

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 101: Bai Zihan Vs Mo Yichen! [1,052 words]

Chapter 101: Bai Zihan Vs Mo Yichen!

"Hmph! Enough talk, let's fight!"

Mo Yichen said.

Bai Zihan kept his eyes on Mo Yichen's sword rather than Mo Yichen himself.

According to the System's analysis, Mo Yichen's entire strength lay in that sword.

At the moment, the sword didn't emit the slightest hint of Qi, making it look like an ordinary weapon.

This made it difficult for Bai Zihan to determine to what extent Mo Yichen had strengthened the sword.

To Earth-Grade? To Heaven-Grade?

If it were at the Heaven-Grade level, it might give Bai Zihan some trouble.

Despite Mo Yichen clearly looking down on Bai Zihan, he wasn't planning to hold back.

The fact that he was using his Divine Sword, along with his Golden Core cultivation, proved this—quite different from typical villains.

The crowd went silent, their attention entirely focused on Bai Zihan and Mo Yichen.

Mo Yichen tightened his grip on the sword, the air around him growing tense.

The Mei Clan members watched with bated breath, some already murmuring words of encouragement.

Swish!

Mo Yichen lunged forward, his sword blazing with a golden light filled with powerful Qi.

He moved with precision and speed, his sword slicing through the air, aiming straight for Bai Zihan's torso.

But Bai Zihan didn't move.

Calmly, he took his time and drew his own sword—an Earth-Grade sword.

"No way! An Earth-Grade Artifact?!"

"How can Bai Zihan use an Earth-Grade Artifact against Mo Yichen? Isn't that an unfair advantage?"

...

The Mei Clan members were stunned.

To them, an Earth-Grade Artifact was so rare and precious that they could only dream of owning one.

Some even thought Bai Zihan was taking advantage of his background, fighting unfairly.

Well, when they first saw a Core Formation cultivator going up against a Golden Core expert, they didn't think it was unfair at all—but now that Mo Yichen was at disadvantage, suddenly it's unfair.

Hypocrites, just like everyone else.

!!!

Mo Yichen also felt the power and pressure radiating from Bai Zihan's weapon, but he showed no signs of stopping.

His sword descended like a golden comet, its radiant light fierce and overwhelming.

But in that instant—

Clang!

A crisp, metallic ring echoed through the hall.

Bai Zihan's Earth-Grade sword met Mo Yichen's strike, effortlessly halting it in place.

The two blades ground against each other, sparks flying as spiritual energy clashed.

Mo Yichen's confident smile wavered.

"What?!"

He had expected to slice through Bai Zihan's defense, to see panic in his eyes. Instead, he was met with a calm, almost bored expression.

Even with an Earth-Grade Sword, Mo Yichen believed that the wielder's strength mattered most.

It was like a baby with a knife—dangerous, but not necessarily powerful. Easily subdued by an adult.

And Mo Yichen thought he was that adult.

"Is that all you've got?"

Bai Zihan sneered.

(Looks like the sword has been upgraded between Earth-Grade and Profound-Grade!)

It was similar to Top Profound-Grade Sword which meant that Mo Yichen wasn't too much of an opponent for him.

"Don't get cocky!"

Mo Yichen roared, his Qi flaring as he channeled even more power into his strike.

A brilliant golden aura exploded around him, the pressure of his Golden Core Stage cultivation surging.

The marble floor beneath his feet cracked, wind howled, and the weaker disciples in the hall stumbled back, their faces pale.

"That's Mo Yichen's true strength!"

"No way! The pressure even more than when our elders unleash their Qi!"

The younger disciples staggered back, some even dropping to one knee, unable to withstand the pressure.

The Mei Clan elders looked thrilled, their eyes filled with hope once again.

But Bai Zihan?

He stood as steady as a mountain.

His Earth-Grade sword continued to hold against Mo Yichen's empowered strike, the blade glowing with a silver sheen as Bai Zihan's own spiritual energy surged.

And then...

A powerful Qi burst from Bai Zihan's body—radiant, sharp, and overwhelming.

Golden Core Stage!

His cultivation was no longer hidden, not that he was keeping it a secret anyways.

The oppressive pressure of his Golden Core Stage swept through the hall like a tidal wave, crashing against Mo Yichen's aura and even somewhat overwhelming it.

"What...?!"

Mo Yichen's confident expression twisted in shock. His body trembled under the crushing force of Bai Zihan's powerful Qi.

The Mei Clan members, who had just been cheering, fell silent. Their faces turned pale, some even stepping back instinctively.

"Golden Core... He's at Golden Core Stage too?"

"But how? Bai Zihan was supposed to be a Core Formation Stage waste!"

"So it was all a lie? Did the Bai Clan deceive the entire world?"

"How can this be possible? He's at the late stage of the Golden Core Realm!"

"Golden Core Stage and an Earth-Grade Weapon—can Mo Yichen win against that?"

...

Even Mei Rulan's face turned pale as she looked at Bai Zihan.

She always thought it was strange that someone as cunning as Bai Zihan would fall for Mo Yichen's trap and accept his challenge.

But now it all began to make sense—he accepted because he was never going to lose in the first place.

The Bai Clan's elders and disciples were equally shocked, their initial panic transforming into astonishment.

The Mei Clan might think of Bai Zihan's "waste" reputation as a deceptive scheme of Bai Clan. But the Bai Clan knew better.

Bai Zihan wasn't just called a waste because of his trashy cultivation talent but also because of his refusal to work hard.

Giving him resources was like pouring fuel into a broken engine—no matter how much they gave, there was no progress.

Hiding his power?

Impossible! With Bai Zihan's personality, they couldn't imagine him keeping up an act since birth.

So how did he reach the Golden Core Stage?

Grand Elder Bai Ren's eyes glinted with pride and excitement.

"So he already reached the Golden Core Stage. I thought he was hiding something, but I never expected this."

Grand Elder Bai Ren's evaluation of Bai Zihan as the future Clan Leader soared.

Even without cultivation talent, he had always been satisfied with Bai Zihan's cunning and leadership qualities.

But now, with such astonishing cultivation talent as well, which could only be called perfect for the Bai Clan Leader—both brains and brawn—there was nothing left to complain about.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 102: Heaven Chosen Last Stand! [1,125 words]

Chapter 102: Heaven Chosen Last Stand!

Mo Yichen's arms shook as he tried to press his sword forward, but it wouldn't budge. His power was being completely overwhelmed by Bai Zihan's.

He had always believed that even if a Nascent Soul expert were to face him, he could hold his own.

But Bai Zihan was like an immovable mountain, utterly unaffected by his strength.

With his superior cultivation level and a body refined by the Primordial Chaos Body technique, there was no way someone at Mo Yichen's level could overpower him.

"This can't be happening!"

Mo Yichen's expression twisted, panic flashing in his eyes.

He gritted his teeth and leapt backward, his feet skidding against the marble floor.

The golden aura around him surged even brighter, expanding outward like a raging storm.

His pride was cracking. A Golden Core Stage cultivator—no, a Late-Stage Golden Core Stage—stood before him.

And it was Bai Zihan of all people!

"I don't believe this!"

Mo Yichen roared, his face a mix of disbelief and fury.

"You... You were hiding your strength all along!"

Bai Zihan chuckled, a mocking smile tugging at his lips.

"Hiding? Maybe! What? Scared already?"

"Arrogant bastard!"

Mo Yichen snarled, but this time, his voice was tinged with desperation.

His grip tightened on his sword—Eternal Spirit Sword—an evolving divine weapon, his greatest trump card.

He could feel the sword's hunger for battle, its desire to devour and grow stronger.

"I'll show you... I'll show you the difference between us!"

Mo Yichen's aura flared once again, and he raised his sword. His Qi condensed, swirling around him like a golden vortex.

"Radiant Fang Slash!"

A brilliant arc of golden light exploded from his blade, rushing toward Bai Zihan with devastating speed.

But Bai Zihan didn't even flinch.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword—First Form: Flickering Shadow Step!"

His body blurred, becoming a series of overlapping afterimages.

The radiant slash cut through one of the afterimages, but the real Bai Zihan was already gone.

Mo Yichen's eyes widened.

"Where—?!"

A cold, calm voice echoed behind him.

"Over here!"

Mo Yichen spun around just in time to see Bai Zihan's sword flashing toward him—fast, too fast to fully react.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Mo Yichen barely managed to parry, his sword clashing repeatedly with Bai Zihan's.

But each time their blades met, Bai Zihan seemed to split into multiple shadows, his strikes coming from unpredictable angles.

"Damn it!"

Mo Yichen shouted, his arms going numb under the relentless assault.

"Struggling already?"

Bai Zihan's voice dripped with contempt.

"You will lose if you continue like this."

"Shut up!"

Mo Yichen roared, pouring even more Qi into his sword.

But it didn't matter.

"Second Form: Phantom Light Strike!"

Bai Zihan's figure flickered, vanishing from Mo Yichen's sight. A split second later, pain exploded across Mo Yichen's left arm.

"AAARGH!"

Blood sprayed as a deep gash appeared on his arm, his sleeve torn and soaked in red.

The Mei Clan members gasped, their excitement rapidly turning to horror.

"How did he...?"

"I didn't even see him move!"

"How is Bai Zihan so powerful? It doesn't make any sense!"

...

The power Bai Zihan displayed was enough to even overshadow some of the Mei Clan's elders.

He wasn't just strong—he was overwhelmingly so.

Even by Heaven Sword Sect standards, Bai Zihan's current strength was near the top, rivaled only by Core Disciples and above.

On the other side, the Bai Clan elders were equally stunned—but for a different reason.

"When did Bai Zihan achieve minor mastery over the Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword?"

"He used to struggle with even the Flickering Shadow Step. How did he become so proficient?"

"I thought his lack of combat experience would be a disadvantage, but it seems my worries were unfounded. With his mastery of the Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword, someone like Mo Yichen doesn't stand a chance."

...

Bai Clan members went from panic to confidence without any worries.

With Bai Zihan's overwhelming strength and his mastery of the Heaven-Grade Technique of the Bai Clan, there was no longer any doubt in their minds about his victory.

Mo Yichen stumbled back, clutching his bleeding arm, his breathing ragged.

But even when pushed to the brink of defeat, Mo Yichen didn't feel despair.

His pride and arrogance wouldn't allow it.

What he was still looking for was a chance—a chance to overturn the situation, just as he had done many times before.

"Falling Star Slash!"

Mo Yichen roared, swinging his sword with all his might.

The air shimmered as a blinding, crescent-shaped beam tore towards Bai Zihan.

But Bai Zihan didn't dodge.

"Third Form: Nine Shadows Flowing Light!"

A surge of silver light enveloped his body, and he seemed to split into nine identical shadows, each moving in a different direction—like illusions, yet each as sharp and deadly as the original.

The Falling Star Slash crashed into one of the shadows, but it passed through like mist.

"This can't be!"

Mo Yichen's eyes widened in horror.

And then—

Nine silver lights converged on him.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash! Slash!

Nine precise, lightning-fast strikes slashed across his body.

Mo Yichen's expression froze, his eyes wide and unfocused. His sword slipped from his grip, clattering to the ground.

Blood sprayed from nine deep wounds crisscrossing his body. His knees buckled, and he collapsed to the ground, gasping, his vision blurring.

"Impossible..."

He whispered, his voice a faint gasp.

Mo Yichen's body swayed, blood pouring from the crisscrossing wounds on his chest. His vision blurred, and his legs wobbled, barely keeping him upright.

But his pride wouldn't let him collapse—not yet.

"Not... not yet!"

Mo Yichen roared, his voice hoarse but defiant.

The golden aura around him exploded, blazing with a furious, almost blinding light.

His Qi surged to its absolute peak, the ground beneath his feet cracking under the pressure.

"Eternal Spirit Sword... awaken!"

Mo Yichen screamed, and his sword—which had seemed so ordinary before—suddenly erupted with golden radiance.

Its blade elongated, ethereal runes glowed along its surface, and a fierce, divine presence enveloped it.

Even Bai Zihan's expression shifted slightly.

"Oh?" he murmured, a flicker of genuine interest in his eyes.

It seemed like Mo Yichen was burning his life force for that extra boost in his strength, specifically to unleash the full power of the Eternal Spirit Sword.

Mo Yichen's hair turned gray in an instant, his youthful appearance rapidly aging, but his aura continued to grow—higher, stronger—reaching a level that made the air tremble.

"Bai Zihan!"

Mo Yichen's voice echoed like thunder.

"Try dodging this!"

A violent, blinding light burst from his sword, condensing into a massive, golden blade of energy—a phantom sword towering above him.

This was Mo Yichen's ultimate, last-ditch attack!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 103: A Heaven's Chosen Falls [1,642 words]

Chapter 103: A Heaven's Chosen Falls

The Bai Clan elders watching from the sidelines instantly felt their hearts tighten.

"That's... that's at the level of a Nascent Soul cultivator's attack!"

"Should we intervene?! If that strikes young master—"

"Wait!"

Grand Elder Bai Ren's calm, authoritative voice cut through the panic. His expression remained serene, his arms folded behind his back.

"Watch closely."

"But Grand Elder—"

"Trust in Bai Zihan. If something happens, I will take the responsibility!"

With the Grand Elder's words, the elders had no choice but to stay where they were.

They also thought that with the Grand Elder there, if Bai Zihan were to be in real trouble, he could save him easily.

The Mei Clan, on the other hand, held a final hope that this attack could defeat Bai Zihan and turn things around.

Mo Yichen's face twisted in fury and desperation as he swung his blazing sword down.

"Divine Annihilation Slash!"

The massive, radiant blade of energy tore through the air, crashing toward Bai Zihan with the power to obliterate anything in its path.

The sheer force of it sent violent gusts howling across the hall, the floor cracking, and the walls shuddering.

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed, but he didn't move to dodge. A better term would be that it was impossible to dodge an attack of that scale.

Rather than trying to attempt dodging which is set to fail, it was better to focus on defending.

As the blinding golden energy engulfed him—

Boom!

The impact was deafening, a massive shockwave tearing through the hall.

Dust and debris erupted everywhere, and the surrounding disciples were forced to shield their faces from the violent wind.

For a moment, everything was chaos.

When the dust settled, all eyes fell on the center of the devastation.

At the center of the devastation stood Bai Zihan, his figure still upright but far from unscathed.

His robes were torn, charred, and stained with fresh blood. Thin cuts crisscrossed his arms and shoulders, and a deeper gash stretched along his left side, bleeding freely.

A thin trail of blood ran down his forehead, trickling past his sharp, cold eyes.

Yet despite the injuries, his stance was steady—unwavering.

Bai Zihan's lips twisted into a faint, almost amused smile.

"As expected of Heaven's Chosen..." he muttered, wiping the blood from his forehead with the back of his hand.

"They always have a trump card to overturn any situation."

His gaze drifted down to his chest, where a faint, silvery light shimmered briefly before fading—his Earth-Grade Armor, one of the reasons he was still standing without much trouble.

Even with his Golden Core Stage cultivation and his body refined by the Primordial Chaos Body technique, the sheer force of Mo Yichen's Divine Annihilation Slash had nearly pushed him to his limit.

"If I hadn't been at the Golden Core Stage..." Bai Zihan thought, his expression darkening slightly.

"I would have been in serious trouble."

This is why you can never be too careful against the protagonist—they always have something that can easily turn the battle in their favor.

Even Mo Yichen, a mere one-star fate-grade Heaven's Chosen, had such a devastating attack.

No need to think about what Lin Xuan and Bai Xinyue have in store as their final trump card.

His attention shifted to Mo Yichen, who stood a few dozen meters away, panting heavily.

The golden radiance around Mo Yichen was flickering, his once-majestic aura rapidly fading.

The Eternal Spirit Sword in his hand had dimmed, its divine light receding.

Mo Yichen's face was pale, streaked with sweat.

His gray hair and withered appearance betrayed the severe cost of unleashing his sword's full power.

But even in his current state, his eyes burned with stubborn defiance.

"You... you're still standing...?"

Mo Yichen's mouth hung open, his eyes wide with shock and horror.

"No... impossible..."

It was an attack that could even kill a Nascent Soul Realm cultivator, not to mention Bai Zihan, who was at the Golden Core Stage.

He even gave up his life force in order to enhance it, leaving no way for Bai Zihan to defend against this attack.

He couldn't believe that Bai Zihan was able to stand after taking a direct hit from his most powerful attack.

"I... I was supposed to..."

"You were supposed to what?" Bai Zihan stepped forward, looming over him. "Be the hero? Save the Mei Clan?"

Mo Yichen's trembling fingers reached for his sword, but Bai Zihan's foot came down on it, pinning it to the ground.

"You're nothing," Bai Zihan said, his voice cold and merciless.

"Just a fool who thought his luck made him invincible."

Bai Zihan looked at Mo Yichen, his hair white and his face pale, with life hanging by a thread.

It seemed like he was really on his last breath, without any more trump cards.

"Without this sword, what are you even?"

Mo Yichen's eyes widened, his face paling as the truth hit him like a crashing wave.

Moreover, Bai Zihan's words seemed like he knew exactly how Mo Yichen rose to prominence.

Was Bai Zihan always after his Eternal Spirit Sword?

That was his first thought when Bai Zihan spoke those words.

But there was no way for him to know.

Because Bai Zihan's cold gaze lingered on him, telling him that he wasn't going to walk out of this alive.

Finally, Mo Yichen realized that his life was really in danger.

"You... You can't!"

Mo Yichen's voice cracked, his pale, withered face twisted with fear.

"I was supposed to rise! I was supposed to stand atop of everyone!"

He screamed, his voice filled with desperation.

"My life was finally turning around! I can't die here! Not like this!"

Bai Zihan's lips curled into a mocking smile.

Of course, his life was turning around, and with the usual trope, he might as well become one of the strongest in a few years.

But there was no way that he, Bai Zihan, would show mercy to his enemy, especially one who could make a comeback like Heaven's Chosen.

"Please... I—"

"Please?"

Bai Zihan sneered.

"Begging now, are we? Where's that arrogance? Didn't you want to be a hero to save the Mei Clan?"

Mo Yichen's breath came in panicked gasps, his thoughts racing. No, he couldn't die here.

Not when he finally had a chance to stand at the peak, to become the strongest— he had survived so much, overcome so many obstacles—

But now, staring into Bai Zihan's cold, unfeeling eyes, all those dreams seemed to crumble like dust.

"Please stop!"

A desperate voice cried out.

It was Mei Rulan, her face pale, her hands clasped together in a pleading gesture.

"Young Master Bai, Please... Please spare him! He's already lost—"

"Rulan!"

A firm, rough voice cut through her plea.

Her father, Mei Yunhe, grabbed her arm, his expression cold and filled with fear.

"Silence, girl! Don't make this worse."

Mei Yunhe's grip tightened, his voice a harsh whisper.

"We've already offended Bai Zihan. Do you want him to turn his sword on us next? We have no right to plead for Mo Yichen."

"But—"

"There is no 'but'!"

Mei Yunhe's eyes were filled with dread.

"Look around you. Mo Yichen lost. Next, it might be our turn. We have no power to plead for anyone, including ourselves."

Mei Yunhe knew that the fate that awaited them would be no better than Mo Yichen's.

Why uselessly plead for mercy for Mo Yichen when they were in no position to even save themselves?

Stopping Bai Zihan would be like digging their own graves. Even if he had considered showing mercy, offending him now would only make things worse.

Mei Yunhe shook his head, disappointment flickering in his eyes as he looked at his daughter.

If she had a shred of sense to think about the consequences of her actions, they wouldn't be neck-deep in this shit to begin with.

Mei Rulan's knees buckled, tears spilling over, but she dared not say another word.

She could only watch, helpless, as Bai Zihan's blade hovered above Mo Yichen's head.

Mo Yichen's trembling grew violent, his voice now barely a whisper.

"No... please... I... I don't want to die..."

Bai Zihan looked down at him, an amused glint in his cold eyes.

"Well, you should've thought about that before you arrogantly challenged me."

"I... I—"

Mo Yichen's heart pounded, his mind racing with regret. He thought he could be the hero.

Thought he could save the Mei Clan, impress the girl he liked, and defeat what he believed to be an arrogant young master.

He thought the world would play out just like always. Even if things got difficult, he would somehow turn it around and emerge victorious—

But no.

This was reality.

He lost his sword. He had no Qi left. His life force was barely holding him together.

Death seemed like the only outcome.

Bai Zihan's gaze remained indifferent.

(Would something happen if I kill him?)

A fleeting thought crossed his mind. Heaven's intervention? A curse? Some sort of backlash for killing a Heaven's Chosen?

After all, Heaven's Chosen were those who walked the path Heaven itself laid out. Killing one might be seen as defying fate itself.

What would happen if he killed a Heaven's Chosen? Would the world shift? Would fate itself retaliate?

He didn't know.

But he would find out.

Mo Yichen's vision blurred, his body feeling like lead. He couldn't even lift his hands to block the incoming strike.

Bai Zihan's sword flashed—a silver arc cutting through the air.

Slash!

A perfect, merciless stroke.

Blood sprayed in an elegant, crimson arc, staining the already devastated floor.

Mo Yichen's wide, desperate eyes seemed frozen for an instant—then the light in them faded.

Thud!

His body crumpled to the ground, lifeless.

The hall fell deathly silent.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 104: No Retribution?[1,260 words]

Chapter 104: No Retribution?

The oppressive silence pressed down on everyone—Bai Clan elders, Mei Clan members, and countless disciples who had watched the duel unfold with bated breath.

Blood pooled beneath Mo Yichen's lifeless body, his pale, withered face frozen in despair.

His empty eyes stared into nothingness, the brilliant light of a Heaven's Chosen snuffed out in an instant.

For a long moment, no one dared to speak.

Bai Zihan's cold, indifferent gaze swept across the silent crowd.

His once-pristine robes were tattered, his body marked with wounds, but he stood tall and calm.

Then, he leaned down, his bloodied hand calmly reaching for the Eternal Spirit Sword, still gleaming faintly beside Mo Yichen's corpse.

"Mine now!"

He muttered, the corner of his lips twitching into a faint smile.

This was the cheat item that had propelled Mo Yichen to the status of a Heaven's Chosen.

Although Mo Yichen had only managed to upgrade it to Top Profound-Grade, Bai Zihan knew that with the resources he had, he could easily enhance it to Earth-Grade and perhaps even Heaven-Grade in the future.

He gripped the hilt, feeling a faint resistance—perhaps because the sword knew that Bai Zihan wasn't his owner.

Bai Zihan didn't care and put the Eternal Spirit Sword into his storage ring along with his other sword.

The Bai Clan elders watched as Bai Zihan calmly claimed Mo Yichen's weapon.

They didn't quite understand why he was interested in a mere Top Profound-Grade sword, especially since he already possessed better weapons.

However, that was the most important. They were unable to process what they had just witnessed.

This was Bai Zihan—their so-called arrogant, talentless young master—standing victorious over the body of a Golden Core genius.

True, Bai Zihan had always been known as the most infuriating, scheming villain, but in their minds, he was still just a spoiled brat who had probably never killed anyone.

Sure, he was a pain in the ass, impossible to deal with, but... this was different.

This was his first kill—his first time taking a life.

And yet, he didn't look shaken.

If anything, he seemed calm, almost as if this was just another task to complete.

'If there was ever someone born to be a villain, it had to be Bai Zihan.'

They all thought this as his ruthlessness remained imprinted in their minds.

But more shocking than his ruthlessness was his strength.

Late Golden Core Stage!

Even their hailed genius Bai Jian was only at that level.

And Bai Zihan didn't just reach that stage—he had achieved minor mastery over the Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword Technique and survived an attack that even a Nascent Soul Realm cultivator would struggle to endure.

Their view of Bai Zihan had been overturned countless times today.

Mei Rulan collapsed to her knees, her face blank with shock, her tears mixing with the dust beneath her.

Mei Yunhe's face tightened, but he forced himself to maintain his composure, gripping his daughter's shoulder, silently praying they wouldn't be next.

Bai Zihan turned his gaze to the Mei Clan. His eyes, sharp and indifferent, swept over them like a blade.

"Well?"

His voice echoed coldly.

"Anyone else want to try their luck?"

The Mei Clan members flinched, lowering their heads.

"Thought so!"

Bai Zihan smirked.

He waited, half-expecting some kind of divine retribution for killing a Heaven's Chosen. A curse? A bolt of lightning? But nothing came.

Maybe because Mo Yichen was just a one-star fate-grade Heaven's Chosen?

Or maybe Heaven's Chosen were just those with protagonist-like cheats—lucky, talented, but not truly protected by the heavens themselves.

In any case, killing them didn't seem to bring any divine punishment.

But, of course, the System had a different reaction—flashing notification after notification in his mind.

(Haha... I'll check them later!)

Bai Zihan thought, barely containing his excitement.

Who knows what kind of heaven-defying rewards he would get for killing a Heaven's Chosen?

But he couldn't afford to get distracted now. He had to finish what he started before heading back to the Bai Clan and checking his rewards.

Grand Elder Bai Ren's eyes shone with pride, a satisfied smile spreading across his face.

"Marvelous... Simply marvelous!" he praised.

Some might say Bai Zihan was too merciless for killing an opponent who had merely challenged him.

But one needed to be ruthless toward their enemies—especially those who might seek revenge in the future.

Leaving a talent like Mo Yichen alive would have been a disaster waiting to happen.

Bai Zihan turned his cold gaze toward the Mei Clan members.

"Now that the nuisance is gone, shall we get back to business?"

Panic erupted among the Mei Clan members, some even stumbling back in terror.

They were back to square one—perhaps even worse—because Mo Yichen might have only angered Bai Zihan further, making the consequences even more severe.

Ironically, the reality was the exact opposite. Bai Zihan couldn't be in a better mood, especially with the System bombarding him with notifications about rewards.

Bai Zihan's eyes were already locked on Mei Yunhe, the Mei Clan patriarch.

"Patriarch Mei," Bai Zihan's voice was almost mocking. "I trust you won't disappoint me."

Mei Yunhe's face was pale, his lips trembling.

"Y-Young Master Bai... please, say what you want!"

He had already resigned himself to his fate.

Watching Bai Zihan kill Mo Yichen had shattered any illusions they had about the young master being a pampered waste.

They had fallen into a trap, and now they were caught with no way out.

Their last hope, Mo Yichen, had been crushed.

There was no point in resisting and making things worse.

All he could do was pray that Bai Zihan would show some mercy—though, honestly, that felt like asking for a miracle.

Bai Zihan's voice rang out, cold and unyielding.

"Half!"

Mei Yunhe's face filled with confusion.

"H-Half...?"

"Yes. Half of everything your Mei Clan owns."

Bai Zihan repeated, his tone casual, as if showing mercy.

"We'll take half of your wealth, your treasures, your cultivation resources—everything."

The Mei Clan members trembled, some clutching at each other in shock.

Half their wealth? That was a crippling demand in itself.

But Bai Zihan wasn't finished.

"Oh, and there's one more thing."

His cold gaze swept over the kneeling Mei Clan members.

"Half of your clan members will have their cultivation crippled."

A wave of despair washed over the Mei Clan like a suffocating tide.

Even Mei Yunhe, who had mentally prepared himself for the worst, felt his knees weaken.

"Y-Young Master Bai... please... isn't that too—"

"Too much?"

Bai Zihan's lips curled into a mocking smile.

"Trust me, I'm being generous. I could kill every single one of you instead. Whether you want to do that yourself or need my help, you can decide."

Mei Yunhe's mouth opened and closed, his voice dying in his throat.

Honestly, he expected everyone to be killed or similar fate, so just half of the Mei Clan being crippled didn't seem that bad.

But even with half of their Clan members being crippled, it was the same as destroying their Mei Clan.

He understood all too well.

With half their wealth stripped away and half their cultivators crippled, the Mei Clan was done.

They might still exist, but only as a shadow of their former selves. No longer the strongest in Meihua City—they would be reduced to a struggling third-rate clan at best.

And with their current state, their rival clans would likely swoop in like vultures, eager to tear them apart.

But there was nothing he could do.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 105: Rewards For Killing a Heaven Chosen! [1,126 words]

Chapter 105: Rewards For Killing a Heaven Chosen!

Bai Zihan was on the flying ship, now more excited than ever.

His thoughts were already drifting away from the Mei Clan, which had effectively been destroyed.

After all, System rewards were waiting for him to claim.

Amidst the surprise and newfound respect from the Bai Clan elders and other disciples, he ignored them and simply stated that he needed to recuperate before heading to his room on the flying ship.

They thought it was understandable—Bai Zihan had taken a Nascent Soul-level attack head-on.

None of them dared to disturb him.

"Let's see what I got from killing a Heaven's Chosen!"

Bai Zihan muttered to himself.

"System!"

He immediately navigated to the reward section without any delay.

[Unclaimed Rewards Available]

The familiar, soothing blue light of the System interface unfolded before Bai Zihan's eyes, a series of notifications filling his vision one after another.

System Notification:

[Congratulations on killing your First Heaven's Chosen!]

Reward: 10,000 System Points

[Heaven's Chosen Killed (Mo Yichen - One-Star Fate-Grade)]

Reward: 100x Cultivation Speed Card (10 Days)

Reward: Sword Intent Comprehension Crystal (Intermediate)

Bai Zihan's eyes widened, his heartbeat quickening. This was far beyond what he had expected.

"10,000 System Points just for killing a Heaven's Chosen?"

He whispered, a grin spreading across his face.

It might have felt easy considering how weak Mo Yichen seemed compared to him, but that was just his perspective.

In reality, Mo Yichen was strong. If it had been someone else at the same cultivation level, they wouldn't have survived against him.

Facing Mo Yichen at the Golden Core Stage was like asking to be killed—practically playing with death.

So, 10,000 points was an okay amount, especially for the first time killing a Heaven's Chosen. And there were still many other rewards waiting.

"And a 100x Cultivation Speed Card? This is the first time I've gotten a 100x Cultivation Speed Card."

Even the 10x Cultivation Speed Card was insanely good for increasing cultivation speed. Who knew how high his cultivation would soar with the 100x version?

But Bai Zihan knew it was too precious to use recklessly. He would save it for the right opportunity.

But what truly caught his eye was the Sword Intent Comprehension Crystal.

"Sword Intent Comprehension Crystal..."

Bai Zihan muttered, tapping the notification.

Sword Intent Comprehension Crystal (Intermediate)

A rare crystal that directly grants a cultivator insight into Sword Intent.

Absorbing this crystal will allow you to achieve Intermediate Sword Intent directly, greatly enhancing your mastery of sword techniques.

Sword Intent!

The very concept of Sword Intent was a realm of understanding that even most Immortal cultivators struggled to achieve.

It was more than just swinging a sword—it was about understanding the sword's essence, imposing one's will through it.

Without talent, luck, and relentless dedication, it was nearly impossible to even achieve the Basic Level of Sword Intent.

It was said that one needed to devote everything to the sword for ten years just to achieve the Basic Level of Sword Intent, and a single distraction could ruin that effort.

For Intermediate Sword Intent, at least a hundred years of practice with the sword and extraordinary luck were necessary.

In the Desolate Heaven Empire, those who achieved Intermediate Sword Intent were all recorded in history as some of the strongest of their era.

And now, that same Sword Intent was within his reach.

"Intermediate Sword Intent... Haha! With this, wouldn't I be invincible?"

Bai Zihan chuckled, his eyes shining with excitement.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that if he had Sword Intent, he would be invincible within his cultivation realm—perhaps even capable of challenging those with higher cultivation levels, just like the so-called "protagonists."

(Should I use it immediately?)

Bai Zihan thought, feeling a mix of greed and impatience.

He didn't know what would happen if he used the Sword Comprehension Crystal right now.

Would he need time to process it, or would he instantly gain Sword Intent?

Logically, waiting until he returned to the Bai Clan would be the safest option. But logic was drowned out by his hunger for power.

Without a second thought, he gripped the crystal in his hand and crushed it.

A blinding silver light enveloped his body, and his mind was instantly flooded with an overwhelming sensation—countless sword techniques, concepts of sharpness, weight, speed, and an endless sense of clarity regarding the sword.

Every time he had wielded a sword—every strike, every parry, every cut—replayed in his mind.

But now, they were refined, perfected, enhanced with an ethereal aura.

His breath grew sharp, his aura subtly shifting, a faint silver sheen radiating from his body.

Sword Intent.

It wasn't just something he understood—it was something he was.

Suddenly, a terrifying surge of pressure erupted from his room, and the entire flying ship shuddered violently.

RUMBLE!

"W-What's going on?!"

One of the Bai Clan disciples outside Bai Zihan's room shouted, gripping the wall to steady himself.

"Is the ship under attack?!"

Another yelled, panic clear in his voice.

"Elders, what is happening?"

The disciples looked desperately at the elders for guidance, fear in their eyes.

But even the elders seemed alarmed. A powerful, suffocating pressure washed over them, making the air feel sharp, as if invisible blades were dancing around.

"Calm down!" barked Grand Elder Bai Ren, his voice calm but commanding.

He was the first to sense the disturbance's origin, and his eyes narrowed as he focused on Bai Zihan's room.

His instincts screamed that this was something extraordinary, but not necessarily dangerous.

"Grand Elder, what is going on? Is someone attacking us?"

Another elder asked, beads of sweat forming on his forehead.

"Impossible! No one has attacked us... No one is even on board except for us."

"Then what is this pressure? This... this feels like someone of Immortal Realm, but how could—"

One of the elders gasped.

"Wait... it's coming from Bai Zihan's room? Is someone coming to assassinate Bai Zihan?"

One of the elders asked, panic evident in his voice. Normally, he wouldn't have been this anxious, but after witnessing just how powerful and talented their heir was, they knew they couldn't afford to take any chances with his life.

