powerful in that way.

According to the information from the Life Plate, even if I don't have the Primordial Strange Vein and find it hard to cultivate this Cultivation Technique, as long as my Young Lady continues cultivating the Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique, I'll be able to continuously gain insights and Realms. It's like getting stronger while lying down! Additionally, my Young Lady's Cultivation Speed will increase thirtyfold! This way, both my Young Lady's and my Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique will strengthen rapidly. This isn't just lying down and getting stronger; it's like skyrocketing while lying down! Moreover, if my Young Lady's Cultivation Speed increases thirtyfold due to my Life Plate's influence, her Pine Skill Realm will also gradually improve. I won't need to worry about her withering away like a delicate flower after a few decades! This second Talent is simply too powerful. If in the future...

"What are you thinking about, smiling so happily?" Lii Xiaolan's voice suddenly came from behind.

Lin Xuankong turned his head. In the hazy morning light, his Young Lady, dressed in green, stood gracefully, looking exceptionally captivating. Now that his Cultivation Speed had increased sixtyfold and he'd gained the second Talent, he couldn't contain his joy. He reached out, took Lii Xiaolan's hand, and pulled her to sit by the table. "How is your study of the Divine Protection Elixir's secret manual going? A few days ago, you insisted on taking it to read. Are you really planning to learn Alchemy?"

Lii Xiaolan had been smiling, but when he suddenly took her hand, her pretty face froze in surprise for a moment. Then, she quickly remembered that he would soon attend the Demon Slaying Conference, and today was also his birthday. Her gaze softened, and she let him hold her hand as he led her to the table.

She looked at Lin Xuankong and said, "You insisted on giving me ten of your forty Nourishing Spirit Pills... so I thought, what if I have a Talent for Alchemy? If I can refine mid-grade Divine Protection Elixirs in the future, I can share some with you! After all, Divine Protection Elixirs and Nourishing Spirit Pills need to be taken for many, many years. If one cultivates to the ninth layer of Transcendence, one must take them continuously until then!"

"Even though the chances of me becoming an Alchemist are slim, with the secret manual in hand, it doesn't hurt to try. Besides, it won't interfere with my normal Cultivation routines!

"But... but the Demon Slaying Conference is extremely dangerous. Do you really not want me to accompany you? Let me tell you, I'm stronger than you!"

She's bluffing again! I've already figured out her true capabilities!

Lin Xuankong said, "The spots for the Demon Slaying Conference are already fixed. Even if I wanted you to participate, the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect would have to agree!

"Moreover, I have the Twin Vine Demon Pearl and the Manluo Demon Pearl, along with powerful Thunder Techniques and the world's strongest Battle Armor. My Heart Thought strength is also rapidly increasing. If I still can't easily traverse the Demon-Suppressing Valley with all this, then all my hard work for so long would have been for naught!

"What's more, if I can't even handle the dangers of the Demon-Suppressing Valley, how could I possibly confront Zhao Renxiong—who is at the Fifth Layer Late Stage and has many expert assistants—on the eighth day of the ninth lunar month?"

As he finished speaking, a look of determination and valor filled Lin Xuankong's eyes.

Seeing him speak with such conviction and unwavering expression, Lii Xiaolan couldn't help but think of his peerless Battle Armor and wondrous Thunder Techniques.

After hesitating for a long moment, she nodded slightly, her small hand tightly gripping his larger one. Her beautiful eyes held a trace of worry mixed with hope. "Yes, I believe my husband can do it! I'll go to Juwei Restaurant today and order more dishes to celebrate your birthday properly and also to give you a proper send-off!"

Lin Xuankong nodded and smiled, a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

The Life Plate showed progress in Alchemy, indicating that the second Talent was also effective for Alchemy. Perhaps by the time I return from the Demon-Suppressing Valley, my Young Lady, with her thirtyfold Alchemy bonus, will have already become an Initial Tier Alchemist! I have to participate in the Demon Slaying Conference soon, so I don't have time for Alchemy... If my Young Lady practices Alchemy, I could just lie back and gain a wealth of insights and knacks for Alchemy! This freeloading is rather nice! I just wonder what it would be like to have several powerful sources for this 'soft rice'... Wouldn't I just lie back and become an expert who has reached the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Layers, possessing all sorts of Divine Techniques...?

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In the eastern part of Great Marsh's inner city, within a courtyard spanning several hundred acres, Hua Yanluo, dressed in light gauze and her youthful appearance restored, stood in a pavilion near the courtyard entrance. Several female disciples of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect waited respectfully beside the pavilion. These disciples, though of significant status within the Celestial Sect, all showed hints of surprise in their eyes at this moment. Even Ding Rui, an elite female disciple at the Fourth Layer Late Stage, had a trace of astonishment in her eyes.

Of course, their surprise wasn't due to Hua Yanluo's rejuvenation; they already knew how wondrous the elixirs and Elixir Formulas presented by Ma Rusong were. What astonished them was that today, Elder Hua had instructed them to welcome an esteemed guest together! Who in Great Marsh Prefecture possessed such status and strength that Elder Hua would wait for over two hours, and yet show no sign of impatience on her face? They pondered and pondered but couldn't figure it out; how could they not be surprised!

Just then, a female disciple hurried over from the courtyard gate, cupped her fists outside the pavilion, and said, "Elder Hua, the esteemed guest has arrived!"

Hua Yanluo nodded slightly. With a swift movement, she was already at the courtyard gate, her disciples following closely behind.

The group went to welcome the guest outside the courtyard gate. They saw a rather plainly decorated small palanquin already stopped at the entrance. Although the four palanquin bearers were extremely tall, their attire was very ordinary, almost indistinguishable from common bearers. However, the few women standing near the palanquin, their faces covered by light veils, all possessed slender figures. Even in ordinary clothes, their beauty and noble aura were hard to conceal.

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Hua Yanluo, a Celestial Sect Elder whose status was comparable to that of a Prefect, showed a respectful expression. She bowed and said, "Hua Yanluo respectfully welcomes our honored guest. Linxi Pavilion within the courtyard has been prepared. Please, feel free to rest there for a while after your long journey."

A maid in a green dress standing by the sedan chair spoke, "We appreciate your thoughtfulness, Elder Hua. My lady intends to go to the main hall to discuss matters first."

Upon hearing this, Hua Yanluo stepped aside to open the courtyard gate. "Please, come inside to discuss matters in detail!"