"He's not in danger."

Bai Ren's expression was unreadable, but a trace of shock flickered in his eyes.

"In fact... it seems he has encountered a remarkable opportunity."

"A remarkable opportunity? What kind of opportunity could cause this?"

"You don't need to know for now... but whatever it is, it is a blessing for our Bai Clan," Bai Ren replied.

"No one is to disturb him. Understood?"

The elders nodded, still uneasy but trusting the Grand Elder's judgment.

"Someone guard the room. If he leaves his room, inform me immediately!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 106: Sword Intent! [1,743 words]

Chapter 106: Sword Intent!

Inside his room on the flying ship, Bai Zihan's breathing slowly steadied, unaware of the commotion he had caused.

He slowly opened his eyes, which shone with a cold, silver sheen—like blades hidden within his pupils.

Sword Intent!

Not just any Sword Intent—Intermediate Sword Intent.

Something that would take even the most gifted sword cultivators a hundred years of blood, sweat, and sheer luck to achieve.

He lifted his hand, and with a casual flick of his finger, a faint, nearly invisible silver arc flew out, slicing cleanly through a decorative vase on the shelf.

Swish!

The vase slid apart into two perfect halves, the cut so smooth that the pieces didn't even fall apart until a gentle breeze from the room's ventilation knocked them over.

"Hahaha!"

Bai Zihan couldn't help but laugh, his excitement palpable.

"Intermediate Sword Intent... as expected of a System that can defy Heaven, it can even give me such a thing!"

He clenched his fists, feeling the sharp, almost tangible aura surrounding him.

Even without drawing his sword, his entire body now radiated a faint, deadly pressure—like a blade unsheathed.

He even felt like his mastery over the Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword Technique had reached a new level just by gaining Sword Intent.

"System!"

[**Host Info**]

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 16

Cultivation Realm: Golden Core (Late)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone

Martial Arts: Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

"Indeed, Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword Technique has reached Greater Mastery from Minor Mastery."

And it was achieved without a single bit of extra training.

Having Intermediate Sword Intent was a cheat for anyone using a sword as their weapon.

Not only did it increase the proficiency and power of his sword techniques, but it also enhanced his understanding of the Sword Techniques.

He couldn't wait to try out his newfound power and see just how much stronger he had become.

Of course, he couldn't test it on the flying ship—otherwise, he might even slice it in half.

Although the flying ship was reinforced with many enchantments and formations, Bai Zihan felt that with his current power, it was entirely possible for him to cut through it.

Though he thought that he was probably overestimating himself as even 10 Nascent Soul Realms couldn't achieve that.

But he wasn't going to risk it and test his power.

"Did we reach the Bai Clan?"

He had lost track of time while achieving Sword Intent. It felt both instantaneous and like many years had passed.

CRACK!

He opened the door, only to see many disciples guarding it.

???

(Did something happen?)

Bai Zihan thought, confused, completely unaware of the disturbance he had caused.

"Young Master, you are out!"

The disciples sighed in relief upon seeing Bai Zihan safe and sound.

"Did something happen? Why are you all here?"

He asked, still puzzled.

The disciples looked at each other, unsure of how to respond.

They didn't know what had happened inside Bai Zihan's room, and judging by his confused expression, even he wasn't aware.

They were just following the Grand Elder's orders to guard his room after the earlier disturbance.

"Young Master, it's better to ask the Grand Elder. He ordered us to guard your room."

One of the disciples replied.

(So even the Grand Elder got involved? Did achieving Sword Intent somehow cause a commotion?)

Looking at the disciples, it didn't seem like they knew he had gained Sword Intent. But he was convinced that something must have happened.

He simply nodded and walked toward the Grand Elder's room.

Knock! Knock!

"Come in!"

Bai Zihan stepped inside.

"Grand Elder, did something happen?"

He got straight to the point.

"Haha... Zihan'er, you're here!"

Grand Elder Bai Ren's voice was filled with affection, which made Bai Zihan feel a bit awkward.

Not too long ago, their relationship could barely be described as anything beyond blood relations.

But now, the Grand Elder was calling him "Zihan'er" like they were close.

The Grand Elder couldn't be happier or more excited when he saw Bai Zihan.

"Do you know what kind of opportunity you just got?"

Grand Elder Bai Ren asked, his eyes practically shining.

"What do you mean?"

Bai Zihan asked, trying to play it cool.

"Hahaha... No need to hide it anymore. You gained Sword Intent, didn't you?"

Grand Elder Bai Ren seemed to think Bai Zihan was trying to keep it a secret, just like how he had kept his cultivation and sword technique mastery hidden.

"How did you know?"

Bai Zihan was genuinely curious.

He was almost sure that he had caused some kind of commotion, but he didn't think it would be this obvious.

"Haha... Don't underestimate these old bones of mine. I once had a friend who once comprehended Sword Intent, and your room emitted the same Qi... perhaps even stronger."

"But it was undoubtedly the same aura of one who has comprehended Sword Intent."

Grand Elder Bai Ren explained, still smiling.

"So, did you achieve Sword Intent?"

He asked, leaning forward slightly with interest.

Bai Zihan nodded honestly. He had no reason to hide it.

Despite the rumors of him being secretive, he never actually liked hiding his strength.

It was their own misunderstanding and his rapid increase in strength that made it seem like he was always hiding his strength.

"Haha... As expected of the heir of the Bai Clan!"

Bai Ren laughed again, his joy almost infectious.

Bai Zihan wanted to comment that just a few months ago, many people didn't even want him to be the heir of the Bai Clan.

But he kept that thought to himself.

After all, even he was aware that he had been lacking in many ways back then.

Bai Zihan watched the overjoyed Grand Elder, still feeling a bit surreal about how quickly things had changed.

Just a few months ago, he was practically the Bai Clan's black sheep.

Now, the same elders who barely acknowledged his existence were practically lining up to sing his praises.

But Grand Elder Bai Ren's next words snapped him out of his thoughts.

"Zihan'er, how about showing me that Sword Intent of yours?"

"Show you?"

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, a faint smile playing on his lips.

"Do you want me to cut something with my Sword Intent?"

Bai Zihan asked, ready to do the same thing he did with the vase in his room.

"No, no!"

Bai Ren chuckled, a spark of excitement in his eyes.

"I want you to attack me with it."

"Attack you?"

Bai Zihan blinked, momentarily stunned.

"Grand Elder, are you sure?"

"Haha, don't look so worried."

Bai Ren's voice was full of confidence.

"I'm not some fragile old man who'll shatter with one strike. Come at me with your full strength, Sword Intent included."

Bai Zihan shook his head.

"Grand Elder, you misunderstood. That's not what I meant. What I meant was would the Flying Ship even be able to withstand the clash? Wouldn't this room be destroyed at the very least?"

Grand Elder Bai Ren grinned, waving his hand dismissively.

"You let me worry about that."

"Well, if you say so!"

Bai Zihan was also intrigued about how powerful his attack would be now that he has Intermediate Sword Intent.

If Grand Elder was going to take responsibility, there wasn't any reason to hold himself back.

Bai Zihan reached into his storage ring, and with a thought, a sleek, silver sword appeared in his grasp—a blade so polished it seemed to drink in the surrounding light.

Without hesitation, he channeled his Qi into the sword, and a cold, silvery sheen spread across the blade.

Grand Elder Bai Ren's playful smile faded instantly, his eyes narrowing as he felt the overwhelming pressure.

His casual, relaxed demeanor was replaced with a sharp focus.

(This is... true Sword Intent!)

He thought it felt much more intense than years ago when his friend achieved Sword Intent and when he fought with him.

But he dismissed it as a flaw in his memory, believing it shouldn't be much different—not realizing that his friend had only comprehended Basic Sword Intent, while Bai Zihan had achieved Intermediate Sword Intent.

But there was no way for Bai Ren to know this because, in his lifetime, he had never met someone who possessed Intermediate Sword Intent.

"Come, Zihan'er. Let me see just how powerful you have become!"

"As you wish!"

Bai Zihan's eyes gleamed.

With a step forward, his figure seemed to blur, silver arcs of light trailing behind him like a river of swords.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light!"

In an instant, his figure split into nine phantoms, each radiating a piercing silver glow.

The phantoms twisted and danced, merging into a single, massive silver blade that slashed directly toward Grand Elder Bai Ren.

The sheer pressure from the strike made the air howl, and the entire room trembled, its protective formation flickering violently.

But Grand Elder Bai Ren didn't flinch.

Instead, his aura surged, and with a calm expression, he raised his bare hand.

CLANG!

The silver blade, radiating with Intermediate Sword Intent, crashed against Grand Elder Bai Ren's bare palm.

Bai Zihan's eyes widened in shock.

(He blocked it... with his bare hand?!)

But what stunned him even more was what happened next.

An invisible ripple spread out from Bai Ren's palm, and Bai Zihan's Sword Intent vanished instantly—swallowed whole by Bai Ren's Qi.

Not a single ripple of destructive power escaped.

The vase on the nearby shelf didn't even shake. The wooden walls, the delicate decorations—everything remained perfectly intact.

Grand Elder Bai Ren's playful smile returned, his gaze filled with admiration.

"Haha, impressive! Truly impressive, Zihan'er!"

Bai Ren laughed, his voice booming with pride.

"Sword Intent at your age? That's a heaven-defying talent!"

Bai Zihan took a step back, pulling his sword away, but his expression remained one of disbelief.

(Not even a trace of destruction... he just erased it?!)

In that moment, Bai Zihan realized just how much further he still had to go before he could even dream of calling himself invincible.

Even with all his recent power-ups, he was still far from being able to match even one of the Grand Elders of the Bai Clan.

And there were many who were stronger than Bai Ren in the Bai Clan itself!

For Bai Zihan, who had just gotten a massive power boost, it was a brutally humbling experience.

One he needed!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 107: A Father's Shock[1,521 words]

Chapter 107: A Father's Shock

"Grand Elder, are you serious?"

Bai Tianheng's expression was one of disbelief, like he had just heard the biggest joke of the decade.

Grand Elder Bai Ren had reported what he saw and wanted to discuss Bai Zihan's hidden strength with Bai Tianheng.

Bai Ren initially believed that Bai Tianheng should know about Bai Zihan's strength and assumed he was involved in hiding it for some kind of scheme.

But looking at Bai Tianheng's confused expression, Bai Ren quickly realized that even Bai Zihan's father didn't know about his true power.

"Do you think I would lie?"

Bai Ren asked, his voice calm but firm.

"Of course not. But what you're saying is... quite absurd!"

Bai Tianheng corrected himself.

Late Golden Core Stage? Minor Mastery over Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword? And finally...
Sword Intent?

Sword Intent?

He had never even seen Bai Zihan practice with his sword for more than an hour that too when forced.

And now Grand Elder wanted him to believe that this same son had somehow gained Sword Intent?

If it were his daughter, he would have believed it happily. But Bai Zihan?

There was no way he could easily accept this, even coming from the Grand Elder's mouth.

"So you really had no idea about this?"

Bai Ren asked again, narrowing his eyes.

Bai Tianheng shook his head.

"Then has Bai Zihan also hid his strength from you?"

Bai Ren was quite confused about how Bai Zihan got such strength.

"I know my son quite well. There is no way he has been hiding his strength all these years. I don't believe he could have hidden his power from his birth."

Bai Tianheng continued.

"I know for sure that before going to the Heaven Sword Sect, Zihan'er has only been at the Core Condensation Stage."

Bai Tianheng made it clear that Bai Zihan's reputation as a waste all these years wasn't just some rumor—it was the truth.

"So, you're telling me he achieved all of this after going to the Heaven Sword Sect?"

Bai Ren found that even harder to believe.

He would rather believe Bai Zihan had been hiding his true strength all along than accept that he had made such rapid progress in such a short time.

"That can only be the explanation!"

Bai Tianheng nodded.

Although he also found it hard to believe, he was certain that all these changes Grand Elder Bai Ren mentioned must have been achieved after Bai Zihan reached the Heaven Sword Sect.

"This brat... I only wanted him to learn to fend for himself. I never thought he would turn out like this. Perhaps he found some opportunity we don't know about in Heaven Sword Sect."

Nonetheless, despite his shock, Bai Tianheng was relieved and happy to know that his son had achieved so much.

Perhaps he thought that he would need to worry less about constantly being concerned about what kind of trouble he would cause.

After returning to Bai Clan, Bai Zihan immediately went to his courtyard.

Bai Zihan began training, practicing with his Sword Intent.

His attacks using sword techniques were nearly ten times stronger with Sword Intent than without it.

Such a massive increase in power was beyond what he had expected, not to mention the other perks—like being able to grasp sword techniques with much greater ease.

He was also able to adjust his power according to his will which was surprisingly easy.

However, Bai Zihan wasn't planning to stay in the Bai Clan for long. He had already decided to return to the Heaven Sword Sect the next day.

Before that, though, there was one thing that he wanted to check and that is the Eternal Spirit Sword he had taken (aka stolen) from dead Mo Yichen.

He took out the sword from his storage ring and admired its beauty.

Unlike before, when the sword seemed to resist him, now it was perfectly compliant.

It even felt eager, like it was willing to serve him as its master.

(Probably because of my Sword Intent.)

With Sword Intent, it was as if he was proving his qualifications to wield it, and the Eternal Spirit Sword seemed to recognize that.

Well, that saved him some effort to tame the Eternal Spirit Sword. All that was needed now was to test its power.

Swish! Swish!

He swung the sword lightly, and silver arcs danced around the blade, each one radiating a sharp, lethal edge.

With a thought, he channeled his Intermediate Sword Intent into the blade.

Hum!

The sword's glow intensified, the silver light becoming almost blinding.

Swish! Swish!

Bai Zihan nodded in satisfaction. The sword felt like an extension of his own will, perfectly responding to his thoughts.

The sword was excellent, but it was still just a Profound-Grade weapon.

His current sword was technically better. But of course, Bai Zihan knew that this sword could be upgraded further—potentially without limit.

Heaven Grade and above—just thinking about that, Bai Zihan couldn't imagine just how powerful it would become.

"But I don't even know what materials are needed for the next upgrade."

Bai Zihan muttered as he closely examined the sword.

Well, he gave up as soon as he started as he knew that it was futile.

But just as he was about to continue testing it—

Ding!

A faint, almost inaudible chime echoed in his mind.

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed.

(Hmm?)

Suddenly, a series of images and words flooded his consciousness—a list of rare herbs, minerals, and monster cores, each one glowing faintly.

(These are... materials?)

It didn't take him long to understand.

(Eternal Spirit Sword... it's actually telling me how to upgrade it?)

Bai Zihan couldn't help but chuckle.

(Such cheap materials? And that idiot Mo Yichen couldn't even get them?)

Well, he understood why. For someone like Mo Yichen without a powerful background, obtaining these materials would be a nightmare.

But for him? They were nothing more than pocket change.

"I should probably have someone start collecting these for me."

He muttered, turning to leave his room.

Just as he stepped out, he saw Luo Qing standing there, waiting for him.

"Nice timing, Luo Qing. I have something for you to do."

"Yes, Young Master?"

Luo Qing asked, bowing slightly.

Bai Zihan handed her a list of the materials he needed.

"Take this list and make arrangements to collect everything. I need them as soon as possible."

"Yes, Young Master!"

Luo Qing replied, her voice respectful.

Watching her rush off, Bai Zihan chuckled.

"There is no need to rush, you know!"

The next morning it dawned crisp and clear over Bai Clan's Estate.

Bai Zihan was waiting for his carriage to arrive so he could return to the Heaven Sword Sect.

Beside him, Bai Tianheng's normally stern face bore a rare, proud smile as he watched his son prepare to depart.

Bai Zihan thought he would be bombarded with questions from his father, who should have known by now that he had reached the Late Golden Core Stage and other details.

But surprisingly, Bai Tianheng hadn't asked anything and remained silent, even as Bai Zihan was about to depart.

Bai Zihan even began to doubt whether his father had heard about those things at all or not.

"Be careful on the way!"

Bai Tianheng rumbled, placing a firm hand on Bai Zihan's shoulder.

"No matter what opportunity you've gained, make sure to cherish it and work hard!"

(It seems like Father thinks I got some kind of opportunity at the Heaven Sword Sect.)

Thinking about it, that's probably the most likely explanation for my sudden increase in power.

Bai Zihan nodded.

"Don't worry, I will!"

He didn't think that it was necessary for him to tell the truth. Because the truth is much more unbelievable than what his father thought.

"This brat... Sigh! Don't make too much trouble at Heaven Sword Sect."

Bai Tianheng, no matter how talented Bai Zihan has become, can't help but be worried due to his attitude.

In the few months that he has been to Heaven Sword Sect, he has already stirred up so many big things including taking out Elder Shen, Shen Liang and finally the Mei Clan.

And those were only things big enough for Bai Tianheng to really worry about. He knew that there should be many other small problems that he should have made that he wasn't aware of.

Well, although he knew that, he wasn't going to stop Bai Zihan's from going back to Heaven Sword Sect.

After all, whether Bai Zihan was at Heaven Sword Sect or Bai Clan, he could stir up trouble.

So, rather than being his problem, he liked it better when it became some other people's problem.

Specifically, Heaven Sword Sect Leader!

Tian Yuheng has been constantly complaining about Bai Zihan and demanded compensation for handling all those problems.

Well, he has been ignoring all those messages though.

"Then I will be leaving!"

Bai Zihan said as he got inside his carriage and soared upward, cutting through the morning mists as he headed back toward the Heaven Sword Sect.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 108: Back to Heaven Sword Sect[1,173 words]

Chapter 108: Back to Heaven Sword Sect

By the time Bai Zihan's carriage soared through the clouds, news of his actions at the Mei Clan had already spread like wildfire throughout the Heaven Sword Sect and beyond.

"Did you hear? Bai Zihan reached the Late Golden Core Stage!"

"Not just that—he killed Mo Yichen, the rising star who was said to have defeated three Golden Core Stage cultivators alone!"

"What? Mo Yichen? But he was known as a genius with incredible potential! Even the Sect was looking to recruit him."

"He wasn't just killed. Rumor says Bai Zihan practically destroyed the entire Mei Clan in his rampage!"

"It's because of Mei Rulan, isn't it? Damn, who told her to offend this devil!"

...

It didn't take long for the rumors to mutate and evolve, growing wilder with each retelling.

Some were true, while others were just exaggerations like Bai Zihan destroying the Mei Clan.

Although what he did was akin to destroying the Mei Clan, he did show mercy and only half of their clan members had their cultivation crippled.

In any case, people were interested in hearing about Bai Zihan due to his growing infamy.

First, he already had a notorious reputation, with many blaming him for using his status and misconduct.

Then came the incident involving Shen Liang, where he single-handedly crippled one of the Heaven Sword Sect's geniuses and even got several elders in trouble.

Now, there were rumors of him destroying an entire clan just because one of their members offended him.

Surprisingly, this wasn't the most shocking part. Given his reputation, such violence was almost expected.

The real shock was the claim that he had reached the Late Golden Core Stage!

Who wouldn't be stunned if someone who was once considered a waste—believed to be at the Core Formation Stage—suddenly turned out to be at the Late Golden Core Stage?

Even those who knew he was in the Core Condensation Stage were shocked when they heard he had broken through to the Late Golden Core Stage.

Bai Xinyue was training as usual when this news reached her ears.

"What?"

Even the always cool and composed Bai Xinyue couldn't keep her face straight when she heard the news.

"That can't be right!"

She muttered, remembering Bai Zihan—someone who slacked off at every turn and only seemed to know how to bully others.

And now she was supposed to believe that this same person was at the same cultivation level as her?

Her? Who had spent the last few years solely focusing on her cultivation and nothing else?

"Could it be that my Dao Bone helped him?"

That was the only plausible explanation she could think of.

The Dao Bone that he had stolen from her must have boosted his cultivation, despite the rumors claiming it was ineffective.

She concluded that all of those rumors must have been fabricated by the Bai Clan to cover for Bai Zihan, who had gained her talent to shield him from their enemies.

"Hmph! No matter, I will reclaim what is rightfully mine."

She wasn't truly afraid of his strength, even though she was shocked.

It simply made Bai Zihan move on her list from "weakling" to "slightly stronger," but he still wasn't considered a major opponent.

The wind howled as Bai Zihan's carriage descended through the clouds, landing gracefully in the spacious landing spot of Heaven Sword Sect.

Before his boots even touched the ground, a figure in Inner Disciple robes stepped forward, his expression caught between respectful and annoyed.

Following him were four other people who were all dressed in Inner Disciple robes.

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, not recognizing him.

Well, Heaven Sword Sect was quite vast, and he had only been here for a few months—most of which were spent cultivating.

So it was normal for him not to recognize most of the disciples, even if they were quite famous.

"Junior Brother Bai Zihan, welcome back!"

The disciple cupped his fists, a smile on his face.

"I am Yuan Jie! May I have a few words with you?"

Yuan Jie asked politely. He straightened, his gaze cautiously observing Bai Zihan's reaction.

Bai Zihan nodded simply because he seemed to be quite polite and also the fact that he had nothing to do.

"Senior Brother Han Zhenwu has heard of your return and wishes to meet with you."

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, looking at Yuan Jie with mild confusion.

(Han Zhenwu? Who the hell is that?)

Bai Zihan thought.

The other disciples nearby seemed to expect him to react with joy at such an opportunity, but to Bai Zihan, this was just another random name.

"Han Zhenwu?"

He said, his tone utterly blank.

"Who?"

For a moment, Yuan Jie's confident smile cracked, his eyes widening slightly.

"Who...? It's Senior Brother Han Zhenwu!"

Yuan Jie quickly explained, his voice rising slightly with disbelief.

"Senior Brother Han is one of the top Core Disciples of our Heaven Sword Sect! Known for his exceptional swordsmanship and profound cultivation! He is also the son of Elder Han, one of the esteemed elders of our sect."

"Oh!"

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change.

But he did recognize the name of Elder Han—who is said to be the leader of the Anti-Sect Leader faction.

Yuan Jie was caught between shock and confusion.

(Did this guy really not know who Han Zhenwu was, or was he just pretending?)

"Uh... well, anyway, Senior Brother Han would like to have a word with you. Would you be willing to come with me?"

Yuan Jie continued, trying to maintain his composure.

Bai Zihan leaned lazily against his carriage, a faint, mocking smile tugging at his lips.

"He wants to see me? Then why isn't he here himself?"

Yuan Jie's polite smile stiffened.

"Senior Brother Han is busy with his cultivation, so he sent me to invite you—"

"Busy with his cultivation?"

Bai Zihan cut him off, letting out a sarcastic chuckle.

"Busy enough to send a lackey to call for me like a dog?"

Yuan Jie's face darkened.

"Watch your—!"

The disciple almost lashed out, but then he remembered Han Zhenwu's strict warning to not offend Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan leaned forward, his voice low and mocking.

"If your 'Senior Brother' wants to see me, he can get off his ass and come here himself. I don't have the hobby of doing favors for nothing."

"You—!"

Yuan Jie's face flushed with anger, but he clenched his teeth and took a deep breath, barely maintaining his composure.

"I understand. I will pass your message to Senior Brother Han."

He forced out, turning and walking away with a stiff back, fists clenched tightly.

Bai Zihan watched him leave, a faint smile playing at his lips.

"Core Disciple? Son of an Elder?" He sneered.

"Why do they all think I'd kiss their ass just because of that?"

He shook his head, his mood already shifting back to indifference.

He didn't think much about this encounter and made his way towards his courtyard.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 109: Han Shenwu! [1,088 words]

Chapter 109: Han Shenwu!

"Congratulations, Young Master! We have heard about your glorious deeds. That Mei Rulan truly deserve that."

When Bai Zihan arrived at his Mystic Moon courtyard, the first people to meet him were Kong Zhanghong and Fang Jinyan.

Lin Xuan was probably cultivating.

On that note, Bai Zihan wondered whether Fang Jinyan and Kong Zhanghong even cultivated, given how quickly they always showed up as soon as he returned.

Well, he didn't really care much, though.

Whether they cultivated or not was entirely their own business, though their presence was convenient since he had something to ask them.

"Do either of you know Han Zhenwu?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Fang Jinyan and Kong Zhanghong exchanged glances. There was no way they didn't know who Han Zhenwu was.

They suspected that Bai Zihan's next target might be Han Zhenwu, who was clearly a bigger fish than Shen Liang in the Heaven Sword Sect.

"Young Master, do you mean the son of Elder Han?"

Fang Jinyan asked for confirmation.

Bai Zihan nodded.

Fang Jinyan began by repeating almost everything Yuan Jie had said earlier—Han Zhenwu was the son of Elder Han, a title that carried weight.

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, not looking impressed.

"So he's just another disciple with a good daddy?"

Kong Zhanghong, standing nearby, couldn't help but chuckle at Bai Zihan's bluntness.

"Young Master, it's not just that. Han Zhenwu isn't like those other guys who just flaunt their backgrounds. He's a ruthless bastard—cold, calculating, and methodical. If he decides you're an enemy, he'll ruin you without a second thought," Fang Jinyan explained.

After all, while Bai Zihan might not take people like Shen Liang seriously, Han Zhenwu was a different beast.

Not only did he have higher status—with his father being one of the most influential figures in the Desolate Heaven Empire—but he was also a true cultivation genius with good head who understood how the world worked, unlike Shen Liang.

Bai Zihan hummed thoughtfully, a faint smirk tugging at his lips.

"And here I thought I'd run out of enemies, but it looks like I don't need to worry about that."

Bai Zihan seemed more amused than wary.

With his recent actions, he thought these disciples of the Heaven Sword Sect would keep their distance—not that he minded.

But the moment he arrived, someone new and interesting had shown up.

And there was no doubt that Han Zhenwu was his enemy.

After all, one mountain can't have two lions.

Han Zhenwu probably wanted to make him his subordinate or something similar.

Well, there was also a chance he was wrong, though he thought that chance was slim.

Fang Jinyan and Kong Zhanghong glanced at each other. Bai Zihan looked amused and pleased rather than worried.

They wanted to warn him that Han Zhenwu was a completely different enemy compared to the others but held back.

Who were they to warn him? This was the young master who had made Shen Liang look like a joke and even destroyed a clan.

"And another thing—one of you needs to investigate how Mei Rulan escaped from the Reflection Cave."

Normally, she was supposed to spend one year in the Reflection Cave as punishment, but somehow, she was back in the Mei Clan.

It was clear that someone had a hand in her escape; otherwise, it should have been impossible for Mei Rulan to do so on her own.

The two of them nodded, understanding that this was another opportunity for them to earn more resources as a reward.

After chatting with Kong Zhanghong and Fang Jinyan and learning about his potential enemy and asking them to investigate Mei Rulan, Bai Zihan went to his room.

He took out the Eternal Spirit Sword, which seemed quite lively.

"Can't wait? Well, even I can't!"

Bai Zihan chuckled, patting the sword's blade lightly.

With a casual wave of his hand, he activated his storage ring, and a series of shimmering materials appeared in the air—rare ores, spirit crystals, refined beast cores, and a vial of crimson liquid that seemed to pulse with life.

These were all the materials he had asked Luo Qing to collect, each one carefully selected for the sword's upgrade.

The moment the materials appeared, the Eternal Spirit Sword trembled in excitement, a faint humming sound filling the room.

Bai Zihan's smile widened.

He didn't even need to do much—the sword was already greedily drawing in the materials, its silver blade glowing brighter and brighter.

The refined ores melted into a silvery liquid, swirling around the blade and merging into it.

The spirit crystals shattered into pure energy that was absorbed by the sword, causing intricate, glowing runes to etch themselves onto its surface.

The beast cores dissolved, their vital essence enhancing the blade's strength and sharpness.

Bai Zihan watched, slightly surprised at how smoothly the process went.

In just a few minutes, the glow around the sword began to fade, and the once ethereal, somewhat translucent blade now looked far more solid and imposing.

Its sharpness seemed almost tangible, and a faint, dangerous aura radiated from it.

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, giving the sword an appraising look.

"Already done? That was way faster than I expected."

He gripped the hilt and gave it a gentle swing. The air seemed to ripple slightly, and a faint arc of crimson light followed the sword's movement.

"Interesting... I knew it would get stronger, but to think it's already comparable to an Earth-Grade Sword..."

His other weapons were still stronger, of course, but this wasn't too far off from the sword he was using.

Perhaps after one or two more upgrades, the Eternal Spirit Sword might surpass his current weapon.

Immediately, another list of ingredients appeared in his mind.

This time, the materials required were far more precious than before—Grade-4 Monster Cores and rare ores.

But to Bai Zihan, it made no difference. He just needed to send this list to his father and have him send the ingredients the same day.

"If you can tell me all the materials you need, I can get them all in one go."

Bai Zihan muttered, but the Eternal Spirit Sword didn't seem to understand.

Well, that was expected.

Anyway, while obtaining the ingredients was easy, it was annoying that he had to wait every time and ask his father for them.

But for the potential of a Heaven-Grade Sword, this was a minor inconvenience.

He just hope that upgrading it to Heaven-Grade would be as easy as it was now.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 110: Han Shenwu's Proposal[1,265 words]

Chapter 110: Han Shenwu's Proposal

"Young Master!"

Kong Zhanghong suddenly burst into Bai Zihan's courtyard, sweat on his face.

"What's up?"

"Young Master, Han Shenwu is coming here!"

Kong Zhanghong said in a panicky voice.

It had only been one day since Bai Zihan asked him about Han Shenwu, and now the man himself was coming to his door.

"Oh!"

(He really came himself?)

Bai Zihan didn't actually expect Han Shenwu to show up, even though he did tell his minion to have him come in person.

Soon enough, Han Shenwu arrived with his lackeys, including Yuan Jie, whom Bai Zihan had met yesterday.

Kong Zhanghong looked nervously between Han Shenwu and Bai Zihan as they drew closer, panic clear on his face.

"You must be Bai Zihan!"

Han Shenwu said, staring straight into Bai Zihan's eyes.

"And you must be Han... something!"

Bai Zihan replied, keeping his gaze steady on Han Shenwu.

"YOU!"

One of Han Shenwu's lackeys erupted in anger at the blatant disrespect.

But Han Shenwu raised his hand, silencing the man, his expression calm.

"Han Shenwu! That's my name."

Han Shenwu introduced himself without a hint of anger.

Bai Zihan was pleasantly surprised that Han Shenwu could still keep his cool after being disrespected.

Whether he was genuinely good-tempered or just desperately wanted something from Bai Zihan was still unclear.

But at least he was better than Shen Liang, who would rather focus on his fragile ego than look at the bigger picture.

"Oh, sorry, I forgot. So, Han Shenwu, what brings you here?"

Bai Zihan asked casually.

"If possible, I would like to have a private conversation with you."

"Be my guest!"

Bai Zihan didn't see any problem with listening to what Han Shenwu had to say.

If he had any tricks planned, well, he better have the strength to back them up.

With his current strength, there weren't many people of his generation Bai Zihan feared.

Bai Zihan gestured for Han Shenwu to follow him inside.

They entered the main hall of his courtyard, where Bai Zihan casually sat down on a comfortable chair, leaning back with a relaxed expression.

Han Shenwu, maintaining his composure, chose the seat opposite him.

Kong Zhanghong and the other lackeys were left outside, the door shutting with a soft click, leaving the two young men alone.

Han Shenwu was the first to break the silence.

"Straight to the point, Bai Zihan," Han Shenwu's voice was calm, but there was a sharp edge beneath it.

"What do you really seek?"

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow.

"Power!"

He answered without a moment's hesitation.

"What else is worth seeking?"

In this world, as long as one is powerful, there is nothing one cannot obtain—from fame to wealth.

Even one's lifespan depends entirely on cultivation. One could even achieve immortality if they reach the pinnacle of cultivation.

So, shouldn't everyone desire true power?

Han Shenwu chuckled, the corners of his lips curling into a smile.

"Haha... Of course! Power is everything in this world. Strength, status, influence—it all comes down to power. The strong dictate the fate of the weak."

"I'm glad you understand that."

"Which is why I'm here." Han Shenwu leaned forward, his gaze sharp and calculating.

"I'm here to invite you to join me—or rather, to join the faction led by my father."

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change, but now he knew the purpose of Han Shenwu's visit.

"If you join us," Han Shenwu continued, a confident smile on his face, "you'll have my support, and my father's as well. Resources, cultivation techniques, allies—though I know you may not need them. But there's one thing we can guarantee you—your future as the Clan Leader of the Bai Clan."

Han Shenwu had clearly done his homework. Even though Bai Zihan was the heir to the Bai Clan, his position was anything but secure.

Threats surrounded him from all sides.

And in powerful clans like the Bai Clan, heirs could be replaced.

Without solid support from within and outside the clan, becoming the Clan Leader was never guaranteed.

Han Shenwu was essentially offering himself as an outside ally—a force that could tilt the balance in Bai Zihan's favor when needed.

"I know there are many who are dissatisfied with you in the Bai Clan. Enemies who would love to see you fail. Your cousin Bai Xinyue, for one."

Han Shenwu's confidence was clear. He had done his research, and he knew about the grudge between Bai Zihan and Bai Xinyue, even if he didn't know the full details.

But one thing was certain—Bai Xinyue was a major threat to Bai Zihan's future, not just because of her talent but because of her influence.

"How about this? If you agree to join me, I will take care of Bai Xinyue for you!"

Han Shenwu offered, his voice filled with confidence.

At that, Bai Zihan's calm demeanor broke. He leaned back in his chair and burst into laughter, his voice echoing around the room.

"Hahaha... You take care of Bai Xinyue?" he managed between laughs. "You... you think you can deal with Bai Xinyue for me? Haha!"

To Bai Zihan, this was hilarious. Han Shenwu was just a nobody at best—a stepping stone for protagonists.

Meanwhile, Bai Xinyue was a Five-Star Heaven's Chosen, a child seemingly favored by the heavens themselves.

Sure, Han Shenwu had some influence, and his father's support meant he could rally some elders.

But against Heaven's Chosen? Against someone with the Heavenly Phoenix Constitution?

Heaven's Chosen had countless trump cards.

Even a One-Star Heaven's Chosen almost killed him.

So thinking a Five-Star Heaven's Chosen like Bai Xinyue could be dealt with so easily was laughable.

The idea of Han Shenwu thinking he could "take care" of Bai Xinyue was like a child boasting about catching a dragon.

Han Shenwu's smile faltered for just a moment before he quickly recovered.

"I know about the grudge between you two. It's not exactly a secret. With our faction's power, we can easily take care of her."

Bai Zihan's laughter gradually faded, and he gave Han Shenwu an almost pitying look.

"You really don't get it, do you? Bai Xinyue isn't someone you can just 'take care of.' If you really think you can, then maybe I'd consider your proposal."

Though he said that, Bai Zihan didn't think it was possible, nor was he interested in any of the things Han Shenwu mentioned.

After all, his concept of power and Han Shenwu were completely different.

To Han Shenwu, power seemed to be limited to status.

But Bai Zihan didn't care much.

Bai Clan Leader? Was his goal really that small?

Such a temporary and insignificant title meant little to him.

Not that he didn't enjoy his status as the Heir, but even without it, Bai Zihan didn't think much would change.

He didn't need such temporary, illusory power.

What he wanted was absolute strength—a strength that could make even Heaven bend to his will.

Han Shenwu's expression hardened slightly at the way Bai Zihan was looking down on him. But at the same time, there was a hint of hope.

If Bai Zihan believed that Bai Xinyue was such a problem, then all Han Shenwu needed to do was prove his faction could neutralize her.

He didn't particularly care about Bai Zihan's strength, despite the recent rumors.

What he wanted was Bai Zihan's status—the position of heir to the Bai Clan, a seat of power with massive potential.

"Okay then!! I'll deal with Bai Xinyue for you, and in return, you will seriously consider joining my father's faction."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 111: Shen Liang Escaped?[1,166 words]

Chapter 111: Shen Liang Escaped?

Han Shenwu left with his lackeys in tow.

Bai Zihan didn't think much about their conversation.

"Young Master, what did you talk about with Han Shenwu?"

Kong Zhanghong asked curiously.

"Just some nonsense. No need to think much about it."

Kong Zhanghong thought about how Bai Zihan lacked interest and fear of Han Shenwu, despite Han Shenwu being one of the strongest in the Heaven Sword Sect.

Well, though, Kong Zhanghong thought he understood where Bai Zihan's confidence came from.

He had a genius sister, someone who was said to be even more powerful than Han Shenwu.

So, there shouldn't be a reason for him to fear Han Shenwu.

"Rather than that, did you find out what I asked you?"

He had asked him yesterday to find how Mei Rulan had escaped, which he believed should have been impossible for her to do on her own.

Well, Mei Rulan had already been taken care of by him. But he needed to know who was trying to ruin his good deeds.

Since Kong Zhanghong was here, Bai Zihan assumed that it should be because he had found out or at least had some clue about it.

"Of course, Young Master. I investigated all night and discovered how she escaped."

Kong Zhanghong responded with full confidence, handing Bai Zihan a scroll containing all the information related to Mei Rulan's escape.

Bai Zihan read through it, and indeed, it contained all the information he wanted.

He was once again surprised by Kong Zhanghong's ability to collect information so quickly.

(Perhaps he's a genius?)

Bai Zihan thought. Not in terms of cultivation or anything, but in terms of gathering intelligence, which he didn't know how Kong Zhanghong could do, especially in just one day.

Well, anyway, in short, from the information Kong Zhanghong had collected, Mei Rulan escaped because of Shen Liang.

Since Shen Liang was also kept in the Reflection Cave, it seemed like someone helped him escape, and he took Mei Rulan along with him.

It seemed like Mei Rulan was only a side quest for the people whose main goal was Shen Liang.

And there was no need to think much about who was involved in helping Shen Liang escape.

Those Anti-Sect Leader factions or the Shen Clan should be the ones, or maybe both.

"So, Shen Liang has also escaped?"

He wouldn't have known if not for Kong Zhanghong.

Of course, with his current strength, he didn't think much of Shen Liang, whom he had already crippled.

If he tries to do something, he doesn't mind sending him off to Heaven.

"Yes, it seems he has indeed escaped."

Kong Zhanghong replied.

Bai Zihan was in deep thought for a few seconds before asking, "Then is the Sect trying to get him back or anything?"

The Heaven Sword Sect seemed to be the same and there wasn't even a slight discussion about Shen Liang running away.

Perhaps the disciples weren't even aware that he escaped.

Or maybe they were just too invested in his achievements and the rumors that any news about Shen Liang was drowned out.

"Not really!"

Kong Zhanghong answered.

"If he escaped, he must be back with the Shen Clan. And the Shen Clan isn't someone even our sect could pressure by demanding their genius. The Sect Leader had already thought about expelling Shen Liang and leaving him in their hands, though now he doesn't need to."

Kong Zhanghong explained.

(Indeed! Crippling Shen Liang must have already made the Shen Clan furious. Further trying to punish him is like adding salt to the wound. The Sect Leader wouldn't really want a blown out war with the Shen Clan just because of Shen Liang.)

Bai Zihan thought.

"Well, that's that, I guess!"

For now, Bai Zihan wasn't too interested in pursuing anything with Shen Liang. If he escaped, then good for him—he had no intention of wasting time chasing after him.

Bai Zihan leaned back in his chair, his lips curling into a faint smile as he looked at Kong Zhanghong.

"You've done well, Kong Zhanghong," Bai Zihan said, tossing a small jade bottle toward him.

Kong Zhanghong caught it with trembling hands, and the moment he opened it, his eyes widened.

"Top-tier pills... again?!"

Kong Zhanghong's voice was a mix of shock and excitement.

Just the last batch had already greatly improved his cultivation, and now he was getting more?

"Keep doing good work, and there will be more where that came from." Bai Zihan's tone was casual, but there was a sharpness in his gaze.

"But I have another task for you. This one is even more important."

Kong Zhanghong's expression turned serious, and he immediately stood straight, acting like a loyal dog awaiting his master's command.

"If you can complete this task well, I will give you a very good Profound-Grade Artifact."

The moment those words left Bai Zihan's lips, Kong Zhanghong's eyes practically sparkled with greed and excitement.

He was practically drooling at the thought. A Profound-Grade Artifact?

That was something very precious—something someone like him could never have imagined obtaining.

But he also realized it meant the task Bai Zihan had for him was of great significance. Something that he must do.

"Y-Young Master! Please rest assured! I will not disappoint you!"

Kong Zhanghong declared, his voice trembling with enthusiasm.

Seeing Kong Zhanghong's dog-like attitude, Bai Zihan almost wanted to laugh.

This guy didn't even try to hide his greed. Well, it was good that he was greedy and willing to do things for him.

"Good! Then listen carefully."

Bai Zihan's tone turned cold, his playful expression replaced with a sharp and serious look. His voice was low, but it carried an unmistakable weight.

"Find out everything you can about Bai Xueqing's ex-fiancé."

Bai Zihan's gaze seemed to pierce right through Kong Zhanghong.

"And when I say everything, I mean everything. His background, his current situation, his strengths, weaknesses, and anything that can be used against him. Understood?"

(Time to find these protagonists!)

Unlike before, Bai Zihan thought he had gained sufficient power and even killed a Heaven's Chosen.

So, he wasn't going to wait for those protagonists to come knocking on his door; instead, he was going to knock on theirs.

And at the top of the list was his sister's ex-fiancé, who Bai Zihan believed was one of the biggest protagonists around.

By this time, if he was a protagonist, he should have stirred up many things and should be on his way to becoming very powerful.

Bai Zihan ideally wanted to ask his father, but his father, who was already feeling guilty about breaking off the engagement with their old ally, probably wouldn't agree.

So instead, Bai Zihan thought he should find someone himself to investigate—and who could have guessed that Kong Zhanghong would be exactly who he needed?

Kong Zhanghong swallowed nervously, all traces of his previous greed replaced by a sense of dread.

"Understood, Young Master! I will begin immediately!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 112: The Gathering of Titans[1,512 words]

Chapter 112: The Gathering of Titans

Sect Leader Tian Yuheng was reviewing a series of reports in his grand study, his calm eyes scanning through the pages with the patience of a seasoned cultivator.

"These people... can't they give me a break?"

Most of the reports concerned the activities of his opponents, especially Elder Han, whom he needed to watch out for.

Sunlight filtered through the crystalline windows, bathing the room in a gentle golden hue.

Everything was peaceful—until it wasn't.

A faint ripple of spiritual Qi swept through the Heaven Sword Sect.

It was subtle at first, like a whisper of wind. But within seconds, it grew—a surge of spiritual Qi so intense that even Tian Yuheng couldn't ignore it.

His head snapped up, his sharp eyes narrowing.

"What is this...?"

He rose from his seat, pushing the reports aside, and strode towards the large, open balcony of his study.

His gaze swept across the distant horizon, where an ethereal pillar of light had pierced the sky.

It shimmered with a kaleidoscope of colors, twisting and coiling like a living thing, sending ripples of spiritual Qi that seemed to shake the very air.

"An opportunity has appeared..."

Tian Yuheng whispered, his voice calm but tinged with interest.

This kind of sign appeared only when some great opportunity—like ancient ruins—manifested.

Without delay, he reached out, his spiritual sense spreading like a tide across the entire sect.

"Elder Shi, Elder Lianhua, Elder Qinglan—assemble at the Grand Hall immediately."

His voice echoed in the minds of the elders he had called, carrying a weight of authority that allowed for no hesitation.

He wasn't going to call for all the elders—only the strongest and most trustworthy ones he could think of.

Within minutes, the Grand Hall of the Heaven Sword Sect became a flurry of movement.

"Tian Yuheng, what's going on?"

Elder Shi asked, clearly unaware of the distant light, though Elder Qinglan and Lianhua seemed to know why they were called.

Tian Yuheng's gaze remained locked on the distant light, even from within the hall.

"An opportunity has manifested. I suspect it may be an ancient ruin or a mystic realm. But we will only know once we investigate."

Elder Shi's eyes widened slightly.

"A mystic realm? But such phenomena haven't been seen in decades!"

Tian Yuheng nodded. Indeed, such opportunities weren't common, which made it even more important to seize them.

"We cannot allow others to claim such an opportunity while we stand idly by."

"Should we prepare the disciples?"

Elder Lianhua asked, her gaze cautious.

Tian Yuheng shook his head.

"No. This is too dangerous to involve the younger generation without knowing what lies within. We will investigate this first."

"Understood!"

Elder Lianhua nodded.

Moments later, Tian Yuheng and his chosen elders soared into the sky, spiritual light enveloping them as they shot towards the source of the mysterious light.

The journey was swift, but even so, the intensity of the spiritual Qi grew with every passing moment.

With such a huge surge of spiritual Qi, Tian Yuheng knew that most of the other major forces would be present sooner or later.

As expected, when they arrived, they saw they were not alone.

Suspended in the sky, radiating powerful auras, were other groups consisting of various clans and sects.

Not one or two but hundreds of them has already gathered.

The most prominent among them was the Bai Clan, led by the iron-willed Bai Tianheng, his cold gaze sweeping over the light with a calculating sharpness, accompanied by his elders.

Not only the Bai Clan, but the Li Clan Leader and Zhao Clan Leader were also present with their elders.

But that wasn't all.

At the highest vantage point, in a grand, hovering pavilion marked with a golden dragon emblem, stood the Desolate Heaven Empire's Royal Family.

It seemed the Royal Commander—one of the strongest under the Royal Family—had also been sent to investigate.

After all, this was such a huge opportunity that even the Royal Family couldn't ignore it.

Tian Yuheng realized that he had arrived late to the party.

"So, everyone's gathered already," Elder Shi whispered, his voice tense. "And the Royal Family too..."

"Expected!"

Tian Yuheng responded, his voice steady.

"A phenomenon of this magnitude would draw the attention of every major power."

Bai Tianheng's gaze shifted, meeting Tian Yuheng's. His lips curled slightly.

"Sect Leader Tian Yuheng. I should have known you would arrive quickly."

"Bai Clan Leader!"

Tian Yuheng nodded slightly.

"I see that your response to such an opportunity is as fast as ever."

"Haha... Of course! Otherwise, how do you think we maintain our status as the strongest clan?"

Bai Tianheng bragged.

"So, did you find something about this? And why is everyone just waiting?"

Tian Yuheng asked curiously.

Bai Tianheng's lips curled into a thin smile.

"Ah, Tian Yuheng, you've arrived late, so you haven't seen the spectacle. There is a powerful barrier surrounding the source of that light. A formation of such complexity and strength that even with our combined might, it has yet to yield."

He gestured toward the ground below, where the devastation was clear.

Trees were scorched and shattered, the earth was riddled with deep, gaping cracks, and the air shimmered with lingering Qi.

It was a clear battlefield—yet the barrier itself remained intact, shimmering with a faint, multicolored glow, its surface untouched despite the carnage around it.

"From the looks of it... no one held back."

Tian Yuheng muttered, his eyes narrowing.

If even with the gathering of the strongest they couldn't put a scratch on the barrier, that meant there was no way to forcefully enter.

But that also meant that whatever was inside the barrier was worth even more—which everyone here must have realized.

"So now, everyone is just watching?"

Tian Yuheng asked.

Despite knowing that the barrier can't be broken, there was no way that one or two won't still try.

"Watching and also waiting."

Bai Tianheng chuckled.

"They're waiting for the Formation Masters to arrive. The Royal Family already sent a message requesting one from the Formation Hall."

"And no one has tried to force their way in since?"

Tian Yuheng didn't believe that everyone would quietly wait for the Formation Master to arrive.

"Oh, they did!"

Bai Tianheng's smile widened.

"But not only is the barrier very powerful but it also reflects the attacks. One of the Zhao Clan's elders even lost an arm. Haha... A fitting punishment for them."

Tian Yuheng's gaze sharpened.

"A reflective barrier?"

"Exactly! The backlash is proportional to the force applied."

Elder Lianhua stepped forward.

"If that is true, brute force is useless. No wonder, everyone is waiting for Formation Master."

"Precisely!"

Bai Tianheng nodded.

"So now it's a waiting game."

Tian Yuheng muttered.

"Well, it doesn't matter as long as we can get something from this."

Tian Yuheng exchanged a glance with his elders.

This was a dangerous situation.

Everyone present was a powerful figure with their own ambitions, and the longer they waited, the greater the tension would become.

The ground below, covered in scorched earth and shattered rocks, was a testament to that.

The barrier's ethereal light remained unaffected, and the chaotic Qi in the air seemed to intensify with each passing moment.

Suddenly, a ripple swept through the gathered crowd. The sky shimmered, and a group of robed figures descended from the clouds.

The leading figure wore silver and gold robes embroidered with ancient runes—an unmistakable mark of the Formation Masters.

"It seems the Formation Master requested by the Royal Family has arrived."

Tian Yuheng whispered.

Bai Tianheng's smile faded slightly, and his gaze became serious.

"Let's see whether they can break the formation or not."

The Formation Masters landed gracefully, their leader stepping forward—an elderly man with a long silver beard and eyes like molten gold.

He glanced around, his expression calm and confident.

Along with him were other Formation Masters.

"I am Grandmaster Huang of the Formation Hall."

The old man announced, his voice carrying across the entire area without being too loud.

"By order of His Majesty, I shall investigate and analyze this barrier. Please, everyone bear with me."

Seeing that the Formation Master was a Grandmaster—a title reserved for Grade-7 Formation Masters—everyone felt a surge of confidence that the barrier could be breached.

"Of course, Grandmaster Huang!"

"We believe that Grandmaster Huang can do that."

...

They also knew better than to doubt such an esteemed person.

Grandmaster Huang floated closer to the barrier, his eyes glowing with a faint golden light as he observed the shimmering surface.

His fingers danced in the air, tracing intricate symbols, and a faint glow appeared at his fingertips.

Tian Yuheng's eyes never leave Grandmaster Huang's figure.

But even as they watched, Tian Yuheng couldn't help but feel a sense of unease.

With so many powerful figures gathered here and the tension already palpable, the slightest misstep could ignite a full-scale conflict.

And yet, they couldn't leave.

Because whatever lay beyond that barrier could change the balance of power in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 113: An Opportunity! [1,008 words]

Chapter 113: An Opportunity!

For several minutes, Grand Master Huang and other Formation Master studied the barrier intently, their hands weaving intricate symbols in the air, faint glimmers of spiritual light following their gestures.

Yet, despite their combined efforts—probing with spiritual sense, tracing ancient runes, and attempting various methods—one by one, their expressions grew solemn.

Finally, they exchanged silent glances, a wordless understanding passing between them.

Grandmaster Huang finally stopped, his hands dropping to his sides. A deep sigh escaped his lips.

The gathered crowd, watching intently, noticed the shift in his demeanor.

From his position, the Royal Commander's sharp gaze fixed on the Grandmaster.

"Grandmaster Huang, what is the result?"

His voice carried authority but held a trace of anxiety.

Grandmaster Huang turned to face the crowd, but his expression already gave away the answer.

"This barrier... is beyond what I had expected. I can now confirm—it is a Grade-8 formation or perhaps even higher. No one in the empire can break through such a formation."

A ripple of shock spread through the crowd.

"Grade-8?!"

"Impossible! For thousands of years, the Desolate Heaven Empire didn't even have a Grade-8 Formation Master."

"So, this formation can't be broken?"

Grandmaster Huang nodded solemnly.

"Indeed! This formation's complexity and power surpass the limits of what we can breach. Even if we gather all the Grandmasters in the Desolate Heaven Empire, it would be futile."

A Grade-9 formation was a true relic of ancient power. Breaking it by force was a fool's dream.

"So what can we do?"

The Royal Commander asked with a frown.

They had attempted to break through with brute force, only to suffer the consequences as the barrier reflected their attacks back at them, causing harm instead.

And now, even a Grade-7 Formation Master stood powerless before it.

Grandmaster Huang's lips curled into a thin, resigned smile.

"We cannot break this formation. However, the formation itself is not a sealed tomb—it is a trial."

"A trial?"

The Royal Commander echoed.

"Yes! After extensive observation, I can confirm that the formation is designed to open on its own—exactly ten days from now."

Grandmaster Huang's words sent another wave of murmurs through the crowd.

"Ten days? That's all?"

"Then we simply need to wait?"

"Haha... That is easy, then. What's waiting ten days? I can even wait a year for this."

...

Many sighed in relief.

If it was just a matter of waiting, then all the powerful factions present still had a chance to seize whatever lay within.

To a cultivator with a very big lifespan, 10 days was like a blink of an eye which they can ignore.

But before they could celebrate, Grandmaster Huang's voice rang out again, cutting through their hopes.

"But there is another condition."

The crowd fell silent, all eyes on the Grandmaster.

"This formation... is only accessible to those aged thirty or below."

Silence!

Then an explosion of outrage.

"What?!"

"This is ridiculous!"

"Only the younger generation?!"

Bai Tianheng's expression also turned grim.

"Are you certain, Grandmaster Huang?"

"I am!"

Grandmaster Huang's voice was absolute.

"The formation itself will reject anyone above that age, perhaps even harming the one who breaks its rule. I suspect this was a deliberate design by its creator."

Tian Yuheng remained calm. If the younger generation was the only one who could enter, then he had no problem.

The Heaven Sword Sect had the most geniuses, and he was certain they could gain the most from whatever was inside.

"Only those under thirty..." Elder Shi muttered. "Then whoever set this up might be looking for an heir or someone worthy of their inheritance."

It was an easy guess since only young people could enter the barrier.

Such formations had been found before, and most of the time, they were inheritances left by their creators for those they deemed worthy, like a genius or someone with great potential.

But no formation has ever been that of Grade-8 or according to Grandmaster Huang, higher than Grade-8.

As a result, the inheritance left behind should also be unimaginably powerful because only those who are Grade-8 Formation Master can make such a formation.

If true, then whatever lay beyond the barrier was something that could change the dynamics of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

"Elders, we must immediately choose the disciples to go on this expedition."

Tian Yuheng declared.

Three of them understood. This matter should be taken as the priority and they need to make preparation as soon as possible.

He wasn't the only one—other factions also began making plans to prepare their younger generation.

But some weren't satisfied.

Powerful rogue cultivators, lacking clans or sects, were furious.

"No! This can't be! You must be lying!"

"Yeah! How can a Grade-8 Formation appear? Even if it was, I don't believe it can resist the power of Immortals."

Their heated words offended Grandmaster Huang, but their frustration was clear.

"Hmph! Believe it or not, that is your choice. You can try to break the formation yourself or attempt to enter after ten days. You will see whether I am lying."

Grandmaster Huang declared.

Tian Yuheng and the other leaders didn't waste time arguing.

Grandmaster Huang's reputation was at stake, and if his words were proven false, his status would be ruined.

Moreover, just because Grandmaster Huang said it would open after 10 days, doesn't mean everyone would let their guard down and leave this place.

They will have someone keep their eyes on this place and regularly update it to their respective clan or sect.

So, it wasn't like Grandmaster can sneakily go inside thinking no one is looking at him.

"Clan Leader Bai, I will take my leave."

Tian Yuheng said to Bai Yuheng.

Now that they understood the nature of the barrier, he knew there was no point in staying any longer.

Better prepare for it!

"Yes, let's catch up next time!"

Bai Tianheng replied.

Bai Tianheng quickly used his transmission jade, sending messages to the elders at the Bai Clan Estate.

"Immediately gather all the disciples below age thirty!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 114: Preparation [1,009 words]

Chapter 114: Preparation

The news of the ancient ruin and the terrifying Grade-8 barrier spread like wildfire across the Desolate Heaven Empire.

It was impossible to hide—a spectacle of blinding light and earth-shaking Qi erupted when the ruin first appeared.

Millions witnessed it firsthand, and for those who didn't, it only took a day for rumors to flood the cities, towns, and even remote villages.

From the smallest clans to the great sects that overlooked the world, everyone was gripped by excitement and ambition.

The promise of a peerless inheritance hidden behind a Grade-8 formation sent ripples of greed and desire throughout the empire.

In the bustling capital of the Desolate Heaven Empire, the Royal Palace was in an uproar.

Advisors rushed to and fro, urgently debating their strategy.

The Emperor himself, a figure of immense authority, was said to have convened a secret meeting with his most trusted generals and ministers.

"A Grade-8 formation? Could it be a treasure from the ancient age?"

One minister whispered, his voice trembling.

"If our imperial family can obtain it, our dominance over the empire will be unshakable! We wouldn't even need to give face to those arrogant sects and clans."

Another added.

While the Desolate Heaven Empire was ruled by the Imperial Family, most of the power was divided between different sects and clans.

Even if they were to rebel, there wasn't much that the Imperial Family could do, especially against clans like the Bai, Li, and Zhao Clans.

Their influence in those clans were minimal and there is no saying what would happen if either of those clans were to rebel.

But if the Royal Family could obtain the inheritance, then there was hope of restoring their absolute dominance in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

"This inheritance—we, the Royal Family, must obtain it! Summon all the princes and princesses! Tell them that whoever claims the inheritance will automatically become the next Emperor!"

Meanwhile, the Heaven Sword Sect—the greatest Sect within the empire—was also in a storm of activities.

Elders were summoned, their expressions filled with excitement.

Sect Leader Tian Yuheng personally convened the elders, his voice decisive.

"Gather our top disciples. We will select one hundred and give them every resource and support they need."

Tian Yuheng knew that instead of sending every disciple, it was wiser to choose their best and equip them well.

Some might think it was foolish to limit their numbers, but he understood the hidden dangers of such opportunities.

If the ruin turned out to be a trap, sending all their disciples could mean total loss.

Caution was key.

While also maximizing their resources to those selected ones. Even the greatest Sect doesn't have unlimited resources.

"How shall we select the participants?"

One of the elders asked.

"Anyone who has reached the Nascent Soul Realm or above should be included without fail. As for the remaining spots, conduct a quick competition—the winners will secure their places."

Within the Bai Clan's grand estate, Clan Leader Bai Tianheng was similarly stern, giving orders to the elders.

"Contact all our top disciples across the empire. Those under thirty must return at once even if they are breaking through. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss."

But it wasn't just the great sects and noble clans that stirred.

The rogue cultivators who roamed the wild lands, the hidden reclusive masters watching from their mountain peaks, and the mercenary bands of the chaotic frontier—none were ignorant of the chaos brewing.

In the vast desert city of Golden Sand Oasis, where ruthless mercenaries and exiled cultivators gathered, the infamous Sand Viper Gang leader grinned as he looked at the report.

"Heh... if those pompous sects think they can hog the treasures, they've got another thing coming. We'll be there too!"

His words stirred the gathered gang members, who exchanged eager and ruthless grins.

"Boss, are we really going for it?"

One of the lieutenants asked, eyes gleaming with excitement.

"Damn right, we are!"

Old Viper barked.

"Gather all our best talents—anyone under thirty with some skill—whether they're cutthroats, rogue cultivators, or desert bandits. Even if they can't seize the inheritance, instruct them to at least kill those so-called geniuses from the prestigious clans or sects."

Even the Forbidden Abyss, a notorious region known for housing demonic sects, was not exempt. Within a shadowy temple, a robed figure chuckled darkly.

"A trial for the young? How interesting... Perhaps it's time for our next generation to stretch their claws."

"Haha... Heaven has blessed us. With the genius that has risen recently in our sect, those cultivators from the righteous path stand no chance."

The entire Desolate Heaven Empire became a cauldron of ambition and scheming, and with ten days until the formation opened, everyone was preparing for a bloody struggle.

Of course, such big news—how could Bai Zihan ignore it?

(Ancient Ruin? Inheritance? What kind of opportunity is this for the protagonist?)

He could already tell that it was predetermined for a chosen one.

And looking at the news, it seemed like the Heaven Chosen for such a great opportunity should be quite favored by Heaven.

So many restrictions were in place, ensuring that powerful cultivators couldn't steal the opportunity from him.

This person was definitely much more significant than Mo Yichen.

And of course, he had to go.

Whether it was stealing this opportunity from the apparent protagonist or finding out who this Heaven's Chosen was—

Not going wasn't an option for him.

Now he had two options: go as a member of the Bai Clan or the Heaven Sword Sect.

It didn't matter much to Bai Zihan, but he decided to choose the Bai Clan.

Why?

Because he was feeling homesick.

Not really!

It was because he was more familiar with the Bai Clan members, and it was easier to order them around.

Moreover, Heaven Sword Sect was conducting a tournament of some sort to select the participants and Bai Zihan didn't want to waste his time in that.

He has no interest in wasting his time like that.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 115: Convincing the Unconvinced[1,065 words]

Chapter 115: Convincing the Unconvinced

"No, we can't!"

Inside the grand hall of the Bai Clan estate, the atmosphere was thick with tension.

Bai Tianheng, the Clan Leader, stood at the head of the hall, his expression calm but his gaze sharp.

Around him, a half-dozen elders were gathered, their faces a mix of concern, skepticism, and even a hint of defiance.

"Clan Leader," Elder Bai Wei said.

"I must speak plainly. Including Bai Zihan among the participants for the ancient ruin is... reckless."

"Reckless?"

Bai Tianheng's voice was even, but there was a dangerous edge to it.

"Yes!"

Elder Bai Wei pressed on, emboldened by the murmurs of agreement around him.

"Bai Zihan may be your son, but this is an opportunity of unimaginable value—a once-in-a-lifetime chance. We must send only the best of our disciples. Those who are strong, capable, and can help in obtaining the inheritance!"

"Are you implying Bai Zihan is none of those?"

Bai Tianheng's tone grew colder.

"Clan Leader, let's be honest. Bai Zihan is only good at creating trouble and would definitely become a hindrance. We are not just saying this selfishly but also for his own safety."

Bai Wei explained.

Although Bai Zihan's recent achievement and the news about his Late Golden Core Stage cultivation might have spread far and wide, it didn't mean that he was all that powerful.

Of course, for his age, Bai Zihan could be considered quite talented.

But the Bai Clan's elders were still skeptical about his combat abilities, which they hadn't seen for themselves.

Additionally, sending Bai Zihan meant that other Bai Clan members would have to babysit him and might lose the opportunity to obtain the inheritance.

Of course, there were also those who opposed it because they didn't want to risk Bai Zihan obtaining the opportunity, though they believed the chances were very slim.

"So, you think that my son is not qualified?"

Bai Tianheng asked with a frown.

"Exactly! Clan Leader, let's not take any risks and endanger our heirs' lives."

Bai Wei said, trying to frame his argument as concern for Bai Zihan's safety, though his true intentions were obvious.

Bai Tianheng also wouldn't have liked Bai Zihan risking his life, considering how weak he was perceived to be.

But Bai Zihan had already expressed his desire to go.

And as cultivators, it is normal to risk one's life for opportunities because that is what cultivation is all about.

If they say it is dangerous, does not going mean avoiding danger?

Wrong!

What if your enemies entered the ruins and obtained the opportunity instead?

Then you could only kiss your future goodbye.

That's why it was normal—necessary, even—to take risks, especially when considering that this was an opportunity one might not encounter again in a lifetime.

Bai Tianheng let out a deep sigh, his gaze sweeping across the assembled elders.

"You are all so worried about Bai Zihan being a burden? Fine. We will let the participants decide."

The elders exchanged confused glances.

"What do you mean, Clan Leader?"

Elder Bai Wei asked cautiously.

"We will gather all the selected participants—the top disciples, those you all consider capable. If Bai Zihan can convince them that he is not a burden, then he will join them. If they reject him outright, then he stays."

Some of the elders looked hesitant, but a few seemed satisfied with this solution.

After all, they believed the top disciples would easily reject Bai Zihan.

"As you wish, Clan Leader!"

Elder Bai Wei finally nodded, a hint of a smug smile on his lips.

(I have done all you wanted. Now, everything is in your hands, son!)

Bai Tianheng thought.

"Summon all the chosen participants immediately. We will settle this here and now."

Bai Tianheng commanded.

Servants rushed out, their footsteps echoing through the grand hall.

Within minutes, the hall was filled with the Bai Clan's top young talents—over hundred young men and women, each radiating powerful auras.

Most were at the Golden Core Stage, and a few had even reached the Nascent Soul Stage.

They were the pride of the Bai Clan.

"Why were we called? Is this a strategy meeting for the ancient ruins?"

"Look! All the elders are here too. This must be something important."

The murmurs spread among the gathered disciples.

"Everyone, we have summoned you here for an important matter," Bai Tianheng began.

"As you know, the ancient ruin has appeared, and you all are those who will represent our Bai Clan."

He paused, his gaze turning cold.

"But there is a dispute among the elders. Some believe that my son, Bai Zihan, should not be included. They fear he may become a burden to you all."

The young disciples murmured among themselves—some with surprise, others with amusement.

Many were surprised that Bai Zihan would even be considered, given his previous reputation as a waste.

Even with the recent news about his cultivation, which was impressive, many still doubted his strength, assuming it was a hollow shell.

High cultivation without the skill to utilize even half of its power.

They were also amused that their young master had the courage to enter such a dangerous place.

A coward going to a place where thousands would die?

No matter his status, once inside, it would be every man for himself.

If possible, they would work as a team.

But if not, they would have to fend for themselves—something they doubted Bai Zihan could manage.

"To resolve this, we will let you decide. Bai Zihan will make his case, and you can judge for yourselves."

As if on cue, Bai Zihan strolled in, his expression calm and confident, his gaze sweeping across the gathered elites of the Bai Clan.

"Oh? Everyone is already gathered here?"

He said, glancing around.

There were some faces he recognized well and others he hadn't seen for years, like the older disciples who were mostly in the Nascent Soul Realm.

Many of them had already left the clan, only occasionally returning to visit.

Their feelings were mostly neutral—they had little to do with Bai Zihan and no strong opinions about him joining.

But for the younger generation, like Bai Jian, it was completely different.

Just seeing Bai Zihan made them angry, and the idea that he wanted to join them because of his status made them even more furious.

Want to convince us?

No way!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 116: Courage or Madness?[1,121 words]

Chapter 116: Courage or Madness?

"We only have one day before the Ancient Ruins open, so let's not waste time."

Bai Zihan continued.

"Who here thinks that I don't deserve to go?"

Bai Zihan asked directly.

Immediately, hands started to be raised, mostly from the younger generation.

The older generation was a bit reluctant, knowing that Bai Zihan was the heir and the Clan Leader was still here.

So, to avoid looking bad, they refrained, even if they did agree.

But they also didn't think their opinion was needed since the majority had already raised their hands.

Bai Zihan nodded as he saw the hands, not a bit surprised.

Honestly, it would be surprising if there were no hands raised.

"Understood!"

Bai Zihan said.

"Let's see, Bai Jian, why do you think I don't deserve to be one of the participants?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Bai Jian, Bai Feng's son, was obviously one of the participants, as he was one of the greatest geniuses of the younger generation.

Bai Zihan deliberately chose Bai Jian, who hated him the most.

"Hmph! Bai Zihan, you lack the experience and strength for this kind of expedition. I advise you to quietly stay here and cultivate without worries."

Bai Jian instantly answered.

"You think I lack strength? While you, yourself, are only at the Late Golden Core Stage?"

Bai Zihan asked with a smirk.

Bai Jian was shaken a bit by the question.