The four sedan bearers immediately lifted the sedan chair and, along with the four maids, followed Hua Yanluo into the courtyard.

At the courtyard gate, several of Hua Yanluo's female disciples exchanged glances, their hearts filled with astonishment. How esteemed is Elder Hua of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect that she would personally guide this young lady from the sedan chair? And this young lady, despite clearly having an astonishing background, arrived in such an ordinary sedan. She truly is low-key!

A moment later, after passing through several winding corridors, the sedan chair stopped before the inner hall of Elder Hua's residence.

The four sedan bearers set down the sedan chair and stood respectfully to the side. Two maids approached the sedan, unrolling an embroidered mat all the way to the door of the inner hall. Only then did two other maids step forward and lift the sedan curtain.

Ding Rui and a few other female disciples of the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect secretly peeked and saw a stunningly beautiful young woman in white stepping out of the sedan chair onto the exquisite, clean mat.

As the young woman emerged, the expressions of Ding Rui and the others shifted, a look of awe in their eyes. At this moment, they felt as if everything around them paled in comparison to her; she was as ethereal and transcendent as a fairy from a celestial palace or a dragon princess from a dragon's keep.

Elder Hua looked at the young woman in white and smiled. "It has been several months, and the Saintess's strength has advanced by leaps and bounds once more. As expected of one who has awakened the ancient bloodline of the Profound Phoenix, truly the foremost prodigy of Great Xia. In due time, once the Saintess masters the Profound Phoenix Blood Bath Divine Technique to the Realm of Great Success in Micro Mastery, the myriad Demons within Great Xia will surely bow their heads and await their doom! The prosperity of Great Xia and the Celestial Sect truly rests upon you, Saintess!"

The young woman in white glanced at Elder Hua, a hint of warmth in her bright eyes. "Elder Hua, there's no need for such formality between us. If not for your personal guidance with the Profound Phoenix Blood Bathing Technique years ago, I would not have awakened this bloodline, even if my father had gathered all the Martial Dao in the world!"

Hearing the young woman speak, Ding Rui and the others suddenly recalled the rumors from recent years about the Celestial Sect Saintess, the Third Princess of Great Xia. They all lowered their heads, daring not to gaze upon her any longer. Surprise and confusion flickered across their faces. Had the Celestial Sect Saintess, Xiaoo Ying'Er, truly left the Celestial Sect's Secret Realm and come to Great Marsh Prefecture?

This was Xiaoo Ying'Er, the esteemed Third Princess of Great Xia! It was said she had awakened an ancient holy bloodline. At just eighteen, she had cultivated the Profound Phoenix Blood Bathing Technique, one of the Celestial Sect's three Divine Techniques, to the Realm of Returning to the Essence. She was an unparalleled prodigy, the likes of which the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect had not seen in a hundred years. Revered as Saintess by the Celestial Sect Leader and thirty-two Elders, her status was on par with that of a Supreme Elder... No wonder Elder Hua had been so deferential!

Seeing Xiaoo Ying'Er so approachable, Elder Hua's smile grew warmer. "I wouldn't dare presume to instruct the Saintess. Being able to accompany you in your Cultivation is my good fortune! The Profound Phoenix Blood Bathing Technique, one of the Celestial Sect's three Divine Techniques, is incomparably powerful yet extremely difficult to cultivate. Even our Celestial Sect Leader has only reached the Realm of Entering the Hall, and for nearly three hundred years, no one has cultivated it to the Realm of Returning to the Essence. That this Divine Technique could be cultivated to the near-immortal Realm of Returning to the Essence in your hands, Saintess, is a blessing for both the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect and Great Xia!"

As they spoke, they entered the main hall. One of the maids took a light, plain silk cloth from a flower basket and spread it over the main seat in the hall. Only then did the young woman in white, Xiaoo Ying'Er, take her seat.

Elder Hua then glanced at Ding Rui and the other disciples. Understanding her meaning, they quickly withdrew from the hall and stood guard outside, at a distance.

Only then did Elder Hua speak. "Saintess, do you truly intend to enter the Demon-Suppressing Valley personally this time? The Demon-Suppressing Array was left by the founding ancestor of the Celestial Sect. Even though you have reached the Late Stage of the Fifth Layer, Saintess, once you enter the Demon Valley, your Cultivation will be suppressed to the Third Layer! You are the Third Princess of Great Xia and the Saintess of our Celestial Sect. If any harm befalls you in the valley... I would be deeply distraught!"

Xiaoo Ying'Er stated calmly, "Since I broke through to the Late Stage of the Fifth Layer twenty days ago, my Cultivation has stagnated. To overcome this bottleneck, I must experience a life-or-death battle. Going to the Demon-Suppressing Valley to slay Demons is far safer than seeking out a Late Stage Tier Five Demon for a fight. There is no need for further discussion on this matter."

With that, she looked at Elder Hua. "The paramount concern now is the safety of Great Xia. A Demon King has already gathered a million Demon People in Dongyang Prefecture, and another is wreaking havoc in Nanyuan Prefecture. Great Marsh Prefecture is also in grave peril. The experts under my father and within the Celestial Sect can still suppress them for now, but in the future..."

"According to the intelligence you provided, the Conical Hat Guest's weapon possesses astonishing power. I suspect everyone in Great Marsh Prefecture who knows of it covets it. However, while others are interested in his weapon, I am more interested in how he refined it. If its Refining Method can be replicated and more such weapons created... it would be of immense help against the Demon scourge in Great Xia!"

As she spoke, a hint of anticipation flickered in her calm eyes. "An old man with a young wife, at the age of knowing destiny... Elder Hua, the insights gleaned from your Spiritual Words Technique have narrowed the search for the Conical Hat Guest considerably. When will you be able to locate him?"

Hearing this, Elder Hua produced a register. "Among the Martial Cultivators in Great Marsh Prefecture—both the inner and outer cities—and the surrounding towns, there are five thousand five hundred twenty-nine individuals aged fifty to fifty-nine. Of these, excluding seven who have never married, the remaining five thousand five hundred twenty-two have all married more than one young woman. These individuals hail from various regions and sects, possessing extensive networks, so we have not yet ascertained which one is the Conical Hat Guest."