He was stunned when the news about Bai Zihan's Golden Core Cultivation reached his ears.

But he had to trust the news because one of his subordinates also went with Bai Zihan to eliminate the Mei Clan and had personally reported it.

But despite knowing that, he continued to believe it was just a cultivation level and that Bai Zihan's strength was still far inferior than his.

Additionally, he really hadn't gone on any monster hunts or trained by sparring with other clan members.

"Hmph! Just being at the same cultivation level means nothing. If it did, there are others who should also be selected as participants."

Bai Jian replied.

"Do others also share the same opinion?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Others nodded in agreement.

"So, you all think I am not strong? Well, indeed, I had been away from the Bai Clan, or you might have forgotten the beating I gave you all."

Bai Zihan muttered, though it was obviously not a whisper, and they heard it, which only made them angrier.

Bai Zihan acted like he was deep in thought, then clapped his palm as if an idea hit him.

"Okay then! Let's do it like this. Whoever is not satisfied, let's fight. If you win, I won't join you."

Bai Zihan declared.

"You? Fight us?"

Bai Jian asked, as if he had heard a joke.

"Yes, you heard me right!"

"Like actually fighting? Without limiting our cultivation or anything?"

Bai Jian asked.

"Yes!"

"Bai Zihan, you overestimate yourself. Any one of us can easily beat you without any trouble. You don't need to waste our time."

Bai Jian arrogantly said.

Others also nodded their heads in agreement, all thinking that if it was a straightforward fight, they could easily win against Bai Zihan without any trouble.

Additionally, Bai Zihan had always been a coward who would resort to other means to torment them, and now saying he wanted a straightforward fight—some of them couldn't believe their ears.

"But if you still want, one of us can fight you to prove my word."

Bai Jian said, eager for a chance to beat up Bai Zihan.

"No, no, you are misunderstanding me."

Bai Zihan quickly said.

"Haha... Bai Zihan, are you scared? Going back on your words just seconds after you said them? You shouldn't have said that if you weren't going to fight."

Bai Jian mocked, not missing the chance.

Others also laughed at Bai Zihan's cowardice.

While some elders couldn't help but facepalm, feeling embarrassed at the cowardly display, unlike what a Bai Clan member should be.

"Tch! Idiot! When did I say that I will not fight?"

Bai Zihan continued.

"What I meant is I won't fight one of you but all of you together."

Bai Zihan arrogantly declared.

"What?"

"This Bai Zihan, did I hear him right?"

"Fight all of us? Is he crazy? Who does he think he is?"

...

Obviously, Bai Zihan's words didn't go over well, especially since it seemed like he was looking down on them by suggesting he could beat every one of them, even if they attacked him together.

Even Bai Jian's smile faded.

Bai Zihan was always arrogant and shameless, but this was a new level of arrogance, especially since there were also some Nascent Soul Realm members.

"Bai Zihan, are you serious?"

Bai Jian asked with a frown.

"Yes!"

Bai Zihan answered.

"Or are you all afraid to even fight a single me together?"

Bai Zihan provoked.

This further angered the participants, who now felt mocked.

"Huh? I am totally ready!"

"Let's go, guys, and teach him a lesson."

"I've had enough of him. Since he wants a good beating, who are we to deny our heir?"

...

The participants were now prepared to fight Bai Zihan.

Above, Bai Tianheng and the other elders watched everything without interfering.

Bai Feng couldn't stop smirking—the crazier Bai Zihan acted, the more certain his defeat seemed.

"Clan Leader, are you sure you want Bai Zihan to go through this?"

Bai Feng asked, pretending to be concerned.

(What is he planning?)

Bai Tianheng thought when Bai Zihan challenged everyone.

He thought Bai Zihan had a plan but didn't expect something like this.

Still, he decided to trust his son.

"Since it is something Bai Zihan has agreed to, I don't see anything wrong with it."

Bai Tianheng replied.

Bai Feng's smile couldn't be wider.

Then, with a loud voice, he announced.

"Everyone who disagrees with Bai Zihan's participation, gather! You all will be fighting against Bai Zihan, and if Bai Zihan wins, he will become one of the participants."

Bai Feng announced.

"Wait a minute!"

Bai Zihan interjected.

"What is it, Bai Zihan?"

Bai Feng asked.

"Just for participation, it doesn't seem fair fighting so many people. How about this—if I win, I also get to be the Leader of this expedition?"

Bai Zihan suggested.

"Very well! The Leader position is undecided anyway, and if you can win against so many people, you deserve to be the leader."

Bai Feng saw no problem, probably because he didn't believe Bai Zihan stood any chance at all.

"Then once again, those who disagree with Bai Zihan's participation will fight him. If Bai Zihan wins, he gets the leader position. Otherwise, he will not be allowed to join."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 117: The Rise of the Scorned Heir [1,864 words]

Chapter 117: The Rise of the Scorned Heir

The Bai Clan participants numbered around 40.

But that was only for those going through the Bai Clan's selection. Others, like Bai Xueqing, decided to join through their respective sects.

Out of those 40, nearly 20 openly opposed Bai Zihan and were even ready to fight him.

Among them, only three were in the Nascent Soul Realm, while the rest were in the Golden Core Stage.

However, they didn't think that Nascent Soul Realm cultivators were necessary to beat down Bai Zihan, who was only at the Golden Core Stage.

Even if the rumors were true—that he had gained mastery over the Heaven-Grade Technique, Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword—they believed that with their numbers, it was impossible for them to lose.

The others chose not to get involved, either because they didn't think it was necessary or because they didn't want to be caught up in the clan's politics.

"Then, are you all ready? Begin!"

Bai Feng announced.

But just as the words left his mouth, Bai Ming suddenly stepped forward, a smug smile on his face.

"Everyone else, stand back. I don't need your help to deal with this arrogant heir of ours."

His voice dripped with confidence, and the others paused—some nodding, a few even stepping back willingly.

After all, Bai Ming was one of the strongest among them. If he was going to humiliate Bai Zihan on his own, why should they bother?

Moreover, even though they agreed to fight Bai Zihan, they hadn't planned to gang up on him unfairly.

Most of them wanted to teach him a lesson and believed they could do it alone.

Bai Zihan raised an eyebrow, his lips curling into a mocking smile.

Not that he expected these prideful idiots to group together and attack him anyway.

WHOOSH!

Bai Ming moved at insane speed, his figure blurring as he shot toward Bai Zihan, his fist crashing forward like a thunderclap.

"This isn't personal, but you need to learn your place!"

Bai Ming roared.

Bai Zihan didn't even blink.

His figure shifted, a blur of movement that seemed almost lazy, and then—

Crack!

Bai Ming's voice died in his throat, his eyes bulging as Bai Zihan's fist buried itself in his gut.

The sheer force sent a shockwave rippling through the air.

"Guh—!"

Bai Ming's face twisted in pain, and before he could even react, Bai Zihan's knee slammed into his chin, lifting him off the ground.

Then a casual palm strike crashed into his chest, sending him flying backward like a ragdoll.

Bai Ming hit the ground, skidding, tumbling, and finally coming to a stop, motionless, dust settling around his body.

BANG!

The others stared in stunned silence.

"That... that was Bai Ming! One of the strongest in his generation when it comes to pure physical strength!"

"And he was... knocked out so easily?"

"How... How can Bai Zihan be that strong without using any Qi?"

"Is his body even more powerful than Bai Ming's? That can't be! He hardly even trains."

They couldn't believe how easily and quickly Bai Zihan had taken out Bai Ming, supposedly one of the strongest among them.

Bai Zihan and Bai Ming's clash was mostly physical, with little to no Qi involved. Yet Bai Zihan came out on top?

It seemed impossible to the Bai Clan members, who knew just how lazy Bai Zihan was—he wouldn't even spare an hour for training.

Bai Zihan waited for another challenger, but they were still too shocked to move.

His mocking voice cut through their disbelief.

"Come on, don't tell me you were just here to watch?"

His grin widened, dripping with contempt.

"Twenty of you against me, and you're too scared to even move? Well, let me help you with that."

Whoosh!

Bai Zihan's figure blurred again.

In an instant, he was in front of another disciple, his palm slamming into the poor guy's face, sending him crashing back.

The guy was caught off guard and couldn't even react—Bai Zihan's speed was beyond what anyone expected.

A girl quickly tried to swing her sword at him, but Bai Zihan's hand snatched her wrist like a vice.

"Gah!"

Her reaction was quick, but Bai Zihan's was faster—like her attack was in slow motion.

He yanked her forward, his knee slamming into her stomach, and she collapsed to the ground, gasping for air.

"Next!"

Bai Zihan roared, his voice brimming with battle lust.

And then the chaos began.

The remaining disciples finally snapped out of their shock, their pride and anger overwhelming their shock.

"Don't let him mock us! Take him down!"

Bai Jian yelled angrily.

He was still processing how the supposed joke of the Bai Clan had taken down one of the strongest among them, Bai Ming, and now two more in a split second.

Though those two weren't as strong as him or Bai Ming, they were still elites chosen as participants.

And yet the so-called waste took them out like it was nothing.

The older generation didn't take orders from Bai Jian despite his greater talent. He didn't deserve that authority.

But the younger generation was different—they were used to following Bai Jian, who acted like their leader.

Seven disciples immediately surrounded Bai Zihan, leaving no way for him to escape.

"Bai Zihan, you have nowhere to escape."

Bai Jian declared arrogantly, forgetting he had to rely on so many disciples just to contain the one he thought was a weakling.

"Escape? Who, me?"

Bai Zihan almost laughed.

If he wanted to escape, would he have deliberately approached them first?

There was no use explaining common sense to someone drunk on the illusion of victory.

They surged forward, weapons drawn, Qi surging—with all their attacks converging on Bai Zihan.

One of them lunged first, his sword slashing down with a fierce glow.

But before his blade could touch Bai Zihan, a blur of motion flashed.

Crack!

His wrist twisted at an unnatural angle, the sword flying from his grip, and a brutal kick slammed into his chest, sending him flying back, his body crashing into another disciple.

"Bastard!"

Another one shouted, his palm glowing with a fiery red light as he aimed a flaming fist at Bai Zihan.

But Bai Zihan sidestepped easily, grabbing the attacker's outstretched arm and yanking him forward.

THUD!

His knee met the disciple's face, a sickening crunch echoing as the man's nose shattered, blood spraying.

From above, the elders watched in shock.

Bai Feng's smile was long gone.

Where was the untalented, problematic young master whose only talent was causing trouble?

He was completely different from how they had known him.

Bai Tianheng's gaze was sharp, but a slight smile played at his lips.

(So... this is the strength my son has been hiding.)

Too strong!

Although the result was yet to be decided, Bai Zihan had already proven himself to all of them.

He was no longer the person they used to know and could even take on multiple elites of the Bai Clan.

Just defeating the three geniuses earlier proved that he was a genius like his sister, Bai Xueqing.

Not to mention, even more, despite being surrounded and outnumbered.

Previously, he was happy to know that at least his son's cultivation had reached the level of a genius, but this was completely different.

Cultivation level doesn't always mean someone can also fight well, especially against so many at the same level.

It was clear that his cultivation wasn't the only thing at the level of a genius—his combat technique and physique were also on par with a top genius.

(No wonder the Grand Elder looked so excited when talking about Zihan'er!)

"What are you doing? Attack him from all sides!"

Bai Jian shouted angrily.

But it was like fighting a storm.

Bai Zihan's figure flickered, moving between them like a ghost.

A punch shattered a jaw. An elbow cracked against a temple. A sweeping kick sent another one tumbling.

In seconds, four more were on the ground, groaning in pain.

Bai Jian's face twisted with rage. He wasn't going to stand by and watch his so-called "waste" of a cousin humiliate them all.

"Everyone, focus! Don't attack blindly! Keep him occupied!"

Bai Jian shouted, and his voice seemed to snap the others out of their panic.

His own sword flashed as he charged in, his blade sweeping toward Bai Zihan's shoulder with a precise, controlled strike.

Clang!

Bai Zihan's palm met the flat of Bai Jian's sword, and a shockwave rippled out.

"Oh? Finally joining in, Bai Jian? I was wondering how long you planned to sit around and shout."

Bai Zihan taunted, his grin sharp.

"Shut up!"

Bai Jian spat, twisting his wrist, his sword flaring with blue Qi as he tried to push Bai Zihan back.

But Bai Zihan didn't budge. His hand gripped the blade, fingers tightening, Qi flaring around his palm like a shield.

"Not bad!"

Bai Zihan commented with genuine compliment.

"But you'll need a lot more than that."

Suddenly, he shoved the sword aside, sending Bai Jian stumbling, and in the same motion, his leg lashed out in a sweeping kick.

Bai Jian barely managed to twist his body, avoiding the full impact, but the force still sent him skidding back.

(How is his body so powerful?)

Bai Jian thought hatefully.

Previously, he had also been beaten down and slapped by Bai Zihan, and he remembered how physically strong Bai Zihan was. Now, he was reminded of it again.

The other disciples tried to take advantage of the moment, but it was like attacking a hurricane.

Another went down with a broken arm, a girl's sword was ripped from her grip and used to smack her aside, and yet another disciple was sent flying with a brutal knee to the gut.

Bai Jian, however, refused to back down. His sword danced, strikes fast and precisely, and he managed to keep his footing, avoiding being overwhelmed.

Indeed, compared to the other disciples who were getting knocked out like flies, Bai Jian was in a league of his own—able to take the hits without losing consciousness.

It was clear he was the strongest among the group now—he wasn't just lashing out in panic like the others but trying to coordinate their efforts.

But even with his leadership, it was of no use as other disciples weren't able to keep up with him.

The last one, a girl with a spear, thrust it forward, her expression desperate.

"Stay back!"

Her voice trembled, but her attack was sharp.

Bai Zihan caught the spear's shaft with one hand, his grip like iron.

"Nice spear," he mocked, yanking it forward, and the girl stumbled toward him, wide-eyed.

Bang!

His hand snapped forward, striking the back of her neck, and she crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

Bai Zihan spun the spear around and casually tossed it aside.

He looked around. Seven of them lay on the ground—some groaning, some unconscious and the only one who could fight was Bai Jian.

"Wow, that was it? Pathetic!"

Bai Zihan sneered, his voice carrying over the stunned silence.

"Is this really the best of the Bai Clan?"

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Chapter 118: Here Comes Another One!

The spectators were silent, shock and disbelief etched on their faces.

"Y-You..."

Bai Jian's voice wavered. He couldn't believe it. How? How was this the same Bai Zihan he used to mock?

Bai Jian's fists clenched, his face pale, but his pride wouldn't let him retreat.

"Everyone!"

Bai Jian shouted, trying to rally the rest.

"Don't you think that it's high time for you to also join?"

The remaining disciples looked at each other and nodded.

They didn't think it would come to this—the older generation having to deal with a single younger generation.

This hadn't happened since Bai Xueqing, who was undoubtedly a genius.

With the power shown by Bai Zihan, most of them didn't have any problem with him joining as a participant.

But they also couldn't let Bai Zihan become their leader—that was still something they felt was still undeserved.

"Young Master, you are undoubtedly strong. How about we take a step back and let you in as a participant? But you are still inexperienced to lead us."

One of the Nascent Soul Realm cultivators said.

Earlier, he thought Bai Zihan was still the same trash he remembered, but he had changed.

Now, there was no doubt that Bai Zihan would become their new head in the future. So, he didn't want to make things worse for himself.

You could even say Bai Zihan had convinced him with his new strength and talent, which was almost nonexistent previously.

Bai Jian couldn't help but get angrier.

These older generation members were not listening to him and even showing this kind of subservient behavior to Bai Zihan already.

Moreover, what about his revenge? If the fight stopped now, it would look like Bai Zihan won, no matter how one looked at it.

If it continued, he believed Bai Zihan would inevitably lose because they still had more than 10 people, with three being in the Nascent Soul Realm.

"Sigh! If you are afraid, just surrender and give up. Otherwise, shut your mouth!"

Bai Zihan commanded arrogantly.

The cultivator wasn't offended or angry at Bai Zihan's response.

Well, one would be if one wasn't used to Bai Zihan who always acted in a disrespectful manner.

"Well, I warned you!"

Saying so, he finally released his Nascent Soul Realm cultivation.

"Bai Zihan, you've proven you're not the same weakling as before, but arrogance will be your downfall."

He moved—a blur of speed—his fist tearing through the air, a shockwave trailing behind it.

But Bai Zihan's figure didn't waver.

BANG!

The Nascent Soul Realm cultivator's fist stopped dead, caught in Bai Zihan's open palm.

The man's eyes widened.

"Impossible—!"

"Is it?"

Bai Zihan's voice was calm, almost sounding disappointed.

"You're at the Nascent Soul Realm, and this is the best you've got?"

Crack!

Bai Zihan's grip tightened, and with a casual twist, the man's wrist shattered.

"Agh!"

He screamed, his body twisting in pain, but Bai Zihan wasn't done.

A knee slammed into his gut, doubling him over, and before he could even gasp for air, Bai Zihan's palm came down on the back of his head.

BOOM!

The Nascent Soul Realm cultivator crashed into the ground, a small crater forming beneath him.

Déjà vu?

The crowd was stunned yet again.

"N-No way! Nascent Soul Realm... taken down like that?"

"This is just like when Bai Ming..."

"How... How is this possible?"

Their voices were laced with fear and disbelief—even more than when Bai Zihan took care of Bai Ming.

After all, no matter what, the Nascent Soul Realm was on a completely different level than the Golden Core Stage.

But more surprising than that was the aura radiating from Bai Zihan.

It was clear!

Bai Zihan was in the Nascent Soul Realm!

"Impossible!"

Bai Jian shouted, his face pale, his eyes full of disbelief.

"He was supposed to be at the Golden Core Stage! How... How is he at the Nascent Soul Realm?!"

Bai Zihan chuckled while glancing at the surprised look of everyone.

Indeed, he was already in the Nascent Soul Realm and hence why he was so confident in confronting all the participants.

[Host Info]

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 16

Cultivation Realm: Nascent (Early)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone

Martial Arts: Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

And the reason for his breakthrough was due to the 100x Cultivation Speed Card (10 Days) which he received for killing Mo Yichen.

He was saving it for when he needed it, but with such a big opportunity as the Ancient Ruins appearing—which even the strongest cultivators couldn't break—he knew he had to prepare with everything he had.

Who knew what would appear in the Ancient Ruin? And there were also the protagonists he needed to be wary of.

So, he spent the last 9 days after returning to the Bai Clan cultivating and managed to break through to the Nascent Soul Realm.

Another reason he challenged them was to test his new power and understand where he stood.

And as he thought, cultivators at the same cultivation level were no problem for him at all.

"This..."

Even Bai Feng was speechless, along with the other elders. Bai Tianheng was also stunned—he didn't expect such a thing.

Nascent Soul Realm?

That too at the age of 16!

That was a level of talent that even surpassed Bai Xueqing's.

If this was true, then there was no chance for anyone to change the heir. Bai Zihan would become the future Clan Leader of the Bai Clan without a doubt.

Even Bai Feng couldn't possibly come up with any reason to oust his position due to the unparalleled talent that Bai Zihan displayed.

(Just how much is my son hiding? Or did he gain all of this in a couple of months at the Heaven Sword Sect?)

Bai Tianheng was confused.

He knew his son wasn't hiding his cultivation like many others thought.

He was certain that Bai Zihan's growth happened after he went to the Heaven Sword Sect, and that he got some kind of opportunity there.

But even with an opportunity, such exponential growth was normally impossible.

(After this, I must ask him!)

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 119: Power Of Nascent Soul Realm[1,375 words]

Chapter 119: Power Of Nascent Soul Realm

Once more, there was stillness on the battlefield.

Even the two Nascent Soul participants who were against Bai Zihan had their mouths open in shock.

One should know that Bai Zihan was almost 13-14 years younger than them, but his cultivation level was the same as theirs.

And they were hailed as talents themselves, so it wasn't a comparison between trash and a genius—but rather a genius and a monster who couldn't be comprehended.

Moreover, even they couldn't claim they could take out Bai Tian the way Bai Zihan did, even though Bai Tian held himself back, possibly not expecting Bai Zihan to be this powerful.

The others who didn't disagree with Bai Zihan were shocked and relieved that they hadn't because there was no way they would humiliate themselves like that and offend Bai Zihan—who was undoubtedly their future leader.

And even if not, he was sure to become someone they couldn't go against.

They avoided opposing him simply because they were a bit reluctant; otherwise, their fate wouldn't be any different from Bai Ming's or Bai Tian's.

"Everyone, we must attack together with our full power!"

Bai Jian roared angrily.

Despite Bai Zihan's revelation of his Nascent Soul realm cultivation, it seemed like Bai Jian wasn't going to give up.

Perhaps he still couldn't come to terms with the fact that the waste he looked down on had surpassed him.

Or perhaps he didn't want to remember the days that would come with Bai Zihan being this powerful.

A lot of bad memories flooded his mind as Bai Zihan displayed his strength.

There was no way he was going back to the days of being bullied by Bai Zihan.

This time, though, the others from the older generation got ready to fight, not because Bai Jian ordered them, but because it was the only way for them to win.

If they lost, they would lose their face as the elite of the Bai Clan.

The other two Nascent Soul Realm cultivators exchanged glances and nodded.

The two Nascent Soul experts unleashed their full power, a storm of Qi swirling around them.

The sky darkened as one conjured a vortex of black lightning, crackling with destructive energy.

The other's aura transformed into a freezing mist, sharp as blades, swirling around her like a violent blizzard.

The rest of the Golden Core disciples joined in, their auras flaring as they surrounded Bai Zihan, creating a formation similar to before, with Bai Zihan having no way of escape.

Nine cultivators, each powerful in their own right, all focused on a single target.

"Try dodging this!"

One of the Nascent Soul cultivators shouted, his voice booming like thunder.

A storm of Qi crashed toward Bai Zihan. Black lightning arced like serpents, the freezing mist transformed into sharp ice blades, and golden sword light tore through the air.

He wasn't the only one; the others also joined in, leaving Bai Zihan with no way to dodge or block their attacks.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword: Flickering Shadow Step!"

Facing the combined onslaught, Bai Zihan used Flickering Shadow Step, dodging with supernatural speed.

But the sheer number of attacks began to overwhelm him.

A bolt of lightning grazed his shoulder, searing his robe.

A blade of ice nicked his cheek, drawing a thin line of blood.

Indeed, they weren't just the elite of the Bai Clan in name only. Unlike the younger generation, they understood the essence of teamwork.

"Tch!"

Bai Zihan clicked his tongue.

More and more attacks closed in.

The Nascent Soul cultivators were coordinating, driving him toward the center of their formation.

"Now!"

One of them shouted, and an enormous sphere of lightning and ice surged, sealing Bai Zihan within a prison of chaotic Qi.

"He's trapped!"

Bai Jian's face twisted with a vicious grin.

"Hahaha! Do you see, Bai Zihan? Arrogance is your downfall."

But his laughter stopped when he saw Bai Zihan's calm expression within the swirling storm.

From within the prison, a blinding light erupted.

Clang!

A resonant sword hum filled the air, sharp and piercing.

The swirling lightning and ice shattered as a beam of radiant light tore through them.

The Nascent Soul cultivators stumbled back, their auras disrupted.

And there he stood.

Bai Zihan—his robes tattered, but his gaze cold and piercing.

In his right hand was a sword—its seemed like Bai Zihan finally forced to use his sword.

Eternal Spirit Sword!

Although Bai Zihan had only managed to upgrade it to Mid Earth-Grade, he had decided to use this as his main weapon.

His other sword was still stronger by a level, but he thought of using this one to get used to it.

Since it was upgradeable, he would be using it anyway in the future.

(I guess this is my limit.)

Relying only on his body and power, it was feasible to take out a single Nascent Soul Realm opponent.

But against two Nascent Soul Realm cultivators, supported by other Golden Core disciples, it was difficult, even with his body's strength.

Still, he was satisfied to know his limit, at least without his sword.

"Let's see whether you can handle this!"

Bai Zihan's voice was cold, and his grip tightened on the hilt.

A terrifying sword aura surged from his body, an oppressive force pressing down on everyone present.

The Nascent Soul cultivators' eyes widened in horror.

"Impossible! That sword aura... It's dangerous!!!"

"Everyone! Defensive formation!"

One of them screamed.

Everyone felt the power radiating from Bai Zihan and knew that whatever was coming would be incredibly powerful. They immediately went into full defense mode.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light!"

In an instant, his figure split into nine, each one a shadow dancing around his opponents.

"What—?! Where is he?!"

"Defend! Defend!"

But their screams were drowned in a storm of sword light.

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

Nine strikes in rapid succession.

The first Nascent Soul expert barely raised his hand to defend when his arm was sliced clean off.

He stumbled backward, clutching the stump, blood gushing out.

The second tried to dodge Bai Zihan's attack, but she couldn't even see where it was coming from. A sharp pain exploded in her abdomen as the strike landed.

The Golden Core cultivators didn't even have a chance.

One by one, they fell—some clutching deep gashes, others dropping their weapons as the force of the strikes shattered their bones.

Nine strikes. Nine opponents. None could defend.

The battlefield froze once more, as if time itself had halted to comprehend what had just occurred.

Bai Zihan stood at the center, his robe tattered, the Eternal Spirit Sword glistening with a thin sheen of blood.

The faint blue glow around the blade flickered like ethereal flames.

(So this is the power of combining a Heaven-Grade Technique with Sword Intent...)

Bai Zihan thought, his grip on the sword relaxing.

"Argh!"

"Ahh!"

The Nascent Soul and Golden Core disciples lay on the ground, moaning in pain.

But despite the deep cuts and intense pain, none of them were dead.

Bai Zihan had held back—just enough.

It wasn't like they were his enemies—because if they were, they wouldn't have been able to keep their heads on their shoulders.

His gaze swept over the disciples, every one of them unable to retaliate.

He sheathed his sword, and the oppressive aura dissipated. The crowd, previously frozen in fear, finally dared to breathe again.

The realization hit them like a tidal wave: Bai Zihan had just crushed the combined might of two Nascent Soul experts and several Golden Core cultivators.

One of the older generation's disciples whispered, trembling, "He... he really is a monster, just like his sister."

"Damn! How can they be so strong while we're like this?"

"At least be happy that this monster is in our clan. With the two of them, our clan might as well rise above everyone else."

...

"I won! I will be leading the team tomorrow. Does anyone have any other opinions?"

Bai Zihan asked.

His question was met with silence. There was no way anyone could argue with his overwhelming victory.

And who else could lead a team if not their strongest?

This was their future Clan leader.

This was Bai Zihan!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 120: The Son Who Surpassed Expectations[1,527 words]

Chapter 120: The Son Who Surpassed Expectations

Silence lingered a moment longer, as if the entire Bai Clan needed time to digest what had just happened.

Then, the elders stirred.

A few exchanged glances, still stunned by what they had just witnessed.

"Truly... astonishing!"

Elder Bai Wei said, his voice carrying across the courtyard.

"I can't believe Zihan was hiding something like this. Looks like heaven has truly blessed our Bai Clan."

He had been the first to object to Bai Zihan's inclusion as a participant earlier, but now, he'd been proven wrong on every level.

He had no choice but to admit that Bai Zihan wasn't just qualified—he was the one who would lead the Bai Clan forward.

His words seemed to unfreeze the rest of the elders.

"To display such overwhelming strength, control, and restraint at the Nascent Soul Realm—at sixteen—isn't just rare. It's unheard of. That level of swordsmanship... it's beyond what most of us achieved even in our prime."

"Indeed," said another elder, nodding gravely.

"That last attack... I reckon he's already on the verge of perfecting the Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword technique."

Another chimed in, half amazed and half bitter, "Two Nascent Soul Realm disciples at sixteen. Bai Tianheng, you old bastard, what the hell have you been feeding your kids?"

That caused a ripple of chuckles among the elders—equal parts impressed and envious.

After all, Bai Tianheng had already been blessed with a top-tier genius in his daughter.

Everyone figured having a 'waste' of a son balanced it out.

But now... that so-called waste turned out to be just like his sister.

And the only thing they could feel was envy.

Bai Tianheng stood near the platform, arms folded, trying to maintain his usual stoic expression.

But the way his eyes crinkled slightly at the corners, the quiet pride in his gaze as he looked at Bai Zihan—it was obvious to anyone paying attention.

Pride, sharp and undeniable, glimmered in his eyes.

Still, there was a trace of awkwardness too.

This was the first time the elders were praising Bai Zihan... instead of complaining about him and he wasn't used to it.

Even Bai Wei—the most vocal critic—was praising him without hesitation.

The shift in tone was so sharp, it could've cut steel.

Elder Bai Feng, who had remained silent the longest, finally let out a reluctant sigh.

His eyes flicked toward his son, Bai Jian—currently slumped over and groaning on the ground, his pride shattered into pieces that might never be put back together.

Then, he looked at Bai Zihan—still standing tall amidst the wreckage, sword in hand, not a trace of smugness on his face, just his usual expression as if he didn't just wipe the floor with the Elites of Bai Clan.

(...I'll admit it, even if I won't say it out loud—your son's better than mine.)

That thought alone made his gut twist, but there was no denying it. Not after what he'd just witnessed.

(I really thought Jian was going to carry the clan's future... but today, I saw it clearly. The gap between them isn't a crack—it's a damn chasm.)

Cultivation level, mastery of technique... and Sword Intent.

He'd sensed it. That final strike—it carried Sword Intent.

And that was when Bai Feng gave up on the idea of his son ever catching up.

Bai Zihan wasn't just talented. He was a once-in-a-billion genius.

His jaw clenched as he watched Bai Zihan calmly sheathe his sword.

Nearby, Bai Tianheng stayed quiet, but one corner of his mouth twitched upward.

Bai Zihan, meanwhile, simply stood there—robe tattered, sword in hand, blood trailing down his arm—but with his chin slightly raised.

He didn't say anything cocky.

Didn't throw insults.

He didn't need to.

The battlefield—the groaning disciples, the shattered pride—was already speaking for him.

"Ahem! Looks like the result is undeniable. Bai Zihan will participate, and he will also act as your leader. Do you all understand?"

Bai Feng finally announced amidst the confusion.

"Yes!"

The disciples answered in unison—at least, those who were still conscious. The ones who fought were being carried away for healing.

Bai Zihan hadn't seriously injured anyone. They'd recover quickly with some healing pills.

"Bai Zihan, do you have anything to say as the Team Leader?"

Bai Tianheng asked, expecting an inspiring speech—the sort of thing leaders usually gave.

He got caught up in the moment and forgot for a second... This was still his son.

"Don't drag me down. And listen to whatever I say."

Bai Zihan said flatly.

Bai Tianheng's pride momentarily deflated. He blinked as reality reasserted itself.

Yep. Still the same brat!

"Ahem! That's all. Everyone, prepare well for tomorrow. And Zihan'er—come with me. We need to talk."

Bai Tianheng said, turning away.

Soon, Bai Tianheng and Bai Zihan were alone in the patriarch's study.

Bai Tianheng studied his son closely. He still looked the same... but he knew, he had gained power beyond what his previous self could.

"Since when did you reach the Nascent Soul Realm?"

Bai Tianheng asked.

"A few days ago!"

Bai Zihan answered honestly.

"Mmm..."

Bai Tianheng was in deep thought.

Bai Zihan's answer didn't match that of the power shown by him.

His cultivation wasn't just stable—it already showed signs of breaking through to the next level.

So, it is hard to believe that Bai Zihan has broken through just recently but he didn't press further.

"Son... you know what I'm going to ask next, right?"

Bai Tianheng said.

Bai Zihan nodded. He'd been expecting it, honestly, though it had taken longer than he thought.

"You want to know how I suddenly became so strong?"

Bai Tianheng nodded again.

Bai Zihan began his explanation.

"Father, do you remember when Mother stole the Dao Bone from Bai Xinyue and gave it to me?"

Bai Tianheng stiffened and nodded. It was one of his greatest regrets—something that still haunted him with guilt.

"Yes... So, you did gain her cultivation talent?"

He assumed this must be the case. Bai Xinyue's talent had long been speculated to surpass even Bai Xueqing.

If Bai Zihan had inherited that, it would explain a lot about his sudden growth.

But Bai Zihan shook his head.

"No. If I had, I wouldn't have been a waste for so many years."

He continued.

"What I meant is... instead of helping, that Dao Bone was actually hindering my cultivation."

Bai Tianheng's eyes widened in disbelief.

He had never expected—nor heard—that transferring a Dao Bone could hinder one's cultivation. Then again, it made sense. Dao Bones were incredibly rare, and hardly anyone had experience with taking one from someone else.

But what he didn't expect was that his wife, who only wanted to help their son, had ended up giving him something that held him back instead.

"So... what did you do?"

"I removed it."

"You what?"

"I took out the Dao Bone."

"You mean by yourself?!"

"Yes!"

Bai Tianheng looked like he might have a heart attack.

"How?! That's incredibly dangerous! And painful! Son, how could you take such a risk?!"

"Maybe it was painful?"

He wouldn't know because his System took out his Dao Bone in an instant without much trouble.

"But even so... that doesn't explain how you reached the Nascent Soul Realm so fast."

Bai Tianheng still couldn't wrap his head around it. If Zihan's cultivation speed became normal, none of this made sense.

Moreover, his cultivation speed before he got Dao Bone was still insanely slow no matter what type of resources was spent on him.

"Oh, right. It must be because of this."

Bai Zihan held up his arm.

A faint glow shimmered beneath his skin.

He revealed his Supreme Dao Bone.

Bai Tianheng stared. Baffled. Speechless.

"This..."

He didn't even need to be sure. He could feel it. This was something beyond even Bai Xinyue's Dao Bone.

"It's the Supreme Dao Bone."

Bai Zihan said.

Bai Tianheng's eyes nearly popped out of his skull.

Supreme Dao Bone—a mythical existence. Said to grant unmatched cultivation speed, overwhelming battle power, and the potential to reach the absolute peak of the Dao.

"Zihan'er... are you telling me... you have a Supreme Dao Bone?"

"Pretty sure."

A few minutes later!

Bai Tianheng finally accepted it.

His son had a Supreme Dao Bone.

A gift from heaven. A one-in-a-million-year blessing.

"Zihan'er... from now on, you must never let anyone find out about this. If someone does..."

He paused.

"Make sure they don't live long enough to spread it."

Even the Bai Clan couldn't guarantee Zihan's safety if word got out. Cultivators from across the world would come.

Empires had gone to war over rumors of a Supreme Dao Bone.

Because whoever possessed one... stood at the very peak of cultivation.

Bai Zihan nodded.

He understood perfectly.

Bai Tianheng exhaled heavily, still reeling from the truth.

But at the same time, he knew he couldn't afford to stay shocked.

A divine blessing had fallen upon the Bai Clan.

And now, it was time to act like it.

"Zihan'er, you can go. Prepare for tomorrow. Supreme Dao Bone or not, geniuses from across the Empire will be gathering."

"You better be ready!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 121: The Day of the Ancient Ruins Opening[1,244 words]

Chapter 121: The Day of the Ancient Ruins Opening

Booming excitement swept across the entire Desolate Heaven Empire like a wildfire.

From the icy peaks of the North to the scorched plains of the South, cultivators, sects, rogue wanderers, powerful clans, and ambitious upstarts—everyone had their eyes set on a single place:

The Ancient Ruins!

Today was the day its barrier would finally be opened for the world to see.

Almost everyone knew about it.

Several cultivators had even tried to break through on their own, believing they were the chosen ones, only to be seriously injured by the backlash of the barrier.

Cities buzzed. Markets emptied. Mountains trembled under the thunder of stampeding cultivators.

Flying swords and spirit beasts streaked across the skies like meteors.

Even the clans that hadn't stepped foot out of seclusion in decades were suddenly on the move.

From the Heaven Sword Sect, Azure Sun Holy Sect, Celestial Jade Hall, Crimson Thunder Palace, to the powerful Demonic Sect—all forces were converging toward one destination.

No matter how wanted the cultivators were, they showed up anyway.

They knew the Royal Family and righteous would be too busy competing with each other to deal with fugitives when thousands of people were flooding in.

Even the Royal Family and righteous cultivators understood that the opportunity in the Ruins was far more precious than catching a few criminals.

The Bai Clan also came in tow, bringing their elders and participants, led by Bai Zihan.

When they arrived, tens of thousands of cultivators were already gathered, and more were pouring in by the minute.

Bai Tianheng looked around, and when he spotted Chu Xing, he descended near him.

The moment Chu Xing saw Bai Tianheng descending from the sky, his eyes narrowed slightly before he offered a polite nod.

"Patriarch Bai!"

He greeted warmly.

"Patriarch Chu!"

Bai Tianheng returned the nod with equal politeness.

He looked around and asked, "Ziyan'er didn't come?"

Chu Xing snorted.

"Same as your daughter. She decided to stick with the Heaven Sword Sect and said she'd be going with Xueqing'er."

Bai Tianheng sighed.

He didn't think there was anything wrong with Bai Xueqing going with the Heaven Sword Sect, but he would've preferred her to lead the Bai Clan delegation.

He had even considered calling her over to protect Bai Zihan—if he was going. But after seeing Bai Zihan's strength, he no longer felt it was necessary.

"Where's the Heaven Sword Sect?"

"There!"

Chu Xing said, pointing.

Bai Tianheng followed his gaze and spotted the Heaven Sword Sect's group led by Tian Yuheng.

There, Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan stood together, and when they saw Bai Tianheng, Chu Ziyan instantly grabbed Bai Xueqing and dragged her along to greet him.

Bai Tianheng folded his arms behind his back as he watched the two girls approach, a faint smile rising to his face.

Despite his usual stoicism, a trace of warmth appeared in his eyes as Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan made their way over.

As two famous prodigies of the Heaven Sword Sect—and beauties known across the empire—they drew gazes wherever they went.

Chu Ziyan was the first to speak, her voice crisp and respectful.

"Uncle Bai!"

She bowed politely.

Bai Xueqing followed with a light bow.

"Father!"

Bai Tianheng looked them up and down, nodding slightly.

"It seems like in the short time I haven't seen you, the two of you have made significant progress—especially Zihan'er."

"It's all thanks to my husband!"

Chu Ziyang replied with a playful wink at Bai Zihan.

Indeed, after being gifted an Earth-Grade Cultivation Technique by Bai Zihan—which he didn't even consider valuable—her cultivation had almost increased by fifty percent.

And if she cultivated at night... it more than doubled.

Bai Zihan ignored her completely, like she didn't even exist. Same for his sister.

He has something more important to do at the moment which is to find the Protagonist which he believes should be here as something as grand as Ancient Ruin should definitely be reserved for one of them.

He could see Bai Xinyue who is with the Heaven Sword Sect. But Bai Zihan didn't think that this opportunity should be for someone like her, perhaps it was but he didn't.

Han Zhenwu was also there and he gave Bai Zihan a knowing smile.

Bai Zihan didn't think much about it but it was clear that he was planning to do something stupid to Bai Xinyue in the Ancient Ruins.

He can only pity him or those lackeys who should be making a move on her.

"Zihan'er, come over here! Greet your future father-in-law—and your fiancée while you're at it."

Bai Tianheng said.

"Tsk!"

Though clearly annoyed, he still came over and offered a proper greeting.

"Hello, Uncle Chu."

Compared to how he treated fellow elders of his own clan, this was downright polite.

"Haha... Zihan'er, you came too?"

Chu Xing smiled in surprise.

He hadn't expected Bai Tianheng to let Zihan attend, especially given how dangerous this place was going to be.

Still, he saw nothing wrong with it—this was a trial every young genius had to go through.

Cultivators are those people who have to risk their life to pursue a higher cultivation level.

Besides, the rumors about Bai Zihan's insane transformation—from a waste to Late Golden Core Stage—had already reached his ears.

That level of talent was almost comparable to his own daughter, and for the first time, Chu Xing felt maybe Chu Ziyan hadn't made a mistake in deciding to marry Bai Zihan.

At the very least, his future son-in-law wasn't the trash people once made him out to be.

Bai Zihan just gave a short nod and stayed silent.

No greeting to his fiancée. No glance toward his sister.

Normally, Bai Xueqing wouldn't care much about Bai Zihan. But lately... she wasn't sure what to think.

First, she had been stunned when Bai Zihan flipped the situation and crippled Shen Liang. Though that kind of scheming was expected from him.

What she didn't expect, though, was the news that came just days later.

Not only did he destroy the Mei Clan, but he also reached the Late Golden Core Stage.

While that realm wasn't particularly shocking—she herself had reached the Nascent Soul Realm at that age—but the speed at which he advanced was frightening.

After all, when he first entered the sect, her Master Qinglan had confirmed he was only at Core Condensation.

In just a couple of months, he'd reached Late Golden Core?

Even she didn't have that kind of Cultivation speed.

"Aie, my husband is ignoring me!"

Chu Ziyan pouted playfully.

Bai Xueqing felt a chill run down her spine.

It was just... creepy.

Not the best feeling when your best friend is engaged to your younger brother.

But Chu Ziyan wasn't stopping.

"Hubby, did you miss your wife?"

She cooed as she approached Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan pressed his fingers to his forehead, already feeling a headache forming—and he hadn't even spotted the Heaven's Chosen he was looking for yet.

"Yeah, yeah. Now can you shut your mouth?"

Bai Zihan replied.

But Chu Ziyan didn't stop and kept teasing Bai Zihan playfully.

To everyone else watching, they looked like a sweet, loving couple—and that pissed people off.

"Are we not here for a life-and-death opportunity?"

"Why the hell are they flirting like they're on a honeymoon?!"

The single cultivators in the crowd were silently crying.

Can't they consider our feelings, these damned lovebirds?!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 122: Royal Family Enter's! [1,134 words]

Chapter 122: Royal Family Enter's!

Whoosh!

Suddenly, the atmosphere shifted.

The wind howled unnaturally, as if bowing in submission.

The sky darkened for a moment, casting long shadows over the thousands of cultivators gathered.

Then, as if on cue, divine light split the clouds—four dazzling beams tearing down from the heavens like spears of judgment.

The Royal Family had arrived!

But of course... they didn't come together.

No, that would be too naive.

Each beam marked the descent of a different prince or princess, all backed by their own faction—cultivators, elders, spirit beasts, personal armies.

Every heir was surrounded by their own little kingdom.

And every single one of them wanted the same thing: the throne.

After all, it was already declared—

"Whoever obtains the inheritance in the Ancient Ruins shall be crowned the next Emperor."

So forget teamwork. This was war in the guise of exploration.

First to descend was the Fourth Princess, Yu Qingya—clad in icy-blue robes, her features sharp as a blade and beauty so cold it sent shivers through the crowd.

Behind her marched the elites of the Frost Lily Pavilion, her loyal guard of female cultivators, each a powerful Elder.

"That's Princess Qingya! The one who froze the Southern Sea Sect's patriarch in a single strike!"

"Damn... She's even scarier in person."

"Careful staring too long—she castrated the last guy who got too bold."

...

She didn't spare a glance for anyone as her ice-lotus spirit beast floated beside her like a frozen throne.

Next came the Seventh Prince, Yu Longxuan—his arrival signaled by the roar of thunder and the appearance of a massive golden dragon illusion coiling in the sky.

He stepped off a chariot pulled by three Spirit Thunder Lions, his black-and-gold robes flapping dramatically.

With him came the warriors of the Crimson Thunder Palace, their war cries echoing like thunderclaps.

"Seventh Prince is here too?! F*ck, now it's getting serious!"

"Heard he split a Nascent Soul cultivator in half during his last trial... using his bare hands."

Unlike his sister, Yu Longxuan grinned wildly, eyes full of challenge as he scanned the crowd.

"Looks like this is going to be exciting~! Hope they're good enough opponents for me."

Then came the Third Prince, Yu Wenzhao, who made the least flashy entrance—but somehow carried the heaviest pressure.

No beasts. No sky-show. Just a single step, and he walked out of a shimmering golden portal with six old men in gray robes behind him—each with terrifying, unreadable auras.

"That's... the Heaven Suppression Pavilion!"

"All six Grand Elders... following him?!"

"He really wasn't joking about being the most dangerous one."

Yu Wenzhao didn't smile and just walked past the other factions like they were beneath him.

And then, last—but far from least—came the Ninth Princess, Yu Feiyan, riding atop a divine phoenix wreathed in heavenly fire.

She was clad in red silks that danced like flame, her eyes gleaming with untamed ambition.

"Heh? Even the Ninth Princess is here."

"What's a fragile princess like her doing here?"

"No matter how precious the opportunity is, the Ninth Princess isn't suitable for a place like this."

The Ninth Princess was the youngest among them—and by far the weakest.

In truth, it was a stretch to even call her a contender for the throne. The lack of supporters trailing behind her made that painfully clear.

The sole elder accompanying her was only at the Soul Formation Realm—strong, yes, but not nearly enough for someone of royal blood in a battlefield like this.

For any other princes or princess, such protection would be a joke.

The crowd was frozen, dead silent as the dust settled from the Royal Family's arrivals.

You could cut the tension with a blade.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes, sweeping his gaze across the Royal Family.

Didn't find anyone impressive enough to warrant his attention—though there were some he recognized.

After all, as the strongest Clan in the Desolate Heaven Empire, the Bai Clan was occasionally summoned by the Royal Family, and he had gone there too.

Anyway, the princes and princesses weren't going to waste any time.

They immediately went to greet the most influential and powerful Clan Leaders and Sect Leaders.

After all, although their esteemed father had promised the throne to whoever obtained the inheritance, if none of them succeeded, they'd have to rely on connections with powerful clans and sects to win the throne through other means.

Many of those clans already supported certain princes or princesses, whether openly or behind closed doors.

But the Bai Clan had no such ties. They didn't need to rely on the Imperial Family. They were strong enough on their own.

That was both an advantage and a disadvantage.

It meant they had a lower chance of offending the future Emperor—but if the prince or princess supported by the Li or Zhao Clans took the throne, then the Bai Clan would need to watch their back, not just from rival clans, but the Imperial Family too.

Regardless, those princes and princesses couldn't afford to skip trying to win the Bai Clan's support. One by one, they came to greet Bai Tianheng.

Fourth Princess Yu Qingya was the first to leave after a polite greeting.

She was followed by the Third Prince, the Seventh Prince, and the Fifth Princess, all offering polite gestures while subtly trying to bring Bai Tianheng into their faction.

Of course, Bai Tianheng expertly dodged all of that—refusing to take sides while still avoiding any offense.

"So, the Emperor sent those four?"

Chu Xing muttered.

Indeed, for people below the age of 30, Princess Yu Qingya, Prince Yu Longxuan and Prince Yu Wenzhao were the best children he had.

Not sure about Princess Yu Feiyan.

People's attention was on those four but not for long.

BOOM!

A ripple tore through the sky, distorting the air like a mirage of hellfire.

The air grew heavy, thick with the scent of blood and sulfur.

A blood-red rift opened above the ruins, jagged like a wound in the heavens itself.

From within came a slow, grinding creak—like the groan of an ancient gate swinging open. Then came laughter. Cold. Unhinged. Amused.

"Looks like we're late to the party!"

The voice was like venom sliding across bare skin—mocking, confident, and terrifyingly calm.

A massive obsidian ark emerged from the rift, covered in writhing demonic runes.

Its hull was forged from black bone and seething flame, and its shadow cast a dark red hue over the earth.

At its helm stood a figure clad in deep crimson robes embroidered with gold-threaded skulls.

His long black hair fluttered in the wind, eyes glowing with an unnatural gleam. A devilish grin split his face, revealing fangs.

It was Saint Son of the Crimson Demon Sect—Mo Tianji, the most infamous prodigy of their generation.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 123: No Righteousness Here! [1,647 words]

"A Saint Son of the Demonic Path? Shit. Why is he here?!"

"I thought the Imperial Family would stop Demonic Cultivators from entering the ruins?!"

"Hah... who's gonna stop them? The Heaven Sword Sect? The Zhao Clan? The Royal Family? Even they have to think twice."

"Not to mention they are all competing with each other and wouldn't spend their time trying to stop someone and waste their energy."

...

As Mo Tianji stepped off the ark, dark mist coiled around him like a cloak of malice.

Behind him came the rest of the Crimson Demon Sect's delegation—beautiful and deadly women in revealing black armor, monstrous cultivators in twisted forms, and elders whose presence alone caused the nearby younger generation to drop to their knees, gasping for breath.

"Those are the Seven Blood Envoys..."

"And her—wait, that's Dugu Lianxin! The Saintess of the Hundred Sins Hall!"

A woman in white stepped down from the ark next, her gown soaked in bloodstains that never dried.

Her face was veiled, but her eyes shone with a chilling, soul-consuming light.

Rumor had it she once made a Nascent Soul expert kneel and confess all his sins before she flayed him alive.

Someone gulped.

"So, the Demonic Cultivators have sent both the Saint and the Saintess?"

"Isn't that... overkill?"

"Overkill?"

Someone else laughed bitterly.

"If they get the inheritance, they'll probably rule the Empire. The more talent they send, the more chance of getting it. Although there's an equally high risk that both of them might die—which I hope they do!"

Boom—crack!

A massive black halberd stabbed into the ground, splitting the earth.

A bulky man with grayish skin and eyes like coals followed behind, dragging a giant beast skull on a chain.

"Third Demon General—Gou Yao!"

The crowd murmured, eyes narrowing.

They even sent one of the top five strongest Demonic Cultivators to protect the Saint and Saintess.

The surrounding crowd instinctively backed away as the Demonic Sect disciples spread out like a tide of rot.

Even the Imperial heirs went silent for a moment.

Yu Longxuan stopped grinning. Yu Qingya narrowed her eyes. Even Yu Wenzhao's cold face tensed ever so slightly.

While the other cultivators would give face—and even when competing, refrain from taking lives as they are from the Royal Family—those Demonic Cultivators were different.

No matter who it is, they don't hesitate to take lives.

And they're perhaps even more likely to do so if you're from a prestigious Sect or Clan, because the two sides are irreconcilable and constantly at odds.

Killing one genius from the other side means one less competitor to worry about.

Gou Yao's heavy boots crushed the ground beneath him with every step, his halberd still embedded in the dirt like a death marker.

The massive man stopped a short distance from the Bai Clan, dragging the beast skull behind him with a lazy clank.

His coal-like eyes locked onto Bai Tianheng.

"Still pretending to be righteous, little brat?"

Gou Yao's voice was rough, like gravel grinding against steel.

From Gou Yao's perspective, even someone like Bai Tianheng was just a child in terms of age.

Bai Tianheng's expression didn't change. Calm. Regal. Cold as the wind atop a snowy peak.

"And you? Still not dead? I thought by now Hell must've sent their invitation to you!"

Bai Tianheng mocked.

"Haha... It won't be for another thousand years that I die. Of course, you can try to take this life if you can."

Gou Yao proudly declared.

There was no way Bai Tianheng was a match for Gou Yao.

Bai Tianheng would have to call upon at least two of Grand Elder Bai Ren's stature if he wanted to take Gou Yao's life.

Of course, he wasn't planning to do that. No one else was planning to either.

"What do you want, Gou Yao?"

Bai Tianheng asked.

"Join us? Your Bai Clan is much more suited to be a Demonic Cultivators!"

Gou Yao said.

Bai Tianheng frowned.

"What makes you think that our Clan is 'Worthy' to be a Demonic Clan?"

Bai Tianheng said.

"Haha... Don't pretend! You know what your clan is capable of!"

Saying so, he glanced at Bai Zihan, who stood behind Bai Tianheng—though Bai Tianheng quickly covered him.

Bai Tianheng frowned, knowing just what Gou Yao was talking about. There was no way he didn't after Gou Yao's obvious hint.

But Bai Tianheng didn't understand how Gou Yao knew that his wife had stolen a Dao Bone and given it to Bai Zihan.

"Haha... Think about it!"

Gou Yao left after saying those words.

A low chuckle came from behind them.

Mo Tianji turned his head lazily, his dark mist swirling like serpents around him.

From the edge of the crowd, a group of rogue cultivators in tattered robes stood with arms crossed, sneering.

One of them, clearly drunk or just suicidally bold, spat on the ground.

"Tch! Overrated bastards!" he snorted.

"Act like gods just 'cause they dress in red and stink of blood. Should just kill themselves and save us the trouble."

Mo Tianji blinked once. Slowly.

Then smiled.

In the next instant—shlick—

The rogue cultivator's head was no longer on his shoulders.

Blood sprayed like a fountain across the ground. His body twitched and collapsed.

Mo Tianji stood exactly where he had been, still smiling, his finger casually wiping a single crimson droplet from his cheek.

"Strange," he said cheerfully. "I could've sworn someone just insulted me. But now... he's dead. So it's fine."

He turned to the stunned crowd, eyes gleaming.

"I thought he was someone powerful enough to dare insult me. But looks like he was just a dog barking nonsense."

No one moved.

No one stopped him.

Not the Bai Clan. Not the Heaven Sword Sect. Not the Royal Family!

Rather many of the younger generation was terrified by Mo Tianji who clearly surpassed them in strength.

Judging by his speed, it seems like Mo Tianji was in the Soul Formation Realm. Indeed worthy of his title as Saint of Demonic Sect.

Mo Tianji laughed coldly.

"No one is going to stand up for him?"

Mo Tianji asked as he pointed to the dead body.

But obviously, no one wants to ask for justice for a dead guy, especially when the opponent is the Saint of Demonic Cultivator.

Losing means death, while winning earns you nothing but a bit of fame.

"You all preach righteousness, don't you? Claim the moral high ground. But when someone dies right in front of you, you still don't do anything? F**king Hypocrites!"

Mo Tianji mocked.

That was when one voice finally rang out—sharp, indignant, furious.

"That's enough!"

It was Yu Longxuan, Second Prince of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

He stepped forward, eyes burning with fury and face pale with rage.

"You dare commit murder in front of the Imperial Family and continue uttering nonsense?! Do you think we will let you run rampant?!"

Yu Longxuan said.

Rather than saying that out of righteousness, it was more like trying to gain a reputation—to be portrayed as a courageous prince who wouldn't let evil do as they please.

It might have worked flawlessly—if the person he said it to wasn't as crazy as Mo Tianji.

Mo Tianji's grin widened.

"Oh, you're adorable!"

In a blink, he vanished—

And reappeared right in front of Yu Longxuan, hand raised, palm glowing black.

The Prince's pupils shrank to pinpricks.

The attack was already halfway down.

"Longxuan!!"

Several elders from the Crimson Thunder Palace flashed into motion.

Boom!

A golden shield materialized just in time, clashing against Mo Tianji's strike with a thunderous shockwave that sent dust flying.

Yu Longxuan stumbled back, pale and wide-eyed.

Mo Tianji stood unmoving, hand smoking slightly, still smiling.

"Whoops! Almost killed another one."

Mo Tianji said, as if killing the Second Prince was the same as the rogue cultivator that he just killed.

The Crimson Thunder Palace Elders gathered protectively around the prince, expressions dark.

Yu Longxuan, still reeling, growled through clenched teeth.

He was horrified about almost being killed but then regained his composure and realized just how humiliating Mo Tianji had made him seem—especially in front of his brother and sister.

"You'll regret this!"

The Second Prince said boldly and acted as if he were going to make a move, but the Crimson Thunder Palace's elders quickly stopped him.

"Second Prince, this isn't the time for that. You must preserve your energy for the Ancient Ruins!"

The Crimson Thunder Palace's elder stopped the Second Prince before he made any more foolish moves.

The Second Prince had no real intention of making a move—he already knew Mo Tianji's strength was far beyond his own. He was just putting on a show, trying to save face after being humiliated.

Mo Tianji rolled his eyes and was about to make a move—but a massive hand landed on his shoulder.

Gou Yao!

The Third Demon General's voice rumbled like thunder.

"Enough!"

Mo Tianji paused. No matter how crazy and arrogant he was, he knew exactly where he stood.

Although a Saint, his power was inconsequential before Gou Yao's. Arguing with him would only make things bad for him.

"Don't forget why we came," Gou Yao said quietly. "Focus on the inheritance. Not this nonsense."

Mo Tianji stared at him for a moment, then scoffed and pulled his hand away.

"Tch! Buzzkill."

But he backed down.

For now.

With the Demonic Cultivators gathered, the air grew even heavier. Disciples from every sect stayed far away from them.

The Imperial Family tightened their defenses. Elders exchanged worried glances.

The tension had been high before.

Now, with the Crimson Demon Sect's arrival and Mo Tianji's casual violence?

It was almost suffocating.

The Ruins had yet to open, and already—blood had been spilled.

And with demons walking freely among them...

Everyone knew this trial would be nothing short of a slaughter.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 124: Ancient Ruin Opens[
1,135 words]

Yu Longxuan stood stiffly, jaw clenched so tight it looked like he might crack a tooth.

"Damn it!"

His fists trembled by his sides—not with fear, but with the unbearable shame of being publicly humiliated.

(Again!)

He could feel it.

That smug look from his brother, Yu Wenzhao—the Third Prince, whose cold eyes practically screamed 'weakling'.

The amused glance from Yu Qingya, his icy sister, who didn't even bother hiding her disdain.

And worse—everyone else had seen it too.

The mighty Second Prince, reduced to a joke.

He grit his teeth so hard that a thin trickle of blood seeped from the corner of his mouth.

His voice filled with suppressed anger.

"Grandmaster Huang," he growled, stepping forward. "How long until the barrier opens?"

He tried to sound calm. Noble. But it came off as bitter, impatient. Desperate.

A few chuckles echoed from the crowd.

Yu Wenzhao arched his brow, his lip curling into a faint smirk.

Yu Qingya didn't even look at him.

Instead, she turned to one of the participants from Frost Lily Pavilion and muttered, "He's already lost composure before the real trial begins."

Her voice wasn't loud—but it was loud enough.

Yu Longxuan heard it.

(Bitch!)

He was going to make them all eat their words. All of them.

(Just wait. Once I get the inheritance... every last one of you will pay.)

His eyes burned with fury, seething with the promise of revenge.

(And the first one I'll kill... will be Mo Tianji. I'll tear that smug grin off his face and grind him into the dirt. Then we'll see who's laughing.)

He thought while waiting for the answer from Grandmaster Huang.

But Grandmaster Huang didn't respond.

Not because he was ignoring the prince.

But because—

RRRRRMMMMMM—

The earth trembled.

The air twisted.

Everyone looked up.

With a sudden pulse of ancient, overwhelming power, the massive dome of jade-colored energy covering the Ancient Ruins began to shimmer—then crack.

Thin lines of golden light spiderwebbed across the barrier like lightning in reverse.

Crack. Crack. CRACK—

A sound like shattering glass echoed through the heavens.

Then—BOOM!

The Formation which formed the barrier exploded in a cyclone of multicolored light, sending out a shockwave that even forced Nascent Soul cultivators to stagger slightly.

A blinding column of radiance surged into the sky, piercing the clouds and drawing everyone's gaze.

A single thought passed through thousands of minds at once:

It's open!

The Ancient Ruin which is protected by Grade-8 formation—unsealed at last.

The excitement in the air was electric.

Eyes gleamed with ambition. Breaths quickened. Qi flared.

"Quickly, enter!"

"Don't let down your guard. Push through with your strength!"

"Remember to get the Inheritance no matter what!"

Elders began barking orders to the younger generation.

The younger generation, equally impatient, flew off at insane speed.

With such a massive crowd, it was inevitable that some cultivators would bump into each other, and the tension only grew—but no one dared waste time on a fight.

They pushed forward, all focused on entering the Ancient Ruin.

However, not everyone was as hasty as them—like the Bai Clan and Royal Family—who knew that rushing in didn't mean much.

After all, the Ancient Ruins would be filled with trials and challenges. Those who went in first were simply testing the traps for others.

Of course, that didn't mean they'd sit back and waste time either.

They would enter eventually—but there was no need to be reckless from the start and waste their energy.

"Argh!"

"What is this?!"

And of course, there were always those fools who didn't believe the warning—that the formation would reject anyone older than thirty.

Some didn't trust Grandmaster Huang's words and tried to sneak inside.

They paid for it.

The unlucky ones were crushed under the pressure of the formation.

The "lucky" ones had their cultivation severely damaged—some even destroyed completely.

"I told you! Only those under thirty years of age are permitted inside, yet you all refused to listen,"

Grandmaster Huang said, shaking his head. There was no pity in his voice. They had brought it on themselves.

After the impatient ones rushed in, it was time for the others.

The Li and Zhao Clan participants, along with their allies, entered next, each one looking eager as more followed suit.

"We should also go!"

Bai Jian said eagerly.

"Wait!"

But Bai Zihan stopped him and the other Bai Clan participants.

They wanted to go in immediately, but with their leader holding them back, they had no choice but to listen.

Next came the Imperial Family. The first to enter was the Seventh Prince, Yu Longxuan which was more like fledgling from the scene than actually going in for the opportunity.

Other royals followed behind, encouraged and praised by their supporters.

"Princess Qingya, you're sure to obtain the inheritance. The Desolate Heaven Empire is yours to rule!"

"Prince Wenzhao, crush your competitors. You are the future emperor!"

"Best of luck!"

The last royal was the Ninth Princess, Yu Feiyan. Her only supporter—a Soul Formation Realm cultivator—who didn't shower her with flattery like the others.

"Princess, be safe. Return safely!"

That was the only thing the elder expected from the Ninth Princess—and even that would be incredibly difficult for her.

Yu Feiyan nodded and entered.

Then came the Heaven Sword Sect and other powerful sects.

Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyang also entered together with them.

"Hehe... Let's go!"

Mo Tianji grinned, and the Demonic Sect participants followed.

Saintess Dugu Lianxin followed with her own team.

Before entering, she glanced at Bai Zihan—who didn't even spare her a glance.

Whether it was fear of being backstabbed or something else, she seemed like the cautious type.

"Bai Zihan, how much longer do we need to wait? Everyone has already entered the Ancient Ruins!"

Bai Jian said, clearly impatient.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes.

(Still no System notification?)

He'd thought the Heaven's Chosen would go last, as they often did.

But maybe one had already entered. Or maybe... There was no Heaven's Chosen for this event, unlike what he had suspected.

Either way, there was no point waiting now. Everyone else had gone.

"Let's go," Bai Zihan finally said.

"Finally," Bai Ming muttered.

The others shared the same sentiment.

They were all too eager to enter the Ancient Ruins.

Even if entering first didn't guarantee anything, it was impossible not to get excited at a chance like this.

As Bai Zihan along with other participants stepped through the glowing barrier, the world spun.

There was no warning—just a flash of light and a sudden jolt, like his whole body had been yanked into another space.

THUD!

Bai Jian hit the ground with a grunt.

"What the hell...?"

They all looked around—and stopped.

This wasn't just some dusty ruin.

They had been teleported to a completely different world.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 125: Inside The Ancient Ruin[1,133 words]

The sky above them was a bruised violet, like twilight frozen in time. Low clouds drifted slowly, crackling with faint arcs of lightning.

The ground was solid obsidian rock, cracked and scorched in places, as if it had once suffered a massive battle or explosion.

Jagged mountains rose in the distance, their peaks twisting unnaturally as if warped by some ancient power.

All around them, ruined temples and half-buried statues of long-forgotten deities littered the land.

Massive stone slabs, torn banners, shattered weapons—this was clearly a battlefield from some distant era, not just a relic site.

A faint red mist clung to the air. It wasn't thick enough to block vision, but it left a metallic taste on the tongue.

Although they had been teleported to such a strange place, it wasn't exactly unique.

There were many sub-worlds like this, created and hidden by peerless experts.

And with the Ancient Ruins' owner capable of creating Grade-8 or higher Formations, it was no surprise that he had also forged a subdomain to preserve his inheritance.

Bai Jian looked around, frowning.

They weren't alone.

He could see dozens of figures scattered across the terrain, some still struggling to get their bearings, others already scanning their surroundings for threats—or treasures.

To the north, a group of robed disciples from the Heaven Sword Sect regrouped around Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyang.

To the west, Yu Wenzhao and the disciples of the Heaven Suppression Pavilion were calmly forming a perimeter.

To the south, the demonic qi in the air had thickened—Mo Tianji's team.

The bastard was laughing like a maniac, probably thrilled by the chaos and the bloodshed to come.

There were already two dead bodies near him—likely his latest victims, since there was no one here to restrain him.

And of course, there were also members of the Li and Zhao Clans, glaring as they appeared.

They were all standing there as if waiting for them.

"Hehe... I can't believe the Bai Clan even sent out trash like you, Bai Zihan!"

Li Feng mocked. The same Li Feng who had been humiliated by Bai Zihan during the engagement ceremony.

Well, Li Feng obviously still believed it was because he had suppressed his cultivation to match Bai Zihan's.

If he hadn't done that, he was convinced he would've won easily with his superior cultivation.

Bai Zihan glanced at him, but didn't get angry.

If he got pissed every time someone insulted him, then after 16 years of ridicule, he'd have died of high blood pressure.

"Oh, I was wondering who was barking. It's the loser from the Li Clan who got beat up like a dog, isn't it?"

Bai Jian and the others laughed at Bai Zihan's jab.

The Li Clan was their bitter enemy, and having their genius humiliated was something they'd remember for life—especially since it was their hailed genius who got racked.

Not to mention, Bai Zihan had even gotten a Heaven-Grade Artifact from the Zhao Clan as part of a bet, making a solid dent in their power.

"YOU!"

Li Feng snapped, unable to hide his rage.

He hadn't forgotten a single moment of that humiliation—the looks, the whispers, the mocking.

He had gone from being hailed as a genius to being the laughingstock of his Clan.

Even when he returned to Sect, other disciples who once feared and revered him had mocked him.

The fear and awe once attached to his name were gone.

His father didn't even want to see his face after that disaster.

But now—now he had a chance.

If he could gain the inheritance from this Ancient Ruin, he could reverse everything.

What he hadn't expected was Bai Zihan showing up here too.

But that only made it more exciting.

A perfect chance to get revenge.

"Hmph! You, Bai Zihan, are certainly insidious. I'll admit I fell for your trap," Li Feng said, surprisingly honest.

"But this is different. I will have my revenge."

Bai Zihan didn't respond. He didn't feel the need to.

Li Feng didn't deserve his attention then, and it was even more true now.

"Bai Zihan, you actually came?"

Zhao Chen stepped forward—the one who had suffered the most from the fallout of the Bai-Zhao-Li clash.

After all, it was his artifact that had been lost in that bet.

A Heaven-Grade Artifact—gone just like that.

The punishment he had endured wasn't something that needed to be said aloud.

But he was still a valued figure in the Zhao Clan, and they had high hopes for his future.

Now, there is was an opportunity to get back what is lost.

"Good. I thought you'd be too much of a coward to come," Zhao Chen said, no longer bothering to hide his hostility.

"Bai Clan—who's your leader?"

"You're looking at him!"

Bai Ming said, clearing indicating at Bai Zihan who was in front of the Bai Clan.

"You? Bai Zihan?"

Zhao Chen looked like he'd just heard the punchline to a bad joke.

"Haha... Bai Clan, did you really lose your mind?"