Xiao Ying'Er said calmly, "While I am participating in the Demon Slaying Conference, I must trouble Elder Hua to mobilize all available officials and the full manpower of the Celestial Sect to investigate each of them. I hope that by the time I emerge from the valley, you will have found him. I wish to meet this Conical Hat Guest personally."

Hua Yanluo rose and said, "As the Saintess decrees, I shall ensure it is done. I wish the Saintess great enlightenment and success in the Demon-Suppressing Valley!"

Chapter 95: Lying Down to Rapidly Grow Stronger, Six Eyes and Six Arms Displaying Majesty

「Three days later,」

At the Xun Character entrance of the Grand Array of the Demon-Suppressing Valley.

Over 120 Martial Cultivators stood somewhat nervously on a platform inscribed with intricate Runes. Lin Xuankong stood among them, looking around with anticipation.

The Demon Slaying Conference involved a thousand Martial Cultivators from various sects. These cultivators were divided into eight teams, respectively entering through eight entrances such as Qian, Kun, Xun, and Zhen. They were heading to eight gathering points to deal with the swarming Demons.

Among Lin Xuankong's team, other Martial Cultivators seemed normal, but two teams were particularly unusual. The surrounding Martial Cultivators looked at these two teams with a hint of reverence.

One team consisted of eight Martial Cultivators, each with extremely long arms that could touch the ground like apes. They carried iron hammer-like weapons, each weighing five to six hundred pounds. The lead cultivator's arms were not only long but also as thick as an average person's thigh, exuding explosive power.

According to the information Lin Jiao secretly told him, this team came from the Blood Ape Valley in the northwest of the Great Marsh, and each member possessed the Dragon Ape Bloodline. Their strength was higher than that of other Martial Cultivators of the same tier by several tenths. Their leader, Lii Fenghan, was at Tier Four Early Stage strength, wore the Dragon Ape Armor, and ranked fourteenth on the Hero List for demon slayers. This was even higher than Zhao Yufei by four ranks, making him extremely formidable.

The other team consisted of seven members with even more peculiar appearances. Six of them had four eyes and four arms, looking like divine beings.

According to Lin Jiao, these seven cultivators came from the Gu Yue Sect in the southern part of the Great Marsh. The sect selected twins as disciples and used Qi Men Cultivation Techniques to gradually merge their bodies and Heart Thoughts from childhood. Gu Yue Sect disciples all had Double Dantians and Double Meridians, and in battle against Martial Cultivators of the same tier, they were invincible!

Their leader, San Gu, a Tier Four Mid-grade, had six eyes and six arms, looking both strange and fierce. He was said to be a triplet who had cultivated into one Heart Thought, possessing six eyes, six arms, three Dantians, and three Meridians. This allowed him to simultaneously practice and perform multiple Martial Skills. He ranked eleventh on the Hero List, just two ranks below Liy Ruofeng of the Fifth Layer Late Stage, showcasing his formidable strength!

Looking at these extraordinary individuals, Lin Xuankong couldn't help but marvel silently. The world is truly vast and full of wonders!

At this moment, a female disciple from the Profound Phoenix Celestial Sect guarding the Rune platform spoke, "The Array will soon activate. Circulate your Qi Blood to protect your body to avoid immediate encounters with Demons upon entry!"

Upon hearing this, many Martial Cultivators silently circulated their Qi Blood, including Lin Xuankong. After circulating his Qi Blood, he looked towards a small hill in the distance, where Lii Xiaolan, dressed in green, was gazing intently this way.

In the past three days, the young lady had already started refining Elixirs.

After all, with my current status and resources, supplying the young lady with some medicinal materials for Alchemy is not a problem!

[Divine Protection Elixir: Entry Level 3/16]

[Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique: Attained Minor Success 15/450]

Under the thirtyfold accelerated Cultivation Speed of the second Talent in my Life Plate, and the cost-free supply of abundant medicinal materials, the young lady's proficiency in refining the Divine Protection Elixir is continually improving. At this rate, before I even leave the Demon-Suppressing Valley, the young lady will likely succeed in refining some Lower-grade Divine Protection Elixirs! As a husband focused solely on cultivating the Martial Dao and passively accepting the proficiency in Alchemy, I'll naturally become adept at Alchemy myself! If the potential for the young lady and me to rapidly become Alchemists were known to the prestigious Alchemists in the Yin Talisman Sect or other sects, I wonder what their reactions would be!

Additionally, the young lady's Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique progress has increased by nine proficiency points in just three days. This speed is certainly thirty times faster than her previous Cultivation speed. For the past three days, I've seen the young lady with a bewildered expression every morning after Cultivation, followed by amazement and joy on her face! At the same time, my own Shadow Concealment Primordial Technique's Realm is also rising rapidly, growing stronger at an astonishing rate! This thirtyfold boost from her efforts is truly fantastic!

Thinking of this, he smiled slightly, waving gently towards the small hill.

Zhao Yufei, with her two Dragon Blood Fierce Dogs by her side, saw Lin Xuankong's relaxed smile and couldn't help but tilt her chin slightly!

She thought to herself: This old guy looks quite relaxed. It seems like he's determined to stick close to me and Steward Xu Bei! If it weren't for Chief Steward Jiang specifically seeking out Xu Bei and me before the trip, I wouldn't have bothered with him and Hu Shuo; they're merely burdens.

Xu Bei sneered, "Chief Steward Lin seems to have a good relationship with his young wife! If I hadn't heard you turned sixty three days ago, I would have thought you were that Conical Hat Guest, hiding an immense strength!"

Although she knew Xu Bei was being sarcastic, Zhao Yufei couldn't help but shake her head repeatedly upon hearing this. Him, the Conical Hat Guest? With his old arms and legs, he'd probably be beaten until he was crying and on his last breath if he faced even a small Tier Two Demon!

She sneered, "If Steward Lin is the Conical Hat Guest, then we must ask him to take care of us once we enter the valley!"

"Among fellow disciples, regardless of strength, we should always help each other!" Hu Shuo spoke up to ease the strange atmosphere.

Lin Xuankong withdrew his gaze, ignoring Zhao Yufei and Xu Bei, and looked at Hu Shuo, Lin Jiao, and Nalan Yunzhu. "Of course, that is only proper!"

Chapter 96: Lying Down to Rapidly Grow Stronger, Six Eyes and Six Arms Displaying Majesty_2

"Heh heh!" Xu Bei sneered. "Hmph!" Zhao Yufei tilted her chin upwards.