To him, choosing a leader meant choosing the one who might become the strongest in the entire empire if they got the inheritance.

And they'd pick Bai Zihan?

The so-called "arrogant brat" whose entire reputation was built on scheming and causing trouble?

Others from Zhao and Li Clan also laughed along with Zhao Chen.

No matter how spoiled Bai Zihan was, it didn't mean that Bai Tianheng, as the clan leader, should indulge his whim—especially when it could risk losing the Inheritance.

The Bai Clan members didn't get angry at Zhao Chen's mocking.

If anything, they felt a bit of pity.

(Poor bastard still had no idea who he was dealing with.)

They weren't about to explain it either.

But when the time came, they were really looking forward to seeing the expression on Zhao Chen's face.

"Anyway, it's good that you, Bai Zihan, are the leader."

Zhao Chen's eyes gleamed with cold arrogance as he stepped forward, flanked by several inner disciples from the Zhao Clan—and a few others clearly allied with them.

Some from the Li Clan, some from minor sects desperate to curry favor.

"I'm going to offer you a deal. Simple, really. Hand over the Heaven-Grade Artifact you took during that little farce of a bet. Give it back now, and I'll consider the matter settled."

His tone turned razor-sharp.

"No grudges. No retaliation. We'll even let you walk away and promise not to interfere with you inside the Ancient Ruin."

A few chuckles came from the Zhao and Li Clan participants behind him.

"But if you don't..."

Zhao Chen's eyes narrowed.

"Then don't blame me for what happens next. The Zhao Clan, the Li Clan—and all our allies—we will act. You think you're strong enough to handle all of us?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 126: Only One Side Leaves [1,600 words]

In terms of numbers, the Li and Zhao Clans, along with their other allies, had almost five times more participants than the Bai Clan.

The Bai Clan participants were already preparing to respond to the threat.

There was no way they would compromise with the Li and Zhao Clans in any way.

Moreover, the Heaven-Grade Artifact had been won by Bai Zihan fair and square—not in the twisted version Zhao Chen was trying to present.

Though whether to give in to Zhao Chen's demands or not was entirely in Bai Zihan's hands.

Bai Zihan blinked.

Once.

Then twice.

Then a small, mocking smile curled on his lips.

"You done?"

Bai Zihan glanced at Zhao Chen.

"I thought you had something more to say."

He showed no intention of giving in to Zhao Chen's demands.

"Bai Zihan, don't think we're bluffing. That artifact belongs to the Zhao Clan! Return it, or you'll pay for it."

"And yet it's with me," Bai Zihan said calmly. "Strange, isn't it? It's almost like I won it. Oh yeah, I definitely won it!"

He paused, then tilted his head with a mock frown.

"Unless you're suffering from dementia, I don't think you'd forget that. Or... maybe you are suffering from it?"

"You—!"

Zhao Chen raised his hand, fury twisting his face. But before he could give the order, Bai Zihan raised one of his own.

Just a finger.

Then he pointed it directly at Zhao Chen.

"Let's get this over with. Come at me. All of you!"

Bai Zihan declared fearlessly.

"Bai Zihan, you can only blame your stupidity!"

Zhao Chen shouted as he got ready to fight.

Li Feng was more than happy with how things were unfolding.

"Nice, nice! Fight! Fight!"

Suddenly, Mo Tianji appeared, looking excited and entertained by the prospect of a battle.

Both the Bai Clan and the opposing side frowned at his appearance.

But Zhao Chen was the one most frustrated by Mo Tianji's interference. The chance to get the Heaven-Grade Artifact back had been ruined.

(Just when I had the opportunity...)

But aside from feeling frustrated, he didn't dare to do anything else.

He couldn't let the truth about the Heaven-Grade Artifact become known. If someone like Mo Tianji found out, keeping it would become a nightmare.

"Hmph! Bai Zihan, you're lucky. But pray that you don't meet us again. Next time, no one will be there to save you."

Zhao Chen said coldly as he turned around and going to leave.

"Oh? Already done?"

Mo Tianji muttered, disappointed.

The Bai Clan members looked at him.

Even though it seemed like Mo Tianji had just saved them, there was no way they'd feel grateful to a Demonic Cultivator.

Bai Zihan didn't see it that way either.

Rather, he saw it the opposite way—Mo Tianji had saved the Li and Zhao Clan members.

Of course, it didn't seem like Mo Tianji was done just because they had stopped.

Mo Tianji stretched his arms lazily, bones cracking like dry wood snapping under pressure.

"Tch! Boring. I was hoping to see some heads roll."

His red eyes swept over both factions—Zhao Chen's side and the Bai Clan—like a butcher eyeing livestock.

Mo Tianji's crimson eyes gleamed as a wicked grin slowly spread across his face.

"Actually... on second thought..."

His voice was casual, as he released his Qi, making everyone around cautious.

"Who told you lot you could just walk away?"

Zhao Chen froze mid-step.

Mo Tianji's grin widened.

"I don't remember giving anyone permission to leave."

"What are you playing at, Mo Tianji?"

Zhao Chen snarled, turning back.

"This has nothing to do with you."

"Oh, but it does," Mo Tianji said, stretching again, his joints cracking ominously.

"See, I was getting bored. And then you showed up. I thought you lot were interesting, but you just leave me in disappointment."

He tilted his head toward Bai Zihan.

"Since you two groups were about to start fighting anyway, why don't we make a game out of it?"

He pointed a long, bony finger at Zhao Chen.

"Your side."

Then he turned and pointed at Bai Zihan.

"Your side."

Then he spread his arms like a grand performer about to announce the finale of a show.

"Only one group leaves."

The silence that followed was deafening.

"You're insane!"

Someone from the Li Clan shouted.

"Do you even know who we are?"

Another yelled.

Although Mo Tianji was definitely terrifying, it wasn't like they would be terrified of him alone when they were so many in number.

Mo Tianji laughed.

"Oh, absolutely! But that doesn't mean anything to me."

He looked around with a devilish glint in his eye. "Only one side gets to walk away. The other... well..."

He licked his lips, a gleam of bloodlust flashing in his expression.

"I'll be very entertained."

"You think we'll go along with this!?"

Zhao Chen snapped, face pale.

"Of course not. That's what makes it fun." Mo Tianji chuckled.

"You'll fight because you have to. Not because you want to."

And as if to prove his point, he just blinked out of sight.

Then—

A scream tore through the air.

One of the Li Clan disciples staggered back, eyes wide in shock, clutching at the gaping hole in his chest.

His heart was gone.

Blood sprayed from the wound as he collapsed, lifeless, into the scorched obsidian.

A second later, Mo Tianji reappeared where the man had stood, licking his fingers, crimson dripping from his lips.

"Mm. Still warm!"

He murmured, eyes gleaming like a predator's.

"What the hell—!?"

Several of the Zhao Clan disciples scrambled back, horrified.

Although they all knew that Mo Tianji was stronger than them and had reached the Soul Formation Realm, they didn't expect the difference in their strength to be this staggering.

Their strongest couldn't even react before Mo Tianji already took someone from their side's life.

Mo Tianji just smiled at them, tilting his head like a curious beast.

"You were too slow. So I helped speed things up."

He raised a finger and slowly drew it across his throat in a mock-slashing gesture.

"Here's the rule. Only one faction gets to leave this place."

His gaze swept across both the Bai Clan and the Li-Zhao side.

"You can die now by my hands... or kill each other for the right to survive. Your choice!"

He stretched, his bones cracking audibly, then waved casually.

"Tick tock. Start killing or I will kill another one after 10 seconds."

For a moment, no one moved. No one breathed.

"It's better to fight against the Bai Clan than Mo Tianji."

"Anyway, we were going to take care of them."

"Yeah! Let's just do what we initially planned."

...

Although all of them decided to follow through with what Mo Tianji asked for, they pretended like it wasn't fear that made them decide—but like they had chosen it because that was the original plan.

In reality, after seeing just how powerful Mo Tianji was, they didn't want to fight him even if he were alone.

"Zhao Chen, what should we do?"

Li Feng asked, but his intention was clear. He wanted to fight with Bai Zihan and the Bai Clan.

Zhao Chen didn't know clearly which option was better.

It would be best if Mo Tianji kept his word, but there was no guarantee.

If Mo Tianji knew about their objective—which was to get back the Heaven-Grade Artifact—then Mo Tianji might not let them go.

In the best-case scenario, if he did know, he might just take the artifact and leave—but that was exactly what Zhao Chen wanted to avoid.

On the other hand, the Bai Clan was still in the same situation as before or perhaps worst.

"Bai Zihan, what should we do?"

Bai Ming asked.

Running away should be a wise choice, but there was no guarantee that all of them would be able to flee safely.

Now that Mo Tianji said those words, it didn't seem like he would be satisfied before one party was completely wiped out.

Fighting Mo Tianji?

Although it was an option, not after seeing how he easily took one of the Li Clan member's lives—and they also knew that if they fought Mo Tianji, the Li-Zhao group might attack them too.

"Just wait!"

Bai Zihan said, still calm.

"Ten seconds is up. Still undecided? Then let's go for a Bai Clan member this time."

Mo Tianji said as he targeted Bai Ming.

Well, Bai Ming wasn't even aware that Mo Tianji was making his move on him.

!!!

Bai Ming only realized the danger when he suddenly saw a knife just before his eyes.

However, Mo Tianji had stopped right before stabbing. Rather than stopping willingly, it was more like his hand was caught by someone.

Bai Zihan caught Mo Tianji mid-air as he made his move to kill Bai Ming.

"You!"

Mo Tianji narrowed his eyes, unable to believe that someone was able to stop him.

Moreover, Bai Zihan didn't even look surprised by his move and instead glared at him with a casual expression.

"Want to kill someone on my watch?"

Bai Zihan said.

Then, using his full strength, he pulled him hard and slammed Mo Tianji to the ground.

BANG!

When Mo Tianji came to his senses, he was looking at the sky.

(Wh—How?)

He tried to escape Bai Zihan's hold but found that he couldn't, and he was helplessly thrown to the ground by Bai Zihan.

He quickly got to his feet and shot a glare at Bai Zihan.

Who would've thought someone here could actually stop him?

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 127: Conflicts in the Ancient Ruin[1,109 words]

Inside the Ancient Ruins!

Bai Xueqing and the other participants from the Heaven Sword Sect had arrived — and just like everyone else, their reactions were the same: cautious awe and rising tension.

Bai Xueqing noticed how everyone kept scanning their surroundings—clearly searching for clues, hidden dangers, or any sign of treasure that had to be somewhere around here.

The area they had been teleported to looked like a deserted city. Crumbled buildings, dust-filled streets — nothing really stood out... except for one thing.

A massive, sealed door.

It was ridiculously huge, and clearly the centerpiece of this ruin.

Everyone could tell at a glance — this was it. The main entrance. Whatever secrets or treasures the Ancient Ruins had, they were behind that door.

Naturally, a bunch of cultivators immediately ran up and tried to force it open.

Didn't budge!

Not even a millimeter!

"Damn! Why is this door so sturdy?"

"Move! Move it!"

"Hey! Why are you all just standing there? Help us open this thing!"

...

The ones trying to force the door began to complain, annoyed that most others were just standing around and watching – not lifting a finger.

Bai Xueqing was among the ones observing silently.

Then there were others who weren't watching or door-bashing – they were fighting.

Grudges, old hatred, whatever it was – without elders or clan protection here, the arrogant young masters relying on background were becoming easy targets.

So right now, you had two types of people:

Either trying to enter the Big Door Or trying to beat the crap out of someone.

Soon enough, a particular conflict grabbed everyone's attention – and of course, it had to be the clash between the Bai Clan and the Li-Zhao Clan.

Everyone knew there was bad blood between those groups. That they'd fight was expected.

And considering both were among the strongest clans in the Desolate Heaven Empire, it wasn't a surprise that this fight became the center of attention.

"Everyone, look – the Bai Clan is fighting the Li-Zhao Clan!"

"Looks like the Bai Clan's screwed."

"Hmph, serve them right!"

...

Bai Xueqing frowned when she saw what was happening.

Looking at the numbers, the Bai Clan was clearly outmatched.

"What the hell are they doing?"

She muttered under her breath.

Why had they entered so late? The Li-Zhao side had time to gather, regroup, and wait to ambush.

She couldn't just stand by.

"I'm going to help them."

Bai Xueqing announced to the other disciples of Heaven Sword Sect. They neither stopped her nor were they going to help her.

After all, antagonizing the Li-Zhao Clan was the best move for any of them unless they were from the Bai Clan.

But the only other Bai Clan member, Bai Xinyue, didn't have a good relationship with the Bai Clan either.

Although she didn't help, she indeed was also watching the conflict between the Bai Clan and Li-Zhao Clan.

"I'll come with you!"

Chu Ziyang declared. If Bai Zihan was in trouble, this was the perfect chance to repay his favor — and besides, he was her fiancé.

Whoosh!

They were about to move out — but someone suddenly appeared in front of them.

A dark, sinister Qi spread through the air, halting them in their tracks.

"Where do you think you're going?"

The voice was sharp, arrogant, and cold.

"Dugu Lianxin!"

Bai Xueqing narrowed her eyes.

It was her. The Saintess of the Hundred Sins Hall — a Demonic Sect monster known to be just as ruthless and terrifying as Mo Tianji.

The name alone made most cultivators tremble.

But Bai Xueqing? Not even flinching.

She looked rather pissed.

"Are you helping the Li and Zhao Clans now?"

Bai Xueqing asked with a scowl.

"Hmph! Those idiots? Not worth it."

Dugu Lianxin snorted. Just the idea of her helping the righteous cultivators disgusted her.

"Then why are you blocking me?"

Bai Xueqing asked with a frown.

"Because of you!"

Dugu Lianxin replied coldly.

This wasn't their first encounter.

Bai Xueqing, righteous prodigy of the Heaven Sword Sect, and Dugu Lianxin, twisted genius of the Hundred Sins Hall, had clashed before.

Bai Xueqing — Nascent Soul at sixteen, a rising star.

Dugu Lianxin — Saintess of a demonic sect, a terrifying talent in her own right.

But in their last fight, it was Bai Xueqing who came out on top.

That loss had shattered Dugu Lianxin's pride. Losing to someone her own age for the first time—her ego couldn't take it.

She'd sworn revenge.

And now here she was, having trained obsessively ever since and conveniently, her target was walking right into her path.

"Move!"

Bai Xueqing's voice was ice-cold. It wasn't a request rather an order or perhaps a warning.

But Dugu Lianxin wasn't here to let her pass.

Slash!

Bai Xueqing wasn't going to repeat and waste time. She immediately attacked after Dugu Lianxin showed no intention of moving away.

Clang!

The moment Bai Xueqing attacked, Dugu Lianxin blocked it with her giant black scythe.

"Hehe... Why so impatient?"

She smiled cruelly.

Chu Ziyang, seeing a chance, tried to slip past and go help Bai Zihan.

But—

"Going somewhere?"

More disciples from the Hundred Sins Hall appeared, blocking Chu Ziyang.

They weren't nobodies — each one had murderous auras, and even Chu Ziyang had to take them seriously.

Clash! Slash!

Bai Xueqing's frustration boiled over, but despite her fury, Dugu Lianxin held her own.

Then, on the other side—

Mo Tianji entered the fray between the Bai Clan and Li-Zhao Clan.

Bai Xueqing frowned even more upon seeing that.

Mo Tianji began by killing one of Li-Zhao Clan disciples.

But Bai Xueqing knew this wasn't some heroic save-the-day move.

No — that guy was dangerous. Probably had his own twisted plans.

"So, you're trying to wipe out the Bai Clan?"

She snarled, realizing that with Dugu Lianxin blocking her and Mo Tianji butchering people near the Bai Clan, it was starting to look like a setup from the Demonic Sect.

"Don't lump me with that lunatic!"

Dugu Lianxin replied sharply.

"I'm only here to fight you. That's all!"

Honestly, she didn't give a damn about Mo Tianji's motives. She didn't like being lump together with someone as senseless as Mo Tianji.

Although this time, his presence worked in her favor—if he really was aiming to massacre the Bai Clan, then this could really hurt Bai Xueqing.

Then Mo Tianji did make his move and went for one of the Bai Clan Members.

But what followed shocked everyone.

Bai Zihan, who everyone assumed was the weak, suddenly appeared.

And slammed Mo Tianji into the ground like a ragdoll.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 128: Mo Tianji's Scheme! [1,004 words]

For a moment, Mo Tianji didn't know what had happened.

Obviously, he was invincible here with his Soul Formation Realm cultivation and a body that could almost absorb damage like it was nothing.

Although Bai Zihan's slam didn't really do much damage to him, the fact that Bai Zihan could stop his attack and even restrain him made him cautious.

"Who are you?"

Mo Tianji asked curiously.

From the Bai Clan, he only knew about Bai Xueqing—Bai Zihan was definitely not a female.

"Tsk! Escaped."

Bai Zihan said, annoyed.

He was thinking about taking care of Mo Tianji here and now.

It was an optimal opportunity, as he had already anticipated that Mo Tianji was going to attack them.

With Mo Tianji's underestimation and carelessness, this was the best chance.

He just didn't expect that his attack wouldn't do anything to Mo Tianji, whose body was somewhat weird.

"Ignoring me."

Mo Tianji muttered, more amused than angry.

On the other hand, Bai Zihan's feat shocked and surprised everyone who was watching.

"This... how is this possible?"

Zhao Chen muttered, his expression as if he had seen something that shouldn't be real.

When Mo Tianji attacked their side, none of them—including Zhao Chen—could even respond.

But Bai Zihan not only stopped Mo Tianji, he even landed a heavy blow, though it didn't seem to do much damage to Mo Tianji.

It's not like he thought Mo Tianji was invincible and no one could stand up to him, but it was a different story when the person doing it was Bai Zihan, the one he looked down on.

This was the same reaction the other bystanders had.

"Did Bai Zihan just beat Mo Tianji?"

"I didn't even see Mo Tianji move, but Bai Zihan stopped him!"

...

Bai Xueqing and Dugu Lianxin had also stopped in their tracks, both with surprise on their faces.

"I didn't think there was someone else in the Bai Clan apart from you who could stop Mo Tianji,"

Dugu Lianxin said.

She assumed Bai Xueqing already knew about this and was faking her earlier desperation—when in reality, Bai Xueqing knew that there was someone who can take care of Mo Tianji.

Though in fact, Bai Xueqing was indeed surprised beyond belief.

It was one thing for Bai Zihan to have recently changed and shown some progress; it was another for him to go toe-to-toe with one of the strongest in their generation.

Even she knew that defeating Mo Tianji wouldn't be easy for her.

Although Bai Zihan hadn't defeated Mo Tianji—and perhaps couldn't—the fact that he could handle his attack and counter made it clear he wasn't helpless.

When Dugu Lianxin said those words, Bai Xueqing didn't respond.

It would've been better if Dugu Lianxin didn't know the truth and kept this misunderstanding.

Perhaps then she would realize her plan—to stall and let Mo Tianji wipe out the Bai Clan—wouldn't work.

And then there was Bai Xinyue, who was more shocked than anyone.

She knew Bai Zihan—knew how weak he truly was.

No talent. No hard work. Only knew how to stir chaos and bully others.

(Just how did he get so strong?)

He was someone she didn't even consider a threat.

Someone she thought she could deal with anytime.

But now?

Could she?

She knew she couldn't. At least, not without using her trump card—and she didn't want to waste that on just Bai Zihan.

Han Zhenwu saw it too, his eyes gleaming with interest and a growing desire to pull Bai Zihan to his side.

Meanwhile, Bai Zihan didn't think anything he did was as impressive as others made it seem.

First of all, Mo Tianji hadn't gone all out.

Secondly, he already knew Mo Tianji would make a move on the Bai Clan before he actually did.

And with his body refined by the Primordial Chaos Body Refinement Technique, it was fairly easy to overpower Mo Tianji in terms of brute strength.

"I thought I'd get bored and tried to make things interesting, but didn't expect someone like you to show up,"

Mo Tianji said.

Bai Zihan chuckled and gave him a smirk.

"What's funny?"

Even Mo Tianji was getting frustrated at how Bai Zihan wasn't taking him seriously.

"Mo Tianji, do you think you're very clever?"

Bai Zihan said, voice dripping with mockery.

"You're clearly here for this."

Bai Zihan took out the Heaven-Grade Artifact he won from Zhao Chen.

Although Mo Tianji acted as if he was just playing around, his true goal from the start had been the artifact—Bai Zihan knew that well.

Mo Tianji had deliberately stirred conflict between the Li-Zhao alliance and the Bai Clan to weaken both sides.

Then he could swoop in and take the artifact without resistance.

Even if others knew he took it, after seeing the carnage he caused, no one would dare oppose him.

But Bai Zihan had already seen through the whole scheme.

Mo Tianji might act carefree, but he had a devious, calculating mind.

Unfortunately for him, Bai Zihan wasn't so easy to fool.

"That... is that a Heaven-Grade Artifact?"

"Damn! So that's why they were fighting."

"How the hell did Bai Zihan even get something like that?"

"Should we... join in and try our luck?"

...

The crowd's attention locked onto the artifact in Bai Zihan's hand. Some instantly recognized its grade.

Mo Tianji frowned as his plan was exposed. Moreover, now everyone could see the artifact and it became more troublesome to take it than he planned.

"How did you figure it out?"

Mo Tianji asked.

"Anyone with half a brain could see through your little scheme. What, did you think you were some mastermind?"

Bai Zihan mocked, full of arrogance.

"YOU!"

Mo Tianji felt rage unlike anything he'd experienced.

It was the first time anyone had insulted him so openly—and exposed him so thoroughly.

His strength and reputation had always been enough to keep others in line.

But Bai Zihan? Bai Zihan had disrespected him over and over.

"You're going to regret this!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 129: Inheritance of an Immortal Emperor[1,529 words]

The air was thick with tension, spiritual energy coiling like storm clouds as Mo Tianji's killing intent locked onto Bai Zihan.

Although Bai Zihan was able to land a solid counterattack on Mo Tianji, no one thought that Mo Tianji would lose if the two fought seriously.

Bai Ming and other Bai Clan members also got prepared to respond, staying on their highest alert, determined not to get caught off guard like earlier.

But just as Mo Tianji's Qi surged to its peak—

CRACK!

A deep rumbling echoed through the ruins.

Everyone froze.

BOOM!

A massive gate, which no one could even move before, suddenly burst open.

The silence shattered.

"It's open!"

Someone yelled.

"There is certainly treasure there!"

"Quick! Go inside!"

In an instant, the standoff dissolved. Everyone's attention snapped toward the gate.

Like a dam breaking, the crowd surged forward in a mad dash—disciples from prestigious sects, rogue cultivators, princes and princesses—all throwing caution to the wind as they raced to be the first ones inside.

Even Dugu Lianxin, who had been fighting with Bai Xueqing, vanished through the door in a streak of light.

"I will take care of you later!"

Dugu Lianxin declared.

Mo Tianji's body tensed as he watched Dugu Lianxin disappear. His gaze flicked between the gate and Bai Zihan.

He was clearly torn. His fingers twitched, Qi still wrapped around his fists.

He could crush Bai Zihan here and now.

It would be messy. Maybe take a few minutes. Maybe longer. But he could do it.

However—

If he stayed behind, Dugu Lianxin could reach the inheritance first.

And just like how the Royal Family wanted to select the heir through this Inheritance, this was the battlefield to decide the next leader of the Demonic Sects.

Mo Tianji's only competitor was Dugu Lianxin, who he recognized to have similar power, though he still thought he was stronger.

Anyway, if he wasted time killing Bai Zihan, he might lose the very thing he came for.

"Tch!"

Mo Tianji's expression twisted in frustration before he scoffed and stepped back, the killing intent around him receding like a tide.

"You're lucky!"

He spat, glaring at Bai Zihan.

"But this isn't over!"

Mo Tianji declared.

With a flash, he disappeared into the gate as well.

Bai Zihan didn't even flinch.

"What an idiot!"

Bai Zihan said.

He didn't fear Mo Tianji and could have even prevent him from leaving.

But he also wasn't stupid enough to waste energy fighting when the main event had just begun.

The Li-Zhao alliance also quickly changed pace and rushed to the gate.

Though it wasn't just the gate opening that changed Zhao Chen's mind—it was Bai Zihan's power, which he hadn't anticipated.

With so many variables, he knew that focusing on the Inheritance would be better.

Additionally, if he could get the Inheritance of this place, even a Heaven-Grade Artifact might be valueless in comparison.

"Let's go!"

Bai Zihan also commanded.

With that, Bai Zihan and the Bai Clan also joined the others and entered the gate.

Inside the gate, the roaring chaos of the outside world vanished in an instant.

There was no sky.

No walls.

Only a vast, endless expanse of white.

White floors stretched out in every direction, pristine and spotless, like glass or polished jade.

The space felt endless, like they were standing atop the clouds of the heavens, isolated from time itself.

Then—

Once everyone was inside.

BOOM!

The gate behind them slammed shut with a deafening finality, sealing everyone in.

"No way back... Are we trapped?"

Someone muttered pessimistically.

But no one there really thought about leaving, not until they get something from this place.

Everyone was confused and a little disappointed since there was nothing in here that they thought there would be.

Not to mention that the gate itself closed, so now they couldn't even go back.

With nothing in sight, the situation seemed to be heading toward the same development as earlier—where people who hated each other and had grudges would begin fighting.

Mo Tianji already seemed to be thinking about continuing his revenge for his earlier humiliation.

Before anyone could do anything—

Light gathered in the center of the space, swirling like silver mist coiling into shape.

Then, a figure emerged.

A woman!

She floated above the ground, draped in flowing robes that shimmered like moonlight, hair long and white, eyes like twin galaxies—vast and deep.

Her beauty was impossible to describe, ethereal and otherworldly, but it was certain that she wasn't a living being.

It seemed most likely to be the remnant soul of whoever this Ancient Ruin belonged to.

Everyone fell silent.

Even Mo Tianji clenched his fists and stood still as pressure mounted on them and made them feel like bowing to her.

Anyone could tell that whoever this soul belonged to used to be a peerless expert, since even her remnant soul gave off such powerful pressure.

The woman's gaze swept across them—not with interest, but indifference, like one might examine a group of mortals standing before a god.

"Welcome!"

She spoke, her voice echoing through the space.

"I see confusion on your faces," she continued, her expression calm, emotionless.

"You wonder what this place is. Why you were brought here?"

She paused, then extended a slender hand.

"You stand in the trial ground of the Immortal Emperor Feilian!"

A collective gasp swept through the crowd.

Immortal Emperor!

That title wasn't just legend—it was myth, fairy tale, impossibility.

A realm spoken of in reverent whispers, said to transcend even the highest mortal cultivation.

A level of existence beyond life and death, said to live forever.

They said one who reached it could split the skies with a thought.

That such a person could never truly die.

But for tens of thousands of years, no one had ever reached it. No records. No proof. Not even a remnant left behind.

Most dismissed it as delusion—a pretty story told to wide-eyed cultivators, something impossible for anyone to reach, at least in this world.

"This place is a test," Feilian's voice echoed.

A cold, invisible pressure swept across the white expanse as her tone turned sharper.

"To find a successor!"

Shock turned to madness.

"To inherit my path. My legacy. My throne. The one who passes my trials will not only gain my power, but step beyond the mortal Dao—to become the next Immortal Emperor."

Gasps turned to open-mouthed stares.

Mo Tianji's eyes burned with fanatical greed.

Dugu Lianxin's smirk deepened, but even she clenched her fists, unable to hide her hunger.

Zhao Chen's lips parted. He didn't speak—but the flicker of madness in his gaze said enough.

Even the normally composed Bai Zihan showed a flicker of surprise before the usual calm returned to his face.

(Immortal Emperor's Inheritance. Certainly seems like it's going to be a big deal.)

The woman—no, the leftover soul of Feilian—swept her gaze across them all.

"In this realm, your bloodlines mean nothing. Your titles mean nothing. I only care about your fate. If your fate is to be my successor, you shall be one!"

Although they didn't really grasp the concept of fate, they all knew that as long as one possessed strength and talent, they could obtain the Inheritance.

So, basically, it was a test to find the most suitable person among the group of cultivators and determine the one to inherit the Immortal Emperor's legacy.

At least, that was their own conclusion as they continued listening intently to what the remnant of the soul had to say.

"You will undergo trials," she said coldly.

"Each one crafted to crush your soul, strip away your weakness, and expose the core of who you are."

Her voice echoed like a blade drawn across glass.

"Whoever shall go through all the trials and reach the end will be the one to receive my inheritance,"

She declared.

Only one shall stand at the end.

Only one shall inherit the path.

The air pulsed with raw greed and feverish anticipation.

They knew it would become a race against each other, all getting ready to storm off as soon as possible.

The moment the word Immortal Emperor echoed through the space, everything changed.

Their determination to inherit it became their only goal—and perhaps, even if they were asked to kill their companions, they might do it if it meant gaining the inheritance.

After all, an Immortal Emperor could rule this world—and perhaps live for eternity.

Who wouldn't want that?

Isn't a few sacrifices worth it?

It was definitely worth it, especially since every one of them was a cultivator and understood the significance of it.

"Let the trial begin!"

The floor beneath them pulsed—sigils of ancient power flaring to life in blinding gold.

Then a path appears, definitely meant to take them to the next floor.

Having listened to the explanation, everyone knew that the one to reach it first would get the inheritance.

So, no one wasted time.

"I will get the inheritance!"

"Immortal Emperor... Hehe! I will rule this world!"

"Get out of my way!"

...

Everyone bolted toward the newly revealed path without hesitation.

But could the trial really be that simple?

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 130: The Trial Began! [1,676 words]

The moment people tried to go towards the path, there was an increased amount of Qi in the atmosphere, landing on them.

BOOM!

A heavy wave of Qi slammed into the crowd like a falling mountain.

People stumbled. Some dropped to their knees. Others grunted, Qi flaring instinctively to defend themselves.

It was suffocating.

An invisible pressure, thick and oppressive, crashed down on them like an endless tide.

It was like a sudden increase in oxygen in the air—like 100 times—which wasn't good for their bodies.

"The hell...!?"

A rogue cultivator clutched his chest, gasping for breath. His legs buckled beneath him as if he were being crushed by an unseen weight.

"This is the trial?!"

Someone yelled, teeth gritted.

It became immediately clear: the test had already begun.

This wasn't just a race to see who could run the fastest. It was a challenge of endurance—to withstand the crushing Qi pressure flooding this space.

And the closer one tried to get to the path—

The more unbearable it became.

Even those at the front, like Mo Tianji and Dugu Lianxin, who had been the first to react and leap forward, were now stopping, their expressions turning grim.

Of course, compared to others, they were able to handle it much better.

After all, although the increase in Qi in the atmosphere was dangerous, that was only if you couldn't absorb it.

Mo Tianji and Dugu, with their superior talent and better cultivation techniques, could absorb it better.

Of course, even then, it wasn't easy for them since the Qi was almost 100 times the normal—and it increased every time they went near the path.

It was similar to the Assessment Test done by the Heaven Sword Sect where a person's aptitude to absorb Qi is tested—which is affected by many factors.

But adding to that, they now also needed to move closer to the path as that was their goal, adding to the difficulty of the test.

Mo Tianji's black robes fluttered violently as his cultivation technique roared to life.

His body became like a vortex, madly drawing in the surrounding Qi, trying to refine and absorb it as fast as it poured in.

Even so, veins bulged along his arms, and sweat rolled down his temples—he was barely keeping up.

"Even with the Nine Hell Refining Art... this pressure is insane!"

He muttered, voice strained.

Beside him, Dugu Lianxin's figure shimmered with ethereal brilliance, equally trying to handle the Qi.

"This pressure... it's like walking into the eye of a hurricane!"

She hissed.

Normally, this kind of place full of Qi would be considered a paradise where one could rapidly increase their cultivation—but with their goal being to go to the next trial as quickly as possible, and with such a huge increase in Qi, it had become the opposite.

Mo Tianji's expression twisted in frustration.

His pride burned—he was one of the strongest here, yet even he felt like his bones were creaking under the pressure.

As for the others—

The weaker cultivators were already faltering, some collapsing altogether.

Blood leaked from noses, mouths, even eyes. Internal organs shook from the huge influx of Qi that they couldn't refine and absorb.

A few screamed in pain and gave up on advancing, dragging themselves away from the path with pale faces and trembling limbs.

At least, the only factor that was good was that when one stepped away from the path, the Qi decreased significantly—though on another note, the closer you tried to go towards the path, the more Qi you felt.

A trial to see who could endure it, who had the talent and maybe good enough Cultivation Technique.

Only those with sufficient strength, willpower, and fate could move forward.

Everyone realized it now: this wasn't just a contest of speed—it was a gauntlet of Qi pressure that would weed out the weak.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes, calmly observing the others.

He stood unmoving as the waves of Qi crashed down on him, cloak fluttering gently as if in a breeze.

"So this is how it's going to be!"

He muttered with a devil's smile.

While everyone was focused on cultivating and trying to adapt to the increased Qi, Bai Zihan didn't need to do anything.

His 100x Cultivation Speed Card was still activated, and previously he was a bit annoyed that he was going to waste one day of its benefit—but it seemed like he didn't need to worry about that.

With an abundance of Qi, this was perhaps even more ideal to cultivate than his private room in the Bai Clan.

He didn't feel pressured nor did he think he would need to use his cultivation technique to be able to absorb the Qi better—though it would certainly make it faster.

But that would be for cultivation, not for survival or anything like others.

Of course, being at the end, the Qi was very little, so he proceeded to go near the path that had more Qi.

Thud! Thud!

By that time, most of the people had settled in their positions and were trying to adapt to the Qi in the air.