As they spoke, a BUZZING sound suddenly arose from the platform beneath their feet. In the next moment, Lin Xuankong felt his heart and spirit tremble. The scenery before his eyes blurred instantly, the light twisting and shifting. When his vision cleared, he found himself standing in a dense forest.

He circulated his Qi Blood to protect his body and scanned his surroundings. Under the nearby trees and among the grasses, piles of white bones were scattered everywhere. Most were the large skeletons of unknown beasts, interspersed with some human remains. The ground was riddled with pits, and many large rocks protruding from the grass were covered with the marks of weapon slashes.

Nearby, Lin Jiao, Nalan Yunzhu, and the other Martial Cultivators all wore expressions of utmost vigilance. Hu Shuo carefully examined the Demon-avoiding Bat he had prepared beforehand. Seeing that its body hadn't changed color, he breathed a sigh of relief. "There should be no Tier Three Demons nearby."

Lin Jiao and Nalan Yunzhu also sighed in relief. Lin Xuankong, however, frowned slightly. Weren't there supposed to be countless Demons? It's been more than ten breaths since we entered, yet not a single one has appeared...

From among the crowd, the tall, long-armed Martial Cultivator, Lii Fenghan, suddenly spoke in a deep voice, "Let's head straight to the gathering place in the south. If we spread out, we risk being picked off by the Demons one by one. The Xun Branch gathering place is located on Juefeng Mountain, surrounded on all sides by cliffs thousands of feet high. Only the Profound Iron Chain Bridge connecting to the neighboring peak allows access to the mountaintop platform, making it easy to defend and difficult to attack. If we gather there, a large number of Demons will naturally be drawn to our aura, and we'll have opportunities to reap rewards!"

Most of the Martial Cultivators nodded in agreement, clearly having great confidence in this Martial Cultivator, who was ranked fourteenth on the leaderboard.

Standing near Lin Xuankong, Zhao Yufei wore a slight look of dissatisfaction. Ever proud, she was certainly unwilling to casually follow someone else's orders.

Just then, six Martial Cultivators stepped out from the crowd and headed east. One of them, a dark-skinned Martial Cultivator, declared, "During the last Demon Slaying Conference, the Martial Cultivators at the eight gathering places were surrounded by countless Demons, and only a few dozen survived. Hmph! Easy to defend and difficult to attack, you say? Sounds nice, but if the path is blocked, there's no escape! The six of us won't accompany you there just to wait to be surrounded by Demons. If we're trapped for over twenty days, wouldn't that be just waiting for death?"

Many of the Martial Cultivators who had originally planned to go to the gathering place hesitated upon hearing this, their expressions shifting.

Hearing this, Lin Xuankong's eyes lit up with anticipation. Staying at the gathering place, surrounded by countless Demons... that sounds wonderful!

"The words of my Younger Brother Lii are not a negotiation; they are an order!" the six-eyed, six-armed Martial Cultivator suddenly declared, his six eyes flashing. "Those of you not going to the gathering place, rather than letting the Demons devour your equipment and supplies, you might as well hand them over to us!"

Hearing this, the expressions of the six Martial Cultivators changed instantly. The dark-skinned Martial Cultivator drew his weapon with a cold sneer. "San Gu, although you're Mid-grade Tier Four, once inside this Demon-Suppressing Valley, you're also reduced to Tier Three! We six brothers of the Ma Family are all Late Stage Tier Three. Do you think we're afraid of you? We've just entered the Demon-Suppressing Valley, and you're already planning to kill and plunder? Aren't you a bit too eager?"

The six-eyed, six-armed San Gu ignored him, merely giving a flick of one arm. The six four-armed Martial Cultivators beside him immediately charged at the group of six, their speed as swift as lightning.

In an instant, the twelve of them were locked in combat. The six four-armed Martial Cultivators hadn't even drawn the weapons from their waists; they fought the six Ma Family brothers using only their four

arms. Yet, even without weapons, these four-armed Martial Cultivators completely suppressed the Ma Family brothers, each of whom was equipped with an Exorcism Weapon!

Moments later, the dark-skinned eldest brother of the Ma Family lost focus for an instant. Two four-armed Martial Cultivators seized his arms and legs. Immediately, the sickening sound of tearing flesh filled the air. This Late Stage Tier Three Martial Cultivator was literally torn into a pile of shredded meat by the pair, and the stench of blood instantly spread!

Ten breaths later, the battle concluded. The six four-armed Martial Cultivators were completely unharmed, while the Ma Family's six Late Stage Tier Three Martial Cultivators had been reduced to piles of shredded meat.

Even though all were Tier Three Martial Cultivators, the disparity in a six-on-six fight was astonishingly vast!

The remaining hundred or so Martial Cultivators turned pale as they witnessed this scene. None dared to speak, their gazes fixed on the four-armed Martial Cultivators, filled with deep fear and dread.

Zhao Yufei and Xu Bei's faces also changed slightly. They glanced at each other, both recognizing the dread in the other's eyes. I have the Silver Hook Armor and my Dragon Blood Fierce Dog, Zhao Yufei thought. I could defeat any one of these six four-armed Martial Cultivators in a one-on-one fight. I might even be able to take down two or three if I fight them individually. However, if any two of them ganged up on me, defeat would be the only outcome!

And these are merely San Gu's subordinates. What if San Gu himself, with a full set of Battle Armor and his even more formidable six arms, were to attack...

For a moment, the arrogance on her face diminished considerably.

Lin Xuankong watched quietly from the side, his gaze fixed on the four-armed Martial Cultivator who was collecting the six Exorcism Weapons. The Martial Cultivator held a peculiar, palm-sized, blood-red fleshy pouch that wriggled constantly. Despite its small size, this blood-red pouch absorbed all six large weapons. This continually wriggling, peculiar fleshy pouch strongly resembled the legendary Ghost Frog Pouch, renowned for its spatial storage abilities.

Chapter 97: Lying Down to Rapidly Become Stronger, Flexing with Six Eyes and Six Arms_3

Hopefully I can be lucky enough to encounter a few Tier Three Ghost Toads in Demon Valley, Lin Xuankong thought as he watched the six Exorcism Weapons being collected and saw the Ghost Frog Pouch. This magical Ghost Frog Pouch, though ugly, is incredibly useful! Moreover, it's no wonder people always say that in this Demon-Suppressing Valley, the strong can reap great rewards! Killing Demons here yields plenty... and the rewards from killing people seem to be just as substantial!

"Alright, everyone head to the gathering place together!" Lii Fenghan, ranked fourteenth, gestured to San Gu and then spoke.

This time, more than a hundred Martial Cultivators kept silent and followed Lii Fenghan toward the south.

After more than an hour of traveling, there were no incidents, except for a few Tier One Evil Sheep encountered half an hour in. They were sliced into pieces by a Martial Cultivator before they could approach the group.

However, during the journey, Hu Shuo's Demon-avoiding Bat kept changing colors. According to what he whispered to Lin Xuankong, there were likely quite a few Tier Two and Tier Three Demons tracking the group...

A few hours later, nearing sundown, the group finally arrived at Juefeng Mountain.

Standing at the foot of the mountain, Lin Xuankong took a glance and couldn't help but nod slightly. This Juefeng Mountain was indeed an excellent defensive position, difficult to assault. It stood about a thousand feet high, its body like an elliptical column with extremely steep walls. Ascending required either a tremendous expenditure of Qi Blood to climb the smooth cliffs or using the Profound Iron Chain Bridge connecting it to an adjacent peak. With this terrain, as long as the Chain Bridge is guarded, Demons will find it extremely difficult to breach!

After climbing the adjacent mountain and crossing the Chain Bridge, Lin Xuankong looked at the mountaintop platform and nodded again. Although the platform was littered with the fragmented remains of unknown beasts and humans, hundreds of sturdy stone houses and numerous stone stoves and tables had been built there. This is clearly a viable camp, provided there are enough water supplies!

Lii Fenghan suddenly spoke, "Everyone, come here!"

This early-stage Martial Cultivator from Blood Ape Valley now carried himself with the demeanor of a leader.

Once everyone had gathered, their expressions a mixture of complexities, Lii Fenghan said, "This gathering place is surrounded by Marsh Python Demons; farther out are Evil Sheep Demons. Those intelligent Demons will gradually congregate here. Once their numbers exceed three to five hundred, they will launch a collective attack on this gathering place! Though there won't be a large-scale Demon attack in the next few days, we still need personnel to guard the place. The Yin Talisman Sect, Cangjian Sect, Nine Blades Association, Cold Star Sect, and Blood Shadow Sect—you five sects will be responsible for the night watch and patrolling the Chain Bridge. Dispatch personnel to guard the stone house near the Chain Bridge. If you detect a mob of Demons approaching, you must immediately notify everyone else."

The Martial Cultivators nodded in agreement and prepared to disperse.

Zhao Yufei's brows furrowed as she stepped out and said, "Why are we specifically assigned to night watch duty? Shouldn't everyone take turns?"

Originally about to leave, Lii Fenghan turned and, seeing Zhao Yufei's objection, sneered, "Because your five sects are too weak. If a large number of Demons attack, you won't contribute much. Therefore, you're only fit for night watch duty! What? Zhao Yufei, ranked eighteenth on the Hero List, do you disagree? Or does anyone else disagree?"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yufei's face turned ashen. The Martial Cultivators from the Cangjian Sect, Nine Blades Association, and the other designated sects also looked displeased.

Just then, Hu Shuo's expression flickered. He quickly stepped to Zhao Yufei's side and said, "I'll do the night watch! I'll do it! Steward Zhao, please don't worry about this!"

Zhao Yufei glanced at Hu Shuo with furrowed brows, sighed slightly, and turned away.

"The Yin Talisman Sect! So glorious a thousand years ago, yet so pathetic now. Do you really think the Yin Talisman Sect is still the Major Sect it once was?" Lii Fenghan sneered. Then, accompanied by the six-eyed, six-armed San Gu, he walked towards the largest stone house on the platform.

Among the crowd, Lin Xuankong frowned slightly. Although his sense of allegiance towards the Yin Talisman Sect wasn't as profound as Hu Shuo's and the others', he had greatly benefited from the sect and met many companions of good character. Lii Fenghan insulting Zhao Yufei was one thing, but to ridicule the Yin Talisman Sect like this...

"Alright, alright, it's getting dark! I've brought plenty of good food and wine. Let's eat first, let's eat!" Hu Shuo, noticing Lin Xuankong's displeased expression, quickly tried to console him, pulling him towards one of the stone houses. Lin Xuankong, meanwhile, was silently forming a plan...

「....」

A silent night passed, and dawn approached.

Inside the stone house, Lin Xuankong consumed a Nourishing Spirit Pill and cultivated Pine Skill for a while, then suddenly felt a tingling itch in his legs and feet. He lifted his long robe and looked down. His once wrinkled and aged legs and feet were now covered with flakes of old skin. He gently brushed them, and the flakes fell away, revealing smooth and firm skin beneath, like that of a man in his thirties!

Lin Xuankong looked at his Life Plate,

Lin Xuankong: Remaining Lifespan seventy-three years and thirty-six days

[Pine Crane Longevity Technique: Attained Minor Success 1/500]

[Heart Thought: Mortal Tier Fourth Grade 5/20]

A trace of joy appeared in his eyes. Although the Pine Crane Longevity Technique doesn't temper the body like Yin Talisman Thunder, its effect of nurturing one's foundation and greatly increasing Lifespan is still miraculous. Now that it has reached the Minor Success realm, it has directly added twenty-four years to my Lifespan! Twenty-four years! That's nearly half a lifetime for an ordinary person... I wonder how much it will increase next time I advance? When the Pine Crane Longevity Technique advances next, it should make my entire body look like that of a thirty-something-year-old. I wonder what I'll look like then, wearing Daoist Robes—scholarly and gentle? Or perhaps like an ageless sage, dignified and

robust? As handsome as Yanzu? Additionally, consuming Nourishing Spirit Pills these past few days has already raised my Heart Thought strength to Mortal Tier Fourth Grade! According to what the Young Lady said... ordinary Martial Cultivators would probably need to take them for ten or more years, consuming thousands, even tens of thousands of pills, to reach this level! Yet, I've only taken less than ten pills over just a few days!