However, there was one person moving, casually, not even seeming to struggle.

Yeah, it was Bai Zihan, who walked like there hadn't been an increase in Qi in the air and was going closer to the path.

He walked, then reached where Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyang were, but didn't even give a glance at them.

He only glanced at Bai Xinyue briefly, who appeared to be struggling as well. When their eyes met, she looked at him in surprise.

(Is this Opportunity for her?)

Bai Zihan thought.

He still hadn't received any notification about another Heaven's Chosen, which led him to believe it was likely referring to Bai Xinyue—the only one present who fit the title.

(Should I take care of her?)

Bai Zihan thought but decided against it. He still has no idea what trump card she was hiding.

With her being Five Star graded Heaven Chosen, it shouldn't be easy.

Then he proceeded to head towards the people who were the first to move—which were Mo Tianji and Dugu Lianxin.

Mo Tianji weirdly looked at Bai Zihan in shock.

Even staying there without injuring himself was taking great effort, and this Bai Zihan was casually strolling.

Bai Zihan's smile became more devilish as he spotted Mo Tianji.

"Oh, mighty Mo Tianji, what happened?"

Bai Zihan asked sarcastically.

"Bai Zihan!"

Mo Tianji could clearly see the mocking tone of Bai Zihan and became furious.

Although he didn't know how Bai Zihan was unaffected by the sudden increase in Qi, he wasn't going to take offense.

This was seen by everyone, who couldn't be more shocked because like Mo Tianji, they also couldn't move or risk injury.

So, how could Bai Zihan move so casually?

Some had to applaud Bai Zihan for being able to make fun of and tease the ever-arrogant Mo Tianji.

While others were still trying to figure out how Bai Zihan was doing this.

Bai Zihan moved closer to Mo Tianji.

"What do you want?"

Mo Tianji asked with a frown.

Slap!

Then, like the most obvious thing to do, Bai Zihan gave a good slap to Mo Tianji, who took a couple of seconds to register what had happened before finally realizing that he had been slapped.

"BAI ZIHAN!"

Mo Tianji couldn't help but want to shred Bai Zihan to pieces. He had never been slapped by anyone—and now it was done by someone who was weaker than him.

But the moment he stopped using his cultivation technique, he spurted blood from his mouth due to his body being unable to handle the Qi.

He quickly activated his cultivation technique, trying to refine the Qi before it did any more damage.

"Damn! Did Bai Zihan just slap Mo Tianji?"

"Well deserved! Who asked him to be so arrogant?"

"Between the two evils, Bai Zihan clearly stands on top. Who else could humiliate someone like Mo Tianji except Bai Zihan?"

"But just how is he unaffected by such a huge amount of Qi in the atmosphere? Is his body immune to Qi?"

...

The crowd, while still cultivating, was also watching the interesting event transpiring before them.

The infamous troublemaker and villain of a righteous clan versus the truly evil and infamous genius of a demonic sect!

The winner here was clear—Bai Zihan!

"Haha... What? Too cowardly to fight me? Tsk! Tsk! Mo Tianji, you disappoint me!"

Bai Zihan said with a disappointed face.

Mo Tianji frowned and couldn't comprehend how Bai Zihan was able to move so easily while he had to struggle so much.

Now, he couldn't even fight back—otherwise, he would risk injuring his body.

Bai Zihan then again came closer to him.

"Bai Zihan, don't push your luck!"

Mo Tianji warned angrily.

"Phew! Haha... What can you even do?"

Bai Zihan asked while casually resting his shoulder on Mo Tianji's head.

It looked like Bai Zihan was casually treating Mo Tianji like his lackey or someone beneath him.

And the biggest thing was that Mo Tianji couldn't even retaliate even if he wanted to.

Slap!

Bai Zihan gave another good slap to the helpless Mo Tianji.

"BAI ZIHAN!"

Mo Tianji couldn't even retaliate and just yelled angrily. He had never been treated like this—certainly not by someone younger and weaker than him.

"Haha..."

Bai Zihan laughed.

In this trial, there was no one other than him who could risk moving around—which also meant that in this trial, he could do whatever he wanted and no one could retaliate.

(Is Heaven helping me this time?)

He thought as he considered how he still had the 100x Cultivation Speed Card activated—and the first trial turned out to be something like this.

"Haha..."

Only a single laugh could be heard throughout the room—and it was the mad laughter of Bai Zihan.

At the moment, with his laugh and mocking tone plus his attitude, no one looked more evil and dominant than Bai Zihan.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 131: Mo Tianji's Worst Day Ever! [1,216 words]

"What is he doing?"

Bai Xueqing muttered.

Well, although she was also stunned and curious about how Bai Zihan was able to walk casually, more than that, she was getting annoyed by Bai Zihan's behavior.

From her perspective, Bai Zihan was wasting his time with Mo Tianji when he could very well go to the next trial and gain a significant advantage over the other competitors.

But no, he wasn't in a hurry at all.

It seemed like humiliating Mo Tianji and asserting his dominance was far more important than some Immortal Emperor's inheritance.

"Hehe... Bai Zihan just doesn't change, does he?"

Chu Ziyang laughed at her best friend complaining.

In recent days, Bai Zihan had changed so much that she began to doubt whether he was still the same person she remembered.

But when Bai Zihan began to do dumb stuff like this, she was reassured that he was the same, though he had become much stronger.

His recent power might make anyone doubt, but his personality and actions were pretty much the same as always.

"Mo Tianji, Mo Tianji! Are you really being a Saint just because you're called 'Saint' by your people?"

Bai Zihan teased again.

Bang!

A kick to Mo Tianji's abdomen sent him flying across the room, making him vomit blood.

Not because of the kick, but because he couldn't cultivate while being kicked, and the Qi in the air overflowed in his body.

"Hmmm... Your body is really weird."

Bai Zihan muttered.

By then, anyone else would've been crippled, but Mo Tianji's body recovered instantly.

Well, Bai Zihan had a lot of time to test the limits of Mo Tianji's body and began a wave of what could only be called abuse.

"Hah... hah... Bai Zihan, I'll kill you!"

Mo Tianji, soaked in his own blood, angrily declared.

Not like Bai Zihan cared—because if he did, he would have stopped way before turning him into such a spectacle.

Mo Tianji's current appearance could only be described as pitiful—to the extent that even those who hated him pitied his situation.

Zhao Chen and their alliance couldn't help but shiver as they watched Mo Tianji get tortured by Bai Zihan.

They also feared that after Bai Zihan was done with Mo Tianji, they might be next, considering what they did earlier.

Li Feng couldn't help but get angrier. Just how was Bai Zihan making him feel inferior time and again?

Was his revenge just going to stay a dream?

On the other hand, Dugu Lianxin—who was closer to Mo Tianji and Bai Zihan—couldn't help but feel a bit of fear toward Bai Xueqing's brother.

Indeed, even the Saintess of the Demonic Sect couldn't help but feel fear watching Bai Zihan torture Mo Tianji like he was a helpless child.

At first, she felt like laughing, watching Bai Zihan slap Mo Tianji, thinking he deserved it.

Then she felt lucky she didn't antagonize Bai Zihan—although he might still feel the need to take revenge on her if his relationship with Bai Xueqing was good, which she knew it wasn't.

But slowly, as Bai Zihan mercilessly turned Mo Tianji into a pool of blood, she couldn't help but feel terrified.

His madness, his mercilessness, and even the amused expression he wore as he watched Mo Tianji suffer—it was akin to what they, the Demonic Cultivators, were known for.

But even they wouldn't ignore an Immortal Emperor's Inheritance just to torture a single person.

"I am done with the experiment!"

Bai Zihan declared after having beaten Mo Tianji into a puddle of blood.

He was comparing how good Mo Tianji's refined body was compared to his own Primordial Chaos Body.

Well, Mo Tianji's body could be called one of the best, but it still wasn't as powerful as his.

Though the recovery rate of his body could be said to be insane, it didn't seem to increase his strength.

Mo Tianji thought that meant the torture was finally coming to an end but then Bai Zihan took out his sword.

"Now, I don't need you."

Bai Zihan coldly said.

Yes, he wasn't going to let Mo Tianji live. Now that it was the optimal place for him, wasn't it time to take out his enemies and potential competitors?

Well, it would have been too easy if that were the case.

"Bai Zihan, we can talk!"

Mo Tianji said, terrified.

But Bai Zihan just got closer to Mo Tianji with a smile. Although the smile looked warm, everyone knew what Bai Zihan was about to do.

"Stop! I said STOP!"

Mo Tianji shouted, only for his words to fall on deaf ears.

He watched, horrified, as the demon in disguise—yes, even to him, a Demonic Cultivator—Bai Zihan was akin to a demon.

But then, the Immortal Emperor Feilian's remnant spirit appeared!

"Halt!"

She commanded, and instantly Bai Zihan felt like he couldn't move.

Still, he looked more annoyed than afraid.

Well, that was because he knew the spirit remnant wouldn't kill him—even if she could.

"You are not allowed to fight or kill in this first trial."

The spirit said.

When Mo Tianji heard those words, he was filled with relief, knowing that he didn't have to suffer anymore.

"Hehe... I don't think you mentioned something like this before."

Bai Zihan said.

The emotionless soul remnant, for the first time, seemed kind of annoyed.

Indeed, there was no such rule as no fighting or killing—but that was because it was assumed to be impossible in this space, especially for weak cultivators.

They had to deal with the sudden influx of Qi, which even Spirit Formation Realm cultivators couldn't ignore.

Much less fight—one couldn't even move unless they were very talented.

But what was unexpected was someone who could ignore the overwhelming Qi without any problems.

It was a problem—because that person could potentially kill all the other competitors, not needing any further trials since he would be the only one left.

This went against what Immortal Emperor Feilian had planned.

So, her soul remnant intervened when Bai Zihan was about to kill Mo Tianji.

Now, even after she said that, Bai Zihan didn't seem willing to listen.

"If there was something like this, you should've said so earlier, don't you think?"

Bai Zihan fearlessly challenged the remnant of Immortal Emperor Feilian.

"Then it shall be from now on!"

She said shamelessly.

After all, she was just a remnant of the original soul—created only to make sure the inheritance went as planned.

She didn't care what Bai Zihan or anyone else thought about additional rules—and even Bai Zihan couldn't argue against that.

"So what would happen if I kill him?"

Bai Zihan asked, though it was more like testing the extent of what she was willing to do.

"Then you shall be expelled from the trial."

She replied.

"Is that so? Mo Tianji, you're pretty lucky, aren't you?"

Bai Zihan said while patting Mo Tianji's head.

Mo Tianji's anger exploded, and he took the chance.

"Immortal Emperor, isn't he attacking me? He should be expelled!"

Mo Tianji demanded.

"Hey, hey! You call this an attack?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"..."

"Unless you are injured or possibly lose your life, it doesn't count. Then remember my words."

She disappeared after that.

"Tsk! She definitely doesn't know what fun is!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 132: To The Next Trial! [1,038 words]

Chapter 132: To The Next Trial!

Everyone could see the blatant disrespect Bai Zihan had for the Immortal Emperor—even if it was just a remnant of that peerless expert.

Perhaps only Bai Zihan was capable of insulting an Immortal Emperor, even if it was just a remnant soul of that expert.

"Haha... Bai Zihan, now you can't do anything!"

Mo Tianji laughed with relief.

Slap!

Bai Zihan gave Mo Tianji a good slap.

Well, the slap was more for humiliation than actually injuring him or risking his life, so Bai Zihan didn't think he broke any of the rules stated by the remnant soul.

And as expected, the Remnant didn't show up—probably because it knew the slap wasn't meant to injure or kill Mo Tianji.

"YOU!"

Mo Tianji had thought Bai Zihan wouldn't dare do anything after being warned by the Remnant of the Immortal Emperor.

Normally, people wouldn't do anything that might risk expulsion—even if the chances were low.

Would you risk the Immortal Emperor's Inheritance just to land a slap?

But Bai Zihan didn't show the same determination for the inheritance as the others.

If he had, he would've gone to the next trial already instead of playing around with Mo Tianji.

"You probably should think before you speak."

Bai Zihan said, making it clear that he was willing to risk the inheritance just to humiliate him.

Mo Tianji kept his mouth shut.

He initially wanted to talk back, say something to feel better and make Bai Zihan angry—but all he got was a slap and more humiliation.

(Just you wait! When I get out of this, I'll kill you!)

Mo Tianji vowed in his heart. There was no way someone feared like him could just let Bai Zihan get away with humiliating him.

Bai Zihan stared at Mo Tianji. He knew the guy would definitely seek revenge, though he wasn't all that worried.

He'd already tested him thoroughly—Mo Tianji wasn't capable of taking his life.

Now that the fun was over, Bai Zihan walked toward the path to the next trial—the area that seemed to have the highest Qi in the room.

As expected, the closer he got, the thicker the Qi. Others might have struggled to breathe, but for Bai Zihan, this was the perfect place to cultivate.

Just when everyone thought the devil was finally heading to the next trial, he sat down near the path and started meditating.

"What the... Why is he still here?"

"Is he seriously trying to cultivate? Isn't it better to get the inheritance first?"

"How should I know what goes on in the mind of a lunatic?"

"Well, it's better for us, I guess. We still have a chance to go!"

...

No one understood what Bai Zihan was thinking or why he was doing something so ridiculous.

If it were them, they would've rushed forward to complete the next trial as soon as they could.

But Bai Zihan?

He just had to waste time and then do something totally unexpected.

"System!"

[Host Info]

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 16

Cultivation Realm: Nascent Soul (Mid Stage)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone

Martial Arts: Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

He'd already had a small breakthrough while beating the shit out of Mo Tianji.

That alone showed how dense the Qi here was—he hadn't even used his Cultivation Technique.

With this environment, he might be able to push all the way to Soul Formation if he really tried.

Of course, whether he could or should depend on the others as well. Once they adapt, they should be able to move and after some time, some of the people should be able to reach the path.

He didn't act like someone who cared about the inheritance, but he wasn't stupid enough to just let others take it from under his nose either.

So yeah, there was a time limit.

One hour later!

By now, many had adjusted to the huge amount of Qi and were moving closer to the path—Bai Xueqing and other geniuses included.

But Bai Zihan still didn't move.

This pissed Bai Xueqing off.

She was still struggling to move under the crushing pressure, and yet this guy who had such an overwhelming advantage was just sitting around, wasting time.

She even doubted his purpose for coming here.

"Bai Zihan!"

Bai Xueqing finally called out.

Bai Zihan, still meditating, opened his eyes at the sound of her voice.

By that point, he had already broken through to the Late Stage of the Nascent Soul Realm.

He looked around and saw that several geniuses had made it fairly close to him.

Looks like he had underestimated the talent pool of the Desolate Heaven Empire. At this rate, in another hour or two, they'd reach the path and move to the next trial.

It seemed that reaching the Soul Formation Realm right now wasn't possible—unless he was willing to let go of the inheritance.

"Dear sister, what do you want?"

Bai Zihan stood up and walked toward Bai Xueqing.

She frowned at his fake affection but ignored his annoying tone and cut to the chase.

"Are you giving up on the inheritance?"

"Of course not!"

"Then what are you doing? Go to the next trial!"

She scolded sternly.

"Yeah, yeah. That's what I was planning to do."

Bai Zihan replied lazily as he turned around and walked toward the path.

As Bai Zihan strolled past Mo Tianji, he suddenly lifted his hand and swung it down fast—stopping just inches from Mo Tianji's face.

The abrupt motion made Mo Tianji instinctively flinch, his body trembling as he stumbled back and coughed up a mouthful of blood because of losing focus.

"BAI ZIHAN!"

Bai Zihan snorted and burst into laughter.

"What the hell was that? I wasn't even gonna hit you."

He mocked, shaking his head.

"If I knew you were such a scaredy cat, I wouldn't have bullied you."

With that final insult, he turned his back and walked away without sparing him another glance.

Mo Tianji's clenched fists trembled violently, his face pale and eyes bloodshot, seething with humiliation and rage.

With everyone watching him, he waved back at them cheerfully.

"Bye bye! See you later!"

Novel Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! Chapter 133: The Second Trial!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

Chapter 133: The Second Trial!

Inside the next floor, it was like stepping into yet another world.

Unlike the first floor, which was mostly a white room with only a path, this time there were a bunch of scrolls floating in the air.

"Are they Martial Techniques?"

Bai Zihan mumbled as he stared at the scrolls.

An eerie quiet enveloped him as he was alone in the room.

Then—

BOOM!

A flash of light tore through the space ahead, and the silhouette of the Remnant Soul emerged again.

The Remnant's form flickered erratically, its illusionary robe slightly disheveled. And its expression?

Let's just say... It looked like it had swallowed a fly.

"You," the Remnant said, voice strained, like it was trying very hard not to lose its temper. "Are finally here."

Bai Zihan raised a brow.

"You don't sound happy to see me."

"... I have no idea what you are saying. Anyway, you don't seem like someone who wants my inheritance."

The Remnant said, a bit curious now.

"What? No way! Did I win it?"

Bai Zihan asked excitedly.

Of course, there was no way he had won it already.

The Remnant was probably just pissed that he was taking something like getting an Immortal Emperor's Inheritance so lightly.

Judging by the look on her face, she clearly thought Bai Zihan would move straight to the next trial after her warning.

Which he didn't.

"No!"

The Remnant flat-out answered.

"Tsk! Why are you asking then?"

Bai Zihan clicked his tongue.

"..."

After another moment of silence, the Immortal Emperor's Remnant finally opened her mouth again.

"You've passed the first test."

She continued.

"The second trial begins now!"

"This is the Hall of Martial Echoes. Within the scrolls are all the Martial Arts I learned when I was young. Most of them are Heaven-Grade and below."

"This is both your opportunity and your test. You can only choose one Martial Technique. Comprehend it. Reach Minor Mastery, and you shall qualify for the next trial!"

Then—poof—the Remnant faded into smoke.

Bai Zihan blinked.

"Oh, someone's cranky today."

He then turned his attention to the scrolls floating in the air.

Hundreds—no, thousands—of Martial Arts Techniques hovered all around him.

Just goes to show how many Martial Arts Immortal Emperor Feilian had comprehended.

And to think this was only what she learned when she was young.

(Young... What age is that?)

Bai Zihan thought curiously.

For someone who could live for eternity, even a thousand years might be "young."

At the very least, he was pretty sure it didn't mean she was twelve like how he considered someone when they say that they are young.

Judging by the number of Martial Arts here?

She was at least over a hundred when she was still "young."

Anyways, Bai Zihan strolled down the rows, scanning his options like a kid in a candy shop.

[Crimson Thunder Palm - Profound Grade]

[Heavenly Dragon Bone Crush Art - Heaven Grade]

[Voidstep Mirage - Earth Grade]

[Soaring Frost Wind Blade – Earth Grade]

[Endless Spear of the Sea – Profound Grade]

[Eternal Flowing Water Sword – Heaven Grade]

He paused at the last one.

"Sword Technique, huh?"

He tapped his chin.

If he wanted to comprehend a technique quickly, a sword technique was obviously the way to go.

He already had Intermediate Sword Intent, which was basically a cheat code for this kind of thing.

But he wasn't just here to show off.

He needed something useful and a Heaven-Grade Defensive Technique would cover his current weakness perfectly.

"I already have Nine Shadows Flowing Light. With a Heaven-Grade defensive technique, I won't have any flaws."

Without further drama, he placed his palm on the scroll.

The Eternal Flowing Water Sword unfurled before his eyes, not as words, but as glowing images made of light—sword arcs like rivers, footwork like drifting leaves, each strike more graceful than the last.

A serene female voice echoed in his mind, guiding the way.

"Flow like the mountain spring—yield when struck, strike when pulled. Water does not fight; it endures and outlasts."

For most cultivators, they couldn't make out what those words mean.

But Bai Zihan?

He smirked.

His Sword Intent pulsed faintly, silver lines of power swirling around him as the technique unfolded in full.

Every form, every step, every twist of the sword—the moment he saw it, his Sword Intent resonated.

He understood.

This wasn't about brute force.

It wasn't even about defense.

It was about being untouchable.

Eternal Flowing Water Sword – Basic Principle:

Instead of clashing, each motion redirected the enemy's power.

When a blade came down, the water would swirl—turning the impact into a glancing slide.

When pressure mounted, the technique gave ground, then returned twice as dangerous—like a whirlpool pulling everything in.

Redirection. Dissipation. Flow.

Three core pillars!

Bai Zihan sat cross-legged, eyes closed.

The Eternal Spirit Sword at his waist floated out on its own and hovered above the ground, spinning slowly.

He raised his hand and began guiding it through the air, mimicking the movements etched into his mind.

Each slash created a ripple.

Each ripple flowed into the next.

Within moments, a small current of wind gathered around him.

Soft, but deadly.

Like the surface of a calm pond with a beast lurking just beneath.

Thirty minutes in—the wind was stronger.

Forty-five minutes—he was redirecting his own strikes in a loop, turning momentum on itself, feeding it into the next move.

By the time the hour mark hit—a full water current danced around his sword, glowing faintly with Sword Qi.

At the same time, space cracked open—

BOOM!

The Remnant Soul returned, robes flaring from the burst of Qi.

She stared at him.

Mouth slightly open.

Brows twitching.

"You..."

She blinked.

"You... already reached Minor Mastery? A Heaven-Grade Technique? In less than an hour?"

Bai Zihan yawned.

"Mmm... it's not that hard," he said casually.

"I sense Sword Intent. Did you achieve it?"

The Remnant asked.

Bai Zihan nodded.

"Show me!"

She demanded.

Bai Zihan didn't think much of it.

He used the Eternal Flowing Water Sword technique, layered with his Intermediate Sword Intent—making it even more ridiculous.

"Are you convinced?"

He asked, casually brushing imaginary dust off his sleeve.

"Intermediate Sword Intent?!!"

The Remnant muttered.

"...Even I wasn't that talented in my youth," she said, voice laced with genuine disbelief.

Bai Zihan smiled like someone who'd just been told water was wet.

"Understandable," he replied. "Not everyone can be me."

The Remnant: "..."

She hovered there, visibly resisting the urge to short-circuit from indignation.

But eventually, she exhaled, and a slow smile curled across her lips.

"Good. Very good! Then you are qualified for the final trial!"

The space behind him trembled.

"Oh! Already the final trial? That was fast."

Bai Zihan said.

Normally, this whole thing should've taken days.

Just the first trial should've taken hours. The second? A day or two at least, even for top talents.

But who could've predicted him?

With Intermediate Sword Intent, comprehending sword techniques was easier than breathing.

The Remnant didn't say anything else.

She no longer bothered commenting on his arrogance.

After all, if arrogance is all he has, he is sure to fail the last trial.

The white room began to break apart, revealing a spiraling stair of light that led upward into the void.

The third trial awaited.

And Bai Zihan?

He just stretched his arms with a lazy smirk.

"All right! Let's not waste any more time."

Then he stepped forward—completely relaxed.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 134: Heaven-Grade in an Hour?[1,020 words]

"I'm first!"

Not really!

Aside from the abnormal Bai Zihan, who was somehow unaffected by the Qi pressure, Dugu Lianxin was the first to enter the Second Trial.

Well, she didn't even finish her words before Bai Xueqing entered too.

The two of them glared at each other, but it seemed like they weren't going to fight.

They weren't like Bai Zihan, who could risk getting expelled just for doing something crazy.

A few seconds later, Chu Ziyang appeared, followed by a few others.

Once again, the Remnant Soul appeared and explained the same thing she had said to Bai Zihan.

But their reactions were very different from his.

"What? Heaven-grade Techniques? This is definitely worth it!"

"Heaven-grade is tempting, but if you want to advance faster, it's better to choose an Earth-grade technique—easier to comprehend. A Profound-grade one? I could probably master that in a day."

...

Unlike Bai Zihan, most of them had never even learned a single Heaven-grade Technique, so they were thrilled at the chance.

Others were thinking more strategically—choosing an Earth-grade or lower technique to move on faster to the next trial.

Meanwhile, Bai Xueqing was looking around, trying to spot Bai Zihan.

(Where is he?)

Now that she was in the Second Trial too, she thought she would finally see Bai Zihan, who had arrived almost an hour earlier than everyone else.

But there was no sign of him.

"Immortal Emperor, do you know where the person who first entered the Second Trial went?"

Dugu Lianxin asked.

Apparently, Bai Xueqing wasn't the only one curious.

Dugu Lianxin, Bai Xinyue, Chu Ziyan, and many others were wondering the same thing.

Shouldn't Bai Zihan be here, meditating and trying to comprehend the Martial Technique that he chose?

"He already advanced to the next trial!"

The Remnant Soul replied.

"What?"

Dugu Lianxin's eyes widened, and so did everyone else's.

"You mean he achieved Minor Mastery in the Martial Art he chose and was able to move on already?"

"Yes," the Remnant Soul confirmed.

"No way!"

Bai Xinyue flat-out refused to believe it.

Bai Zihan? Able to comprehend a Martial Technique in under an hour?

Impossible!

Even the most basic Martial Technique was something he used to struggle with.

In fact, she always felt like Bai Zihan was half-blind when it came to martial arts comprehension.

So even if he did steal her cultivation talent by taking her Dao Bone, she never saw him as a real threat.

After all, he couldn't comprehend a single Martial Art. And even if he somehow did, he'd probably take a whole year just to reach Minor Mastery on a Yellow-Grade technique.

"Did he pick a Yellow-grade or Profound-grade technique?"

Dugu Lianxin asked, trying to make sense of it.

If it were a low-level technique—something close to what she already knew—maybe she could also achieve it.

But the Remnant Soul shook her head.

"No. It was a Heaven-grade technique."

"..."

A heavy silence followed. Everyone had just heard something outrageous.

"Heaven-grade? That's impossible!"

"How could anyone comprehend a Heaven-grade technique in under an hour?"

"Even one day would make you a unparalleled genius! Under an hour? What kind of monster is he?"

...

Dugu Lianxin went completely silent after that.

"If that's all, then good luck," the Remnant Soul said. "You can take all the time you want—unless the person ahead of you reaches the Inheritance first."

The Remnant Soul reminded the participants—still frozen in shock—that time was ticking, though she couldn't really blame them.

After all, even those who'd seen everything under the heavens had been stunned when Bai Zihan revealed his Intermediate Sword Intent.

With those words, she disappeared.

Only then did the others snap out of their shock.

They knew they couldn't afford to waste time.

Bai Zihan was already ahead. Falling further behind could cost them the Inheritance of the Immortal Emperor.

Most people quickly chose Profound-grade or even Yellow-grade techniques, trying to sacrifice long-term gain for a shot at catching up.

But prideful ones like Bai Xueqing and Dugu Lianxin weren't backing down.

They thought: "If Bai Zihan can do it, why can't I?"

So they both chose Heaven-grade techniques and began their comprehension.

A few minutes later, more participants arrived, including Bai Jian and Mo Tianji.

Mo Tianji could've been one of the first to reach the Second Trial... if Bai Zihan hadn't injured him and kicked him across the room, making him lose a lot of time.

He hadn't stopped cursing Bai Zihan's name since.

When he finally reached the trial, he thought this was his moment to take revenge.

"Where is he? Where's Bai Zihan?!"

Mo Tianji roared the moment he appeared in the room.

Now that the heavy Qi pressure was gone, he could move freely—and he was ready to make someone pay.

His Soul Formation Realm aura erupted violently, forcing nearby cultivators to back off under the pressure.

Despite how Bai Zihan humiliated him, he was still one of the strongest members of the younger generation, and just his presence reminded people of that.

Many who had arrived a bit earlier—or just after Mo Tianji—thought Bai Zihan was screwed.

He shouldn't have messed with someone like Mo Tianji.

But of course, the ones who actually knew where Bai Zihan was looked at Mo Tianji like he was a clown.

"Bai Zihan, stop hiding like a coward and come fight me!"

Mo Tianji shouted, scanning the room, his eyes darting left and right—but finding nothing.

"Mo Tianji, stop embarrassing yourself. Bai Zihan already moved on to the next trial. Now shut up and let me concentrate."

Dugu Lianxin snapped, clearly annoyed by his disturbance.

"What?"

Mo Tianji, who had come charging in for revenge, was stunned—and pissed.

"Tch! He ran off? Coward!"

He grumbled but didn't make a scene this time.

"What even is this trial? I want to get to the next one as soon as possible."

He spoke impatiently.

After all, if Bai Zihan could pass it so fast, how hard could it be?

He planned to wrap it up fast so he could go settle the score with Bai Zihan.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 135: Freak Among Freaks[1,675 words]

The Remnant Soul explained the same thing she had earlier.

Understanding the trial, Mo Tianji made the same assumption everyone else had—that Bai Zihan had simply picked a Yellow-Grade Technique and managed to pass.

"Hmph! That Bai Zihan must have been in a hurry,"

Mo Tianji muttered arrogantly, though honestly, if he were in the same position, he might've done the same.

If he was the first to reach the Second Trial, and if there was a chance to widen the gap between him and the others, he would've taken it without hesitation.

That would've made securing the Inheritance far more certain.

But for the people who arrived later, it was a different story. They had to worry—what if they didn't get the Inheritance?

In that case, they'd at least want to walk away with a powerful Martial Technique.

"Immortal Emperor, can you tell me what grade of Martial Art Bai Zihan picked?"

Mo Tianji asked the same question.

"Others already asked! I'm not repeating myself. You can ask them."

The Remnant Soul snapped.

She was clearly getting annoyed at having to answer the same question over and over—though she understood why they all wanted to know.

Mo Tianji looked around.

Dugu Lianxin didn't look like she was going to tell him anything, so he grabbed someone who looked weak and asked coldly, "Do you know what Martial Art grade Bai Zihan chose?"

The poor guy trembled.

"Y-Yes! It seems like he picked a Heaven-Grade Martial Art!"

Mo Tianji's eyes widened, just like everyone else's had when they first heard it—like they were about to pop out of his skull.

"What did you say? Repeat that!"

He demanded.

"I-It's true! The Immortal Emperor's Soul told us that Bai Zihan chose a Heaven-Grade Martial Technique and mastered it within an hour. He was already gone by the time we got here."

The poor guy spilled everything he knew in hopes of not getting smacked.

Thud!

Mo Tianji let go of him, his mind on the verge of collapse.

(A Heaven-Grade Technique? In one hour?)

He found it as unbelievable as anyone would. But it hit harder for him because he knew how insane that was.

He had taken nearly a whole year to achieve Minor Mastery in the Heaven-Grade Technique of the Crimson Demon Sect.

(Maybe the techniques here are easier to grasp than the ones I learned?)

He tried to convince himself.

Determined to prove his superiority, he immediately chose a Heaven-Grade Technique himself.

If he could master it quicker, then that'd show everyone just how talented he truly was.

One hour later...

"Damn it!"

Mo Tianji couldn't help but curse.

Let alone reaching Minor Mastery—he didn't even fully understand what the technique was about!

He wasn't alone. Many others, hailed as top-tier geniuses in the outside world, couldn't even take the first step in comprehending their chosen techniques.

But honestly? That was normal.

What wasn't normal was Bai Zihan achieving Minor Mastery of a Heaven-Grade Technique and clearing the trial in under an hour.

That made everyone else feel like they were crawling.

Even Dugu Lianxin and Bai Xueqing looked like they had just been slapped across the face.

Reality had slapped them. Expecting to comprehend a Heaven-Grade Technique in an hour?

That was just delusional. Even getting a vague grasp on the essence in an hour was wishful thinking.

And reaching Minor Mastery?

Yeah—no!

Earth-Grade Techniques were comparatively easier to understand, but even then, no one managed to fully grasp them in just an hour.

Maybe peerless talents like Bai Xueqing or Dugu Lianxin could've gotten somewhere with an Earth-Grade one.

But most of the people who picked Earth-Grade Techniques weren't in their league.

Some of those who picked Profound-Grade Techniques were beginning to understand the concepts and had even started practicing, aiming for Minor Mastery.

By that time, the prince and princess had also arrived at the Second Trial.

Yu Longxuan was in a damn good mood—and everyone knew why.

The guy who humiliated him, Mo Tianji, just got humiliated by Bai Zihan.

He couldn't stop grinning inside. Even if he was nearly an hour behind the first arrivals, he didn't care.

In his head, he was screaming, "Serves you right!" "Hit him harder!" and so on as he watched Bai Zihan metaphorically beat the crap out of Mo Tianji.

While he was enjoying his indirect revenge, the others were thinking more practically.

Their thoughts? Recruit Bai Zihan. Fast!

Not just because he was heir to the most powerful neutral clan, but because of his insane strength as well.

Anyway, the Remnant Soul once again explained the rules, even though most had already figured them out by watching others.

"Sh*t! How did Bai Zihan even reach Minor Mastery of a Heaven-Grade Technique in one hour? I can't even grasp this Profound-Grade one!"

Complaints and frustrated mutterings echoed throughout the trial space.

Word spread fast that Bai Zihan had mastered a Heaven-Grade Technique and moved on already.

Still, most of them chose Heaven-Grade Techniques anyway. They were rare treasures no clan or sect would hand out easily—if at all.

But some people still chose lower-grade techniques, hoping to pass the trial quickly and compete for the Immortal Emperor's Inheritance.

Another hour passed...

"This is impossible! How the hell...?"

"Is it even possible to comprehend something like this so fast?"

The grumbling only got louder. Frustration was mounting, especially from those who now felt Bai Zihan was getting closer and closer to the Inheritance.

Which... he was.

If not, why else would they be chasing this ridiculous idea of mastering a Heaven-Grade Technique in an hour?

Sure, they were geniuses—the kind who did what normal people couldn't. But even for them, this was way too much.