[Yin Talisman Technique: Attained Minor Success 41/232]

The nurturing of the Yin Talisman Divine Thunder Root and the deep tempering of my head and bones are also progressing rapidly. At sixty times the normal cultivation speed, it will only take about ten more days to reach the Mid-grade of the Fourth Layer! If it weren't for the restrictions in Demon-Suppressing Valley limiting my power to the Perfection of the Third Layer, a casual strike from me now would be far more formidable than before! I'm advancing quickly, but I'm still uncertain when those Marsh Python Demons will attack... If I can obtain some Tier Three Marsh Python Gall here—the kind that can regenerate flesh on bones and instantly heal grievous wounds—then I can confidently go on a killing spree at the other gathering places!

As Lin Xuankong was reveling in his progress, a shout filled with terror suddenly erupted from the night-watch stone house hundreds of yards away, "Something's happened! Something's happened!"

Chapter 98: Transcending Limits Primordial Divine Technique, One Strike Shakes a Thousand Pythons

Upon hearing the shouts, Lin Xuankong looked outside the stone house. Dark clouds pressed down from the sky, and the air was heavy. Heeding the call, numerous Martial Cultivators from the nearby stone houses rushed out, crossing the chaotic piles of bones on the platform. Their faces were tense as they gazed towards the Profound Iron Chain Bridge.

Lin Xuankong frowned as he walked out of the stone house. From the adjacent stone house, a disheveled Lin Jiao and Nalan Yunzhu ran out. Nalan Yunzhu's face still bore a rosy flush.

Lin Xuankong looked speechless. Such good spirits, no wonder I heard strange sounds for about ten breaths' time just now!

Lin Jiao, Hu Shuo, Xu Bei, and Zhao Yufei stood together near the chaotic bone piles. In the faint morning light, they looked into the distance, their expressions instantly changing.

Near the guard stone house, dozens of Martial Cultivators had already drawn their weapons, each on high alert, their expressions tense.

In the forest on the opposite peak, numerous black, white, blue, and red giant serpents, each over a zhang in length, were slowly writhing. The patterns on these giant serpents were extremely peculiar, resembling various wild beasts and even humanoid forms.

The number of giant serpents was immense. A single glance revealed over a thousand of them, making the entire opposite peak look like a mountain of flesh, as if the whole mountain were slowly writhing...

The Tier Three Martial Cultivators could somewhat stomach this sight, but the Tier Two Martial Cultivators felt their hair stand on end.

Among them, a giant serpent three to four zhang long, its body covered in strange patterns, led over a hundred other giant serpents as it crawled towards them along the Profound Iron Chain Bridge.

As it wriggled, the countless patterns on its body seemed to twist and deform like the souls of innumerable wild beasts, appearing both eerie and imposing.

"How can over a thousand Demons be here so quickly? I heard that in previous Demon Slaying Associations, it took three days for a large number of Demons to be drawn to the gathering place!" a Martial Cultivator exclaimed, his eyes filled with fear, barely able to hold his weapon.

Someone frowned. "Is this nearly half of all the Marsh Python Demons from the vicinity?"

The other Martial Cultivators also looked extremely grim.

"We must block that Tier Three Marsh Python!"

From the crowd, Lii Fenghan, who was tall with long arms, swept his gaze over everyone.

Hearing him, the expressions of the many Martial Cultivators around him changed slightly, and they avoided his gaze.

In battles between Tier Three Demons and Martial Cultivators of the Same Tier, the Martial Cultivator was usually the one who got brutally beaten. Especially when facing the virtually unkillable Tier Three Marsh Python, almost no one was willing to take the lead.

Near the stone house, a hint of determination appeared on Zhao Yufei's cold, beautiful face.

She handed the fierce hound beside her to Xu Bei and stepped forward. "I will fight it!"

Just yesterday, Lii Fenghan had humiliated Zhao Yufei and the Yin Talisman Sect before countless people. As the treasured daughter of the Zhao Family, how could she swallow this insult? Naturally, she intended to use this battle to show everyone her true strength!

Hearing this, Lii Fenghan turned his head. Seeing it was Zhao Yufei, his brows furrowed.

The six-eyed, six-armed San Gu said coldly, "Zhao Yufei? Although you possess the Silver Hook Armor, you are merely at the Late Stage of Tier Three. You're no match for a Tier Three Marsh Python, which can regenerate endlessly!"

Zhao Yufei's pretty face stiffened, and her hands gripping the Silver Hook paled slightly. "I..."

Her heart filled with shame and indignation. Before entering the valley, she, ranked eighteenth on the Hero List, had been so full of valor! Who would have thought that after gathering with the prodigies of the Great Marsh Hundred Cities, she would be so utterly disregarded!

Seeing her at a loss for words, the six-eyed, six-armed San Gu sneered and looked at Lii Fenghan. "Brother Lii, why don't you go kill this Tier Three Marsh Python and show Zhao Yufei of the Yin Talisman Sect what true strength looks like!"

At San Gu's words, Lii Fenghan's expression shifted. He picked up the giant hammer at his feet, glanced at the Martial Cultivators avoiding his gaze, and declared, "Fine! Then I shall show these Demons what it means for one man to hold a pass against ten thousand!"

San Gu's six eyes moved in unison as he smiled and nodded.

Lii Fenghan then leaped lightly, clearing over thirty zhang to land on the Chain Bridge.

Then, his Qi Blood surged throughout his body as he let out a mighty roar. Numerous Forehead Scales materialized and swirled around the Profound Iron Hammer in his hands, encasing his entire body in protection. He transformed into a black shadow, smashing down towards the giant serpent's head!

Watching this, Lin Xuankong thought to himself, I've carefully studied information about the five kinds of Demons in the Demon-Suppressing Valley. However, this is my first time facing them, so it's better to observe the Marsh Python's abilities first before making a move. Besides, the arrogant Lii Fenghan and San Gu have repeatedly humiliated the Yin Talisman Sect; it's fitting to let them take the lead.

As these thoughts crossed his mind, the Profound Iron Chain Bridge connecting the two mountains began to shake violently. The man and the python had already clashed.

Lii Fenghan, ranked fourteenth on the Hero List, naturally possessed a fierce Hammer Technique and was highly skilled in Body Technique. He moved with terrifying speed across the dozen or so Profound Iron Chains, almost like a phantom.

Each time he swung the Profound Iron Hammer, it fiercely struck the Tier Three giant python's head or chest, sending out vast ripples through the air with every impact, a display of unparalleled might!

Yet, the Tier Three giant python, despite its enormous size, was exceedingly agile. It twisted its body and head rapidly, continuously spewing inky-black Demon Qi from its massive maw. This Demon Qi swirled around them, relentlessly trying to corrode Lii Fenghan.

Between its attacks, it would occasionally take a sudden, deep breath, sucking in a large amount of Demon Qi that was almost tangible. This created a powerful vortex, attempting to draw Lii Fenghan into its mouth.

Whenever this happened, Lii Fenghan would let out an explosive shout. His figure would flash, retreating several zhang in an instant to evade the terrifying suction force!

Chapter 99: Surpassing Limits Primordial Divine Technique, One Strike Shakes a Thousand Pythons_2

A man and a serpent battled fiercely for nearly one hundred breaths with no clear winner.

Although Lii Fenghan hammered the giant python hundreds of times, each blow denting its body, the Marsh Python would instantly recover. Meanwhile, Lii Fenghan, struck dozens of times by the giant python's tail, remained unscathed thanks to his full Exorcism Armor.

The many Martial Cultivators watching from behind were initially tense due to the Marsh Python's ferocity, but upon seeing Lii Fenghan's heroic and powerful performance, they sighed in admiration and finally felt relieved.

Among the hundreds of Martial Cultivators, someone loudly cheered, "Such a ferocious Hammer Technique, worthy of an expert ranked fourteenth on the Hero List!"

Someone else, with a fawning expression, shouted, "Truly a genius with the Dragon Ape Bloodline! Once you advance to the Late Stage of the fourth layer, you will surely become a mighty hero. Congratulations to Young Master Lii for slaying a Tier Three Demon!"

Those under Lii Fenghan's command wore proud expressions, feeling quite smug.

In the crowd, only the members of the Yin Talisman Sect, including Zhao Yufei, frowned heavily.

As man and serpent fought fiercely, Lin Xuankong observed carefully for a while, suddenly sensing something, and frowned.

He looked up at the sky and whispered, "Something's going to happen!"

"What's going to happen?" Lin Jiao asked.

Following Lin Xuankong's gaze, he looked up at the sky.

Then, he felt a raindrop on his face, and his expression changed drastically. "Crap! Big trouble is coming!"

Lin Xuankong suddenly gripped the Iron Rod in his hand tightly, frowning and intending to head toward the stone house, but Hu Shuo grabbed him. "It's raining, big trouble is coming! Steward Lin, don't wander off! Stay with Steward Zhao and Steward Xua!"

At that moment, raindrops started to fall steadily.

Lii Fenghan, in the midst of the battle, felt the raindrops on his body. His eyes widened instantly, a look of horror appearing on his face. He no longer dared to attack the Marsh Python and quickly retreated, but it was too late!

The moment the raindrops fell on the Tier Three Marsh Python, its body suddenly swelled to two to three times its original size, becoming as thick as a stone roller and sixty to seventy feet long. Simultaneously, its neck pulsed, and two bizarre, gigantic heads emerged.

One head resembled a human's but had a flat face with no eyes, nose, or ears—only a gigantic mouth filled with hundreds of sharp fangs, constantly roaring.

The other head was somewhat like a sheep's, long-faced with horns, similarly lacking eyes, nose, or ears, possessing only a fanged mouth!

The giant python's lantern-like eyes locked onto the retreating Lii Fenghan. Its enormous body twisted, catching up to him with a speed several times faster than before. All three heads aimed their gigantic mouths at Lii Fenghan, and an immensely powerful suction immediately enveloped him!

Lii Fenghan's retreating body was instantly held in place by the suction. Although he wore the Exorcism Armor and his body was unharmed, his exposed eyes and mouth couldn't withstand the terrifying Demonic Power suction. Within one-fifth of a breath, his thick Qi Blood turned into a blood mist, drained completely dry!

The Battle Armor, losing the support of his Qi Blood, instantly reverted to the Profound Iron Hammer.

His body began to tremble violently; his flesh and organs shattered into pieces, sucked into the giant python's mouths. Only a skeleton, along with the Profound Iron Hammer, remained, plummeting into the ten-thousand-foot deep abyss!

In the next moment, the Tier Three giant python glanced at the Martial Cultivators on the mountaintop. Its vertical pupils widened slightly as it twisted forward, covering thousands of feet in a blink and nearing the summit.

Behind it, countless other Marsh Pythons, also enormously enlarged, twisted rapidly along the iron chains!

This scene unfolded too quickly. The many Martial Cultivators, who were just laughing and cheering moments ago, were caught off guard by the sudden, disastrous turn in the battle.

Their expressions changed drastically, and they hurriedly retreated. But at this moment, surrounded by ten-thousand-foot cliffs on the mountaintop platform, where could they retreat? If the giant python rushed onto the platform, how could they possibly survive?

"Damn it! A bunch of useless fools!"

San Gu glanced at the retreating Martial Cultivators, wiped the rain from his face, and cursed at them. Then, all six of his eyes turned to the charging Tier Three giant python, a profound look of dread appearing on his face.

Gritting his teeth, his six arms shook, the weapons on them transforming into Exorcism Armor. He then marched toward the Chain Bridge, followed by the four-armed Martial Cultivators and six long-armed Martial Cultivators, their faces filled with grief and indignation.

But against the Tier Three Marsh Python, whose power had massively increased, it was an extremely tough fight even for these four-armed and long-armed Martial Cultivators, who were far more powerful than ordinary Tier Threes.

Were it not for San Gu's six powerful weapons and his relentless, dense attacks preventing the giant python's three heads from using their Absorption of Qi and Blood, someone might have already met Lii Fenghan's fate in an instant!

In the rain, these dozen or so people surrounded the giant python, continually attacking.

Their weapons smashed against the serpent's body, creating resounding THUMPS.

Large waves of air ripples spread out, turning countless raindrops in the vicinity into mist!

After a dozen or so breaths, one long-armed Martial Cultivator failed to dodge in time. Struck in the head by the giant python, he was instantly flung off the Chain Bridge, plummeting into the ten-thousand-foot deep abyss below!

The six-eyed San Gu, seeing this, launched a rapid and fierce attack on the python's heads with his six weapons, but his expression grew increasingly grim.

Amidst the attacks, he occasionally glanced at the sky with two or three eyes. He knew that while they could suppress the Tier Three giant python for now, there was no way to kill it. Their only hope for victory was for this rain to stop quickly!

Suddenly, on the mountaintop platform, a Martial Cultivator let out an extremely shocked shout, "Damn, what's that?"

Chapter 100: Exceeding Limits with Primordial Divine Technique, One Strike Shocks a Thousand Pythons_3

The nearby Martial Cultivators turned their heads and looked at the mountain peak platform behind them. The fighting San Gu heard the roar and couldn't resist glancing over with two of its eyes. At that, the hearts of San Gu and the many Martial Cultivators suddenly tightened.

In the vast curtain of rain, the dozens of scattered white bone piles on the mountain peak platform unexpectedly began to stir. Countless bones rapidly writhed out, fusing together under the rain's nourishment. They instantly grew flesh and, in moments, transformed into six Tier Three giant pythons!

These six Tier Three giant pythons were even larger than the one on the Chain Bridge. Their bodies were covered with incredibly dense patterns, and terrifying human and sheep heads had also grown from their necks!

Seeing this scene, everyone present felt their hearts plummet.

Who would have thought that the Marsh Python Demons were so cunning and insane? Relying on their near-immortal regenerative abilities, they had cunningly hidden bones in advance among the piles of shattered skeletons on the mountain peak platform!

"This is just... holy crap!" Lin Jiao exclaimed, his face turning deathly pale as he grabbed Nalan Yunzhu's hand.

"We're doomed, doomed!" a Tier Two Martial Cultivator cried, collapsing to the ground in terror.

"Damn it, we should have cleaned out those bones earlier! We're finished!" another Martial Cultivator lamented, his face full of fear and regret.

Now, even the usually confident Xu Bei and Zhao Yufei were trembling all over. They had imagined battling Tier Three Demons, but they had never conceived of facing seven Tier Three Marsh Pythons simultaneously—especially Marsh Pythons in the rain!

At this moment, with a Tier Three Marsh Python blocking the Chain Bridge and six even more powerful Tier Three Marsh Pythons on the mountain peak platform poised to devour them, there seemed to be no path to survival for anyone present!

Break through the Chain Bridge!

With its six arms waving and radiating an overwhelming, ferocious aura, the Six-Eyed San Gu felt a chill creep into its heart. It knew that the only escape was to avoid the six Tier Three Marsh Pythons on the platform and carve a bloody path across the Chain Bridge. It roared explosively, no longer paying attention to the Martial Cultivators on the platform. Leading the four-armed and long-armed Martial Cultivators behind it, they unleashed all their power, attacking the Tier Three Marsh Python before them.

However, even though these dozen or so individuals fought desperately, forcing the Tier Three Marsh Python back repeatedly, hundreds, even thousands, of Tier One and Tier Two Marsh Pythons swarmed behind the giant serpent. Carving a bloody path out was proving to be incredibly difficult.

The Six-Eyed San Gu, facing the vast curtain of rain and the seemingly endless Marsh Pythons, felt despair gradually cloud its six eyes.

Meanwhile, on the mountain peak platform, the six Tier Three giant pythons were already rapidly slithering towards the over one hundred Martial Cultivators.

The crowd instantly erupted into chaos, scattering like a disturbed hornet's nest. Some rushed towards the Chain Bridge. Others ran wildly in all directions. Some charged towards the mountain's edge. And still others drew their weapons, madly confronting the Tier Three giant pythons head-on!

The entire mountain peak platform had descended into utter chaos!

In the blink of an eye, at least a dozen people were drained by the Marsh Pythons, reduced to withered bones. Even Xu Bei, who had broken away from the Yin Talisman Sect members and fled alone, was ensnared by a Tier Three giant python!

Amidst the chaos, Lin Xuankong quickly rushed towards the stone hut.

Zhao Yufei, Hu Shuo, and the others managed to find each other in the chaotic crowd. They gathered together, each drawing their weapons, their faces etched with despair as they scanned their surroundings.

The next moment, Zhao Yufei's expression changed. Through the rain, she saw a Tier Three Marsh Python, having just devoured a third-level Martial Cultivator, now heading straight for the four of them!

Zhao Yufei's two Dragon Blood Fierce Dogs tucked their tails between their legs, barking furiously at the approaching Marsh Python.

Zhao Yufei bit her lip firmly. Her Silver Hook trembled and transformed into the Exorcism Armor, enveloping her entire body. She knew that no matter how terrified she felt, she had to fight!

Just as the Tier Three Marsh Python was about to lunge at the four of them, its gigantic body suddenly stiffened. It froze in place, about twenty yards away from them.

Zhao Yufei, Hu Shuo, Nalan Yunzhu, and the others stared in astonishment. They saw the massive python's body go completely rigid, as if something behind it had seized its tail!

Their gazes followed the Marsh Python's body back, and they saw a figure standing at its tail. Through the curtain of rain, they saw that the person wore a Daoist Robe and had a full head of silver hair. A Jade Belt was fastened around their waist, from which hung a Silver Token. It was none other than Lin Xuankong, the Silver Jade Steward whom Zhao Yufei had repeatedly looked down upon!

At this moment, the silver-haired Daoist was gripping the Tier Three Marsh Python's tail with a single hand. Despite the python's frenzied thrashing, it couldn't move forward even an inch!

He was holding back a Tier Three Marsh Python, renowned for its immense strength and size, with just one hand? Single-handedly?

Lin Jiao's eyes widened in shock, and he stammered, "S-Steward... Steward Lin, th-this... this... such strength?"

Nalan Yunzhu was equally, if not more, astonished.

Hu Shuo was so shocked he nearly dropped his Longsword.

Zhao Yufei, clad in her Silver Armor, stared with her cold, beautiful eyes wide with disbelief. Even her two Dragon Blood Fierce Dogs gaped in astonishment!

Just then, the Tier Three Marsh Python's vertical pupils contracted. Its body coiled, and it raised its three heads high, fixing its glare on Lin Xuankong!

A trace of helplessness flickered across Lin Xuankong's face. I originally planned to hurry back to the stone hut, change into my black clothes and mask, and save everyone as the Conical Hat Guest. Unfortunately, I had barely made it back and hadn't even changed when I saw Hu Shuo and Lin Jiao in danger! I could ignore Xu Bei being devoured by a Marsh Python, but Hu Shuo and Lin Jiao are my fellow sect members. I can't bring myself to abandon them. The Conical Hat Guest identity has too many enemies; I can't expose it. It seems I'll have to use my Nine-Seal Genius identity for now!