Normally, reaching Minor Mastery in one or two hours? Yeah, not happening. That was a few days of hard work, minimum.

"Just how strong are you...?"

Chu Ziyun whispered under her breath.

She, too, had chosen a Heaven-Grade Technique—one that could benefit both her and her clan.

Her clan didn't have any Heaven-Grade Techniques, so bringing one back would be a huge deal.

She also chose this since it seemed like the chance of getting the Inheritance was quite low with how quick Bai Zihan was.

There was also her competitive side that wanted to see if she could also achieve Minor Mastery of a Heaven-Grade Technique within an hour—but it proved far more difficult than she expected.

This made her realize just how wide the gap between them had become. A gap she never expected.

She wasn't bitter or jealous—not exactly. It was Bai Zihan, after all.

But the roles had reversed.

A few months ago, people said she was too good for him. Now? Now it was she who wasn't worthy to stand beside him.

It was ironic—and just a little painful.

She was on the verge of understanding the technique's basics and had begun practicing.

But compared to reaching Minor Mastery?

She was still behind.

Just as frustration and disbelief were starting to boil over among the gathered cultivators, a ripple of Qi stirred through the trial space.

The Remnant Soul reappeared above the platform, its voice as clear and commanding as ever.

"Congratulations! You have achieved Minor Mastery of a Heaven-Grade Martial Technique. You are eligible to proceed to the Third Trial."

The words slammed into everyone like a thunderclap.

What?

Someone else had done it?

Eyes snapped toward the person who was approached by the Remnant Soul.

A girl stood there with a calm expression.

"Who the hell...?"

"Wait... is that...?"

"It's Bai Xinyue from Heaven Sword Sect!"

"Bai?!"

"Another Bai Clan member?!"

"Wait... Bai Xinyue? Wasn't she—wasn't she exiled years ago?!"

Gasps spread like wildfire as people began to recognize who the second person to pass the Second Trial was.

The most shocked were those from the Bai Clan, who didn't even know why she had been expelled—once a genius of the clan, said to possess talent on par with Bai Xueqing.

Some looked away in shame, knowing deep down that her exile had been the result of the clan's mistake.

Bai Xueqing also looked at her, but there wasn't much emotion in her eyes—perhaps a hint of guilt and pity.

The Remnant Soul turned toward her, voice laced with interest now—maybe even admiration.

"You are the second to complete the Heaven-Grade Martial Trial. Your comprehension speed rivals that of ancient geniuses."

Dugu Lianxin's expression changed. Her ever-calm demeanor cracked, her brows furrowing as she stared at the girl on the platform.

(It seems like the Immortal Emperor is interested in this girl!)

The Remnant Soul's attitude was noticeably different from when she addressed Bai Zihan.

Even though Bai Zihan was clearly the superior genius, having surpassed Bai Xinyue in both speed and comprehension, the Remnant Soul hadn't offered him much praise.

Yet now, despite Bai Xinyue being slower and coming in second, the Remnant Soul openly praised her.

Mo Tianji's jaw clenched.

(Another Bai Clan freak? Just how many monsters did that family have in hiding?)

He was already angry that he couldn't surpass Bai Zihan's time, and now he had come to know that he wasn't even second.

This was a big blow to someone who considered himself the most talented in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire.

"You may proceed. It's the Final Trial!"

Bai Xinyue's eyes widened when she realized the next trial was the last.

She gave a small nod, her expression neutral.

Then, without sparing a glance at anyone, she turned and stepped into the next trial.

Gone!

But what the Remnant Soul said shocked everyone else.

"The next trial is the final?"

"Doesn't that mean Bai Zihan might have already gotten the Inheritance?"

"Damn! We need to speed up. Those two already have such a huge advantage."

...

They came to realize that the next trial was the last and also that they didn't have leisure time to waste.

They quickly concentrated on reaching Minor Mastery of their technique.

Of course, just determination wasn't enough!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 136: The Third Trial! [1,509 words]

Chapter 136: The Third Trial!

The third floor was dark.

No floating scrolls. No glowing runes. No Remnant Soul waiting with a smug face.

Just silence.

Then—

CRACK!

The world split apart.

Bai Zihan's body convulsed as he felt something rip through him.

A sickening pull, like his very soul was being yanked out of the body.

And then—

Light!

He blinked.

A different sky stretched above him now. Dusty. Red.

The sun dimmed behind clouds of smoke.

Around him stood stone walls—ruined stone walls—half-shattered and scorched.

A city?

Shouts and screams echoed from beyond.

His head spun. He felt... heavy.

No Qi.

No Sword Intent.

It looked like he had become an ordinary person.

Silent!

Bai Zihan staggered, looking down at himself.

His robes were different—standard-issue armor, like what a low-ranking soldier might wear.

A rusted sword was sheathed at his waist, and a badge pinned to his chest:

[City Guard Captain – Bai Zihan]

"Excuse me?"

He muttered, barely keeping the disgust off his face.

(Just where am I?)

Just then, a young soldier burst through the broken gates.

"Captain! You're awake! Thank the heavens!"

Bai Zihan didn't respond.

His gaze drifted to the horizon—dark figures gathered like a tide just beyond the hills.

Demonic Beasts!

Dozens of them or perhaps hundreds.

He rubbed his temple.

"What the hell kind of trial is this?"

If it were his usual self, those Demonic Beasts—whose rank was no higher than Rank-2—would've all fallen in a matter of seconds against his sword.

But with his cultivation restricted, it seemed difficult to kill even one.

The soldier continued, panic rising.

"Captain Bai Zihan! All the other superiors have run away. We can only rely on you!"

"Fantastic!"

Bai Zihan muttered sarcastically.

"Captain?"

He waved him off.

"Nothing. Let's go!"

The soldier blinked.

"Yes, Captain!"

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes at the young soldier as they moved briskly through the rubble-strewn streets.

"...What's your name again?"

He asked casually, brushing dust off his armor and trying not to grimace at how cheap the material felt.

The young man blinked in confusion.

"Uh, it's Hong Tao, Captain. You don't remember?"

"Feels like I hit my head or something,"

Bai Zihan said, tossing out an excuse.

"So what the hell happened here, Hong Tao?"

He asked, trying to figure out what kind of setting this was.

Hong Tao's face darkened.

"The beasts attacked three days ago. No warning. No buildup. Just... roars and fire and death. Half the outer wall's gone. Most of high ranking soldiers ran off to the Inner City when things got bad. Said they'd regroup! Those bastards!"

"Regroup, huh?"

Bai Zihan snorted.

"Let me guess—they didn't come back and are abandoning the outer part of the city?"

"Yes, Captain!"

Hong Tao said bitterly.

Bai Zihan understood. There was no reinforcement coming.

"Regroup" was just an excuse—they had abandoned everyone left behind.

They were either waiting for the Demonic Beasts to leave after slaughtering the rest... or preparing to fight them behind the protection of the inner walls.

All around them, people scurried through alleys—bloody, coughing, broken.

Mothers held children close. The wounded screamed for medicine. And in every shadow, eyes glinted with fear.

Only a handful of guards were left. Their armor dented, their weapons chipped. Some barely looked older than fifteen.

Just as Bai Zihan was about to ask who the strongest one left behind was, a deafening roar split the air.

From a crumbled house ahead, a massive boar-like Demonic Beast burst out, tusks dripping with gore, its eyes red with hunger.

"Damn it!"

Hong Tao shouted, drawing his blade.

"Captain, run away! That one's a Spine-Tusk Devourer—it's already killed three squads! We can't take it down with just one person!"

He grit his teeth, eyes filled with panic and determination.

"You need to find the others! The west checkpoint still has some guards left—we might be able to mount a counterattack!"

Then he stepped forward.

"I'll stall it with my life!"

Bai Zihan glanced at him like he'd grown two heads.

"Are you fucking stupid?"

Hong Tao blinked.

"You think throwing your half-dead body at it's gonna buy time? What, you planning to get eaten dramatically and give a inspiring speech?"

"But—"

"Shut up!"

Bai Zihan said flatly.

"I'm not gonna let some idiot play martyr in front of me."

He kept his eyes locked on the Spine-Tusk Devourer as it scraped the ground with its hooves, snorting and growling, tusks twitching with bloodlust.

"I used to kill these things in my sleep," Bai Zihan muttered under his breath.

"Now stay behind me and stop trying to act like a hero."

Bai Zihan cracked his neck and stepped forward, dragging the rusted blade along the stone until sparks danced behind him.

"Come on, you overgrown pig!"

The beast roared and charged again.

Bai Zihan didn't run. He smiled.

His body felt heavy. Sluggish. His limbs didn't respond with the same precision he was used to.

No Qi! No Sword Intent!

Only knowledge about these Demonic Beast and Martial Arts.

But that was enough.

He slid under the beast's first charge, sparks flying as his blade scraped against one tusk.

He rolled, kicked off a shattered pillar, and brought his sword down—hard—on the beast's flank.

CLANG!

The edge barely sank in.

The monster roared, bucking violently and throwing him back into the dirt.

Bai Zihan gritted his teeth. He wasn't used to this—having to try. To bleed. To fight like this.

But his stance never wavered.

The beast charged again.

This time, he didn't dodge.

He sidestepped at the last moment, twisted with the momentum, and jammed his rusted sword into its armpit—the one soft spot he could see.

GRRRR!

It shrieked in pain.

Then he twisted the blade and yanked.

Blood sprayed.

The beast stumbled.

Another two slashes—crude, inefficient, but deadly—and it finally collapsed with a thud.

Silence fell!

Then—

"...That was amazing," Hong Tao whispered, eyes wide.

"I-I've never seen someone move like that. Captain, you were like... like those legendary cultivators!"

Bai Zihan exhaled slowly. His arm ached. His sword was half-bent. His chest heaved with each breath.

But his mind was sharp.

He glanced at the beast's corpse.

So this place has cultivators too?

He thought it was a world like Earth—devoid of cultivation—but it looked like this was still a cultivation world.

Just one where this city had no cultivators.

Only mortals. Fragile. Perishable.

But what's the real objective of the Third Trial?

Was it to protect the city? Kill the demonic beast? Or something else entirely?

Bai Zihan stared down at the beast's twitching corpse. Blood pooled under its belly, soaking into the cracked stone.

He wiped his blade on its fur with a grimace.

Hong Tao rushed up beside him, panting, still awestruck.

"Captain, are you alright?! That was insane—I didn't even see how you moved!"

Bai Zihan rolled his shoulder.

"I'm fine. Sword's not, though."

He glanced at the bent hunk of metal in his hand.

With a click of his tongue, he tossed it aside and picked up one of the beast's tusks—sharpened, thick, and still dripping blood.

"Captain, what do we do now?"

Hong Tao asked, breathless.

Bai Zihan didn't answer immediately. He looked down the smoke-clogged streets—eyes narrowed, mind racing.

The city was broken. Chaos reigned.

And he was supposed to fix this?

He scoffed.

"What's the objective here?"

Hong Tao blinked.

"Objective?"

"Nothing. Talking to myself."

He turned.

"We're going hunting. And gathering whoever we can."

Hong Tao straightened.

"Yes, Captain!"

They moved quickly, cutting through side streets and debris-choked alleys.

The city was a graveyard waiting to collapse, but here and there, survivors still clung to life.

Wounded guards.

Civilians crying for help.

Children huddled in corners.

Bai Zihan didn't even look twice.

This was a trial. An illusion. These people weren't real.

Not worth the time.

But Hong Tao—

He stopped.

Again and again.

He handed out bandages. Pulled survivors from rubble. Reunited children with their mothers.

"Keep moving," Bai Zihan said flatly each time—but he never truly stopped him.

What if the test isn't about killing? What if it's about saving?

But he wouldn't gamble on sentimentality. That wasn't who he was.

So he focused on what he could control: the beasts.

And he was efficient.

Ruthless.

Each encounter was a brutal, calculated skirmish. He struck weak points, used terrain, smashed skulls with debris when weapons failed.

He kicked one beast off a rooftop. Impaled another with a shattered spear shaft.

No Qi. No Sword Intent.

But skill? That, he had in abundance.

And with every beast that fell, guards came out of hiding.

Drawn by noise. By hope.

"Captain Zihan's alive!"

"He killed that thing?! Alone?!"

"Is that a boar tusk he's using?!"

They followed.

They rallied.

A dozen turned into thirty.

Thirty into nearly fifty.

Battered, injured, and terrified—but still clinging to survival.

Bai Zihan stood at the center, bruised and sweating, gripping a bloodied poleaxe he'd stolen off a corpse.

He didn't give speeches.

He didn't inspire.

He just killed.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 137: Let Them Feel Modern War [1,034 words]

Chapter 137: Let Them Feel Modern War

The sun—if you could still call that dim, red ember a sun—finally dipped behind the smoky skyline.

Night fell.

The air turned colder.

The moans of the injured mixed with distant howls, low and guttural.

The demonic beasts hadn't left.

They were waiting.

The city was quiet, but it wasn't safe.

Bai Zihan leaned against a cracked wall, wiping blood off his makeshift poleaxe with a torn strip of cloth.

His armor was dented, dirty, and far too tight in the shoulders.

His muscles ached, and there were three new bruises on his ribs from when he got thrown into a collapsed smithy.

(Tsk! What a weak body.)

He thought. Compared to his real body, which would have already healed from this kind of injury, this one was pathetic.

No power. Gets injured easily. Doesn't heal.

It was already a miracle he'd taken down so many demonic beasts with this kind of body.

Around him, a ragtag cluster of survivors had set up camp in what used to be a merchant plaza.

Half the roofs were gone, but the walls were tall and thick, and there was only one narrow path in.

Easy to guard.

A small fire crackled at the center, hastily built from broken furniture.

Guards sat around it, sharpening swords, whispering, patching up wounds.

Civilians huddled near the edges—tired, hollow-eyed, but alive.

"Captain Bai, you saved us."

"We all thought we were dead. But now... You gave us a chance."

Others murmured in agreement.

"Yeah, if you hadn't shown up..."

"I saw him cut that Spine-Tusk in half with a rusty sword."

"You're our savior!"

...

Bai Zihan rolled his eyes.

They were whispering like he was some kind of war hero.

He reckoned that if he came with his real body, they'd be treating him like a god. Well, not that he didn't understand their feelings.

He was like a light of hope in this endless despair.

Like Hong Tao said, the ones who should have been commanding these people have run off to Inner City.

The ones left behind are those without status or power. They were abandoned by the very city they tried to protect.

Now, their only hope rests in him.

Though the irony of a villain being treated as a savior was definitely hilarious.

He spotted Hong Tao and called out.

"Hong Tao!"

"Yes, Captain!"

He immediately responded and made his way toward Bai Zihan.

"What's the status of these people?"

Hong Tao saluted.

"We've got forty-six people total—twelve actual guards, the rest are mostly civilians or injured. We set up a few barricades, but we're low on supplies. No more than one night's worth of food left. Water's worse."

Bai Zihan nodded, then turned toward the people gathered.

"All right, listen up!"

His voice wasn't loud, but it was authoritative.

It cut through the muttering like a blade through silk.

"We're not gonna survive another day if we stay like this."

Silence!

"So we're not going to wait for it."

Everyone tensed.

Bai Zihan's eyes swept the camp. Calculating. Cold. Focused.

"We're going to organize."

He pointed toward a half-intact building nearby.

"That'll be our shelter. Only one entry point. If the beasts come again, civilians retreat there. Guards hold the perimeter. If the civilians aren't injured, have them reinforce the shelter with simple traps and barricades."

He raised two fingers.

"We'll split into teams. One team handles provisions. We need water, food, medicine—anything remotely useful. You find it, you bring it back."

"The other team is a rescue squad. I'll lead them. We'll fight the monsters and rescue anyone who's hiding or trapped."

"No one acts alone. No one runs off. We move as units. If you ignore orders, I'll personally throw you over the wall. Clear?"

Dozens of voices responded at once.

"Yes, Captain!"

Even the civilians nodded. Some hesitantly, others with fire in their eyes.

Hong Tao grinned beside him.

"You sound like a real captain now."

Bai Zihan didn't respond. He just crossed his arms.

"Hong Tao!"

"Yes, Captain?"

"You'll lead the provision team. Take four others. Just stick to the area that's free of demonic beasts."

"Y-Yes, sir!"

Hong Tao was hesitant, but he agreed—this was something Bai Zihan had ordered him to do.

"And one more thing. This might even be something that can save the whole city," Bai Zihan said.

Hong Tao's eyes widened in surprise.

Something that could save the city?

He looked around at the destruction all around them. Just surviving was already a miracle.

Save the city?

"Do you know what potassium nitrate is?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"Potassium nitrate?"

It was clear from his expression that he had no idea what Bai Zihan was talking about.

"Mmm... You know the white salty stuff they use in fertilizer?"

Bai Zihan tried again.

Hong Tao nodded after thinking for a second.

"Yes! That stuff."

"You need to bring it back and even search for it if there is a possibility of it being there."

Bai Zihan said.

And why did he need potassium nitrate? There is no need to think much.

That's right—he wanted to make explosives.

He didn't know how long this trial would last, but if the goal was to kill every demonic beast, it could take weeks. Maybe months. Doing it alone was suicide.

With explosives, the others could fight too.

(Let them feel the power of modern warfare.)

Well, although he said that, he only knew how to make basic explosives. But that was enough.

He could still fight—and whatever survived the explosions, he'd finish off himself.

Bai Zihan continued, telling Hong Tao to also find two more ingredients for explosives: sulfur and charcoal.

Those two were fairly easy to explain and find.

Hong Tao didn't question Bai Zihan. Not after what he'd done.

Assembling 50 or so people in one day in the middle of all this destruction? That wasn't something even real commanders could pull off.

Well, those same commanders had run away in fear, so maybe that wasn't a fair comparison.

Either way, to Hong Tao, Bai Zihan wasn't just a survivor.

He was their savior—and their leader.

Someone worth following without question.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 138: Ironmist[1,218 words]

Chapter 138: Ironmist

The night stretched on, tense and restless.

Few managed to find any real sleep.

But Bai Zihan didn't waste a second.

After putting everyone in order and giving out tasks, he turned his attention to gathering information—specifically, everything about the city and the world he was in.

Even if it seemed odd for someone to ask such basic questions about a place he was supposedly from, he didn't hold back.

Hong Tao sat cross-legged near the fire and began explaining.

The city he was teleported to was called Ironmist.

Once a bustling trade hub, it had grown around a large mining operation just beyond the outer walls.

Mostly iron, but some veins contained useful alchemic minerals, which attracted cultivators and merchants alike.

The city had even hosted a minor sect branch at one point, though they had withdrawn a year ago.

Ironmist was divided into three distinct layers: the Outer City, Middle Ring, and Inner City.

The Outer City was the largest and most impoverished, home to workers, traders, and the general population.

The Middle Ring was wealthier, filled with workshops, guild branches, and merchant offices. It boasted stronger walls and better-trained guards.

That's where Bai Zihan and the others were now.

The Inner City, however, was a fortress in itself. It housed the nobles, high-ranking cultivators, and the City Lord's Manor.

Once the gates of the Inner City closed, nothing entered or left.

Its residents were safe and sealed off, leaving everyone else outside to fend for themselves.

(Ironmist...)

It wasn't a name he was familiar with. Well, there was no way he'd know the name of every city when there were millions in the world.

He also asked Hong Tao what year it was.

Year 237 of the Heaven Cycle!

Bai Zihan didn't know what that meant. It definitely wasn't the current system to track the year.

It also wasn't the calendar used a thousand years ago—he had learned about that.

(Perhaps tens of thousands of years... Considering that Immortal Emperor Feilian existed tens of thousands of years ago, that would make sense.)

Bai Zihan came to the conclusion that the world he was in—or more specifically, the time period—was likely the same era as Immortal Emperor Feilian.

He then asked whether there was a Righteous Cultivator Sect or Clan nearby, to which the answer was negative.

There was one tens of thousands of miles away but getting reinforcements would take days.

Not to mention, only those in the Inner City had the means to contact those cultivators.

And one should know—cultivators didn't work for free. They were expensive.

Perhaps the people in the Inner City didn't even bother contacting the sect, just to save money.

In a sense, the situation was hopeless. Reinforcements weren't something they could count on.

"Then what about the Inner City's strength? Can they deal with these demonic beasts themselves?"

While it wouldn't be easy, considering the Inner City had much stronger people, better defenses, and superior weapons, Hong Tao answered that they should be able to.

Bai Zihan asked this because if he couldn't handle the demonic beasts, then he'd have no choice but to involve the people in the Inner City.

Well, whether they volunteered or were made to get involved—that was up to him.

But he didn't want to take such drastic measures yet. The trial's objective might be to protect the Inner City, after all.

He couldn't take any chances. And things weren't desperate enough yet to justify exploiting that option.

The next day, Bai Zihan set out to kill more demonic beasts, along with a few people whose primary responsibility was to save others.

Bai Zihan didn't just wander to where the beasts were.

Using the map they had, he picked his destination carefully.

The first place he was heading to was a blacksmith's—hoping to procure better equipment and maybe even a blacksmith.

If Bai Zihan could get one, he even considered the possibility of making a gun.

Well... whether he could get a blacksmith was already unlikely, not to mention the skills required to craft guns in such a short time.

Still, the trip would be a success as long as he could get weapons.

Hong Tao, meanwhile, went with his four helpers to the same path as yesterday, where Bai Zihan had already killed most of the beasts.

They would all return to the shelter before sunset.

Bai Zihan hadn't gotten far when the first demonic beast appeared—a hulking, four-legged creature with skin like cracked stone and molten eyes that glowed with hunger.

Bai Zihan didn't hesitate.

He surged forward, sword flashing. The beast lunged, jaws wide—but it never got the chance to bite.

In a single, fluid motion, Bai Zihan twisted his body, ducked beneath the strike, and drove his blade into the creature's throat.

A burst of Qi exploded from the impact, and the beast collapsed, its head rolling to the side.

The helpers stared for a moment, wide-eyed.

"So fast..."

"Those demonic beasts are like animals to slaughter before Captain Bai!"

"We have nothing to fear with Captain by our side!"

...

The helpers Bai Zihan brought were full of confidence after watching him handle what should've been a powerful demonic beast so easily.

They kept moving, cutting through abandoned alleys and shattered buildings, until another beast—a scythe-tailed lizard with bone spines jutting from its back—crawled from the ruins of a toppled watchtower.

This one hissed and launched itself at the group, tail slicing through the air like a whip.

Before the others could react, Bai Zihan had already struck with his boar tusk blade, aiming for its head.

Bang!

Since the scythe-tailed lizard's focus was on the group and not on Bai Zihan, his attack caught it completely off guard.

It had no chance to defend against the sudden strike and was killed easily.

The helpers watched in awe—and also a bit of pity for the beast that died so pathetically.

Bai Zihan didn't waste time standing around.

As planned, they followed the route marked on the map, and before long, they stumbled upon a collapsed shop front bearing the faded symbol of a hammer and flame.

The blacksmith's forge.

Inside, the building was surprisingly intact.

Rusted tools lined the walls, and crates of half-finished weapons were scattered about. Most were junk—but not all.

In a locked cabinet near the back, Bai Zihan pried open the lock and uncovered several solid weapons.

Though none were even Yellow-Graded artifacts, they were well-crafted—reinforced alloy blades, spiked maces, even a few bows with finely woven spiritstring.

A few suits of armor, though slightly damaged, were still usable. Not elegant, but functional. Durable. Practical.

They couldn't carry everything.

"We'll take what we can," Bai Zihan ordered, taking a sword and inspecting the weight.

"Later, we will bring more people."

"You mean civilians?"

"They'll do. This path's cleared of beasts—for now. If they move in groups, I can keep them safe."

His helpers nodded. They were clearly impressed, but didn't waste time gawking.

Before leaving, they also found three survivors—a woman and her two sons—hiding beneath the forge's cellar. Weak, but alive.

The group gave them food and helped them walk.

But to Bai Zihan's disappointment, none of them were blacksmiths.

Still, his mission to get equipment was at least fulfilled.

Chapter 138: Ironmist

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 139: A Weapon for the People [1,258 words]

Chapter 139: A Weapon for the People

They returned before midday.

Bai Zihan didn't rest.

After giving his helpers a short break and making sure the rescued family had food and shelter, he gathered a small crowd of civilians—stronger ones who hadn't completely collapsed from fear.

Naturally, the idea of going outside again—into a city crawling with demonic beasts—was met with horror.

"You want us to what?!"

"Do you want to kill us?!"

"We'll die the moment we step outside!"

...

The helpers he brought earlier stepped forward, dragging a tarp behind them.

With a casual motion, one of them pulled it off—revealing the severed, grotesque head of the molten-eyed beast Bai Zihan had killed.

Another helper held up the scythe-like tail of the lizard creature, its serrated edge still gleaming with blood.

"See this?"

One of them said, grinning.

"This ugly bastard didn't even touch Captain Bai before it died."

"Those things are terrifying," another said, "but they're nothing before our captain. We were with him—walked through half the city and back. No one even got scratched."

The crowd went silent. Some stared at the monster parts in stunned disbelief. Others leaned in, half-curious, half-terrified.

"We're also here to protect you if things go wrong. And don't think you'll stay safe just by hiding either. That equipment could increase our survival rate several times over."

Many still hesitated, but after looking at the condition of the people who went with Bai Zihan, they were convinced that nothing would happen.

They also knew that it was all to increase their survival. Without much choice, they agreed to go with them to bring the equipment.

They formed two lines, armed with whatever they could scavenge, and set off again.

They followed the same cleared path, winding through ruined streets and collapsed buildings.

There were no beasts this time—only bloodstains and the remains of earlier kills.

The civilians didn't speak much.

But looking at the destruction around them, everyone understood that they only had themselves to depend on.

They reached the forge and got to work.

Even with so many people, it took effort to pack everything. Weapons, armor, tools—anything remotely usable was taken.

They stacked equipment onto makeshift sleds, wrapped maces and swords in cloth, and tied damaged armor with rope.

They returned before nightfall, dragging their haul back into the shelter.

The People who were left behind rushed forward to see what they'd brought—eyes lighting up at the sight of real weapons and serviceable armor.

It wasn't much, but it felt like hope.

And then, as Bai Zihan stepped through the doors, Hong Tao came rushing over, barely able to contain his grin.

"Captain Bai!" he said, panting slightly. "You're not gonna believe this. I found someone!"

He gestured behind him.

A middle-aged man stepped forward. Muscular, soot-stained, with arms like steel rods and calloused hands that spoke of his hard work.

"This guy's name is Lao Shen," Hong Tao said proudly. "Was hiding in a collapsed house. He's a highly skilled blacksmith—used to work for one of the merchant guilds. Even made some Yellow-Grade Artifacts before!"

Bai Zihan's eyes widened for the first time here with a bit of excitement.

He hadn't thought Hong Tao would bring someone like that.

And if he was someone capable of making Artifacts, then Bai Zihan knew that he was surely capable of making something like a gun.

The man gave a respectful nod toward Bai Zihan.

After all, at the moment, Bai Zihan was the leader of this place and something of a saviour.

"I saw the work you did clearing that path," he said in a gruff voice.

"You keep me safe, I'll get your gear fixed. Might even make something better, if you give me good materials."

He glanced toward the monster parts being dragged inside.

"Those'll do nicely."

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed as he looked at the old blacksmith then at Hong Tao.

"Nice job!"

Bai Zihan complimented Hong Tao, who looked a bit embarrassed.

After all, he hadn't done much—just went to a place that had already been cleared of demonic beasts by Bai Zihan and encountered Lao Shen by luck."

"Mr. Lao, I want you to create a weapon."

Lao Shen scratched his stubbled jaw.

"You want a custom blade?"

"No," Bai Zihan said, shaking his head.

Then he crouched down, grabbed a stick, and with the tip carved a rough shape in the dirt.

It was... strange.

A long, thin cylinder, with a blocky base and a small rectangular extension underneath.

Then a secondary grip under the barrel, angled for stability. A sight on top. Vaguely familiar and utterly foreign.

Lao Shen frowned.

"What... is that? A crossbow?"

"Not quite," Bai Zihan replied. "Imagine a weapon that doesn't rely on bowstrings. No need to pull anything back. Just point and boom. A small explosion inside propels a metal projectile faster than the eye can track."

He stabbed his finger at the end of the barrel.

"All the force comes from here. No Qi. Just physics!"

Lao Shen blinked, then squinted at the drawing again.

"And you want this... thing to fire a metal spike?"

"Or a ball. Or anything lethal enough at high velocity."

He stood up and looked the blacksmith in the eye.

"It should fit in one hand," he said, lifting his own.

Lao Shen scratched his head, muttering under his breath.

"Compact forge-fire combustion weapon... self-contained burst... small, reloadable chamber... hmmm..."

He turned to glance at the pile of scavenged materials.

"I could forge a pressure chamber using tempered beastbone and spirit-iron alloy," he murmured. "Barrel could be channeled mithril or blacksteel... hmm... and the trigger mechanism..."

His eyes lit up.

"I can make this," he said with sudden certainty. "Might take a few days. I'll need more refined materials if you want it to be reliable. But is it really that important? I can make a better sword and shield. Should we waste time on something unknown?"

Having never seen such a weapon, Lao Shen thought it might be a waste of time—though he did find it interesting.

But at such a critical time, he didn't think he should waste effort on something unproven.

Bai Zihan smiled.

"No, this is the most important thing. Perhaps something that could save this city."

Lao Shen widened his eyes upon hearing that it might save the city.

Really?

He didn't know.

But since Bai Zihan was the leader of the shelter, he figured he might as well trust him.

"Fine!"

Lao Shen agreed.

"I'll get started on the prototype. You'll get your first version in two days—assuming no one drops a beast on my forge again."

Bai Zihan turned back to the crowd that had gathered, now sorting through armor and fitting weapons to trembling hands.

A few children peeked out from behind crates.

One of them—one of the boys rescued yesterday—held a dagger with both hands, like it weighed more than he did.

With his body, he couldn't do anything to the Demonic Beast but it's a different story if they had guns.

Even those little kids could kill a Demonic beast as long as he aimed properly.

That's how he was going to kill every Demonic Beast. Give these people the means to fight back.

Hong Tao had also brought back potassium nitrate. Now all he needed was charcoal and sulfur to make black powder.

Then, with the gun Lao Shen would craft, anyone could take down those demonic beasts.

Time for those bastards to feel the power of a gun.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 140: The Flame Beyond the Walls[1,140 words]

Chapter 140: The Flame Beyond the Walls

The Inner City of Ironmist stood in stark contrast to the chaos beyond its borders.

Where the Outer and Middle City had been reduced to ash, blood, and crumbling ruins, the Inner City still gleamed—its walls reinforced with powerful formations.

Array formations shimmered faintly across the skies, forming a dome-like barrier that had withstood the onslaught of demonic beasts for nearly a week now.

Life inside the Inner City hadn't changed at all—they were still the same arrogant nobles, drinking and partying while the people outside died without a second thought.

The so-called defenders of the Inner City weren't much better—most were cowards who'd fled the Outer and Middle City the moment things turned dire.

But because of their higher status or better connections, they were allowed through the gates while the commoners were left to die.

Now they wore armor and patrolled the walls, pretending to be heroes.

And at the center of it all, in the highest tower of the Vermilion Palace, was the Princess.

She stood barefoot on a jade balcony, clad in flowing red silk robes.

Barely sixteen, with delicate features and sharp phoenix eyes, she looked more like a pampered noble daughter than the ruler of a nation.

A breeze stirred her robes, and she frowned as she looked toward the east—where the Outer City still smoldered beyond the walls.

Behind her, the grand hall echoed with footsteps as one of her ministers had arrived.

"Your Majesty!"

Minister Duan said, bowing low.

Although he seemed to show respect to the Princess, there was a smirk beneath his polite manner.

The Princess did not turn around.

Her hands gripped the jade railing tightly, knuckles pale, her eyes still fixed on the horizon where the black smoke curled like mourning banners into the sky.

That was where the Outer City once stood—homes, markets, shrines—now reduced to charred wreckage.

"...Minister Duan," she said softly, her voice barely carried by the wind. "Are we sure? That there's nothing left out there?"

Minister Duan's footsteps paused behind her.

"We cannot say for certain," Duan said, his tone laced with practiced diplomacy.

"But the likelihood is low, Your Majesty. Our scouts reported that almost everything beyond the wall has been destroyed by the Demonic Beasts. The Outer Wall has fallen. The Middle City is compromised. We must assume the worst."

She finally turned, eyes wide with something rawer than fear—guilt.

"There were people still out there," she said. "Families who couldn't reach the gates in time. Soldiers. Children."

Minister Duan's bow deepened, but the smirk tugging at his lips never quite vanished.

(Of course! Do you think we can afford to bring everyone into the Inner City? Let those useless fools die for our greater cause.)

"And yet... would you send more lives to their deaths? We barely held the Inner Wall during the last wave. The barrier formations are stretched thin. If the beasts breach the Inner City—"

"Enough!"

She whispered, her fingers trembling at her sides.

"I know that. I know!"

(Then stop talking about going to rescue them. It's already been a week since those demonic beasts began their attack.)

She walked past him into the hall, her bare feet nearly silent against the polished floor.

The ministers stood at attention in a half-circle around the throne dais, all eyes falling on her slight frame.

She looked too young.

Most of the decisions were made by Ministers, and the Princess was more of a figurehead than a true ruler.

"I don't want to abandon them," she said quietly, looking not at the ministers, but at the ground.

"But if I send troops and the barrier falls... then everyone in the Inner City will die too."

A thick silence settled. No one offered advice.

Because they were all waiting. Watching. Calculating.

She could feel it—that suffocating sense of powerlessness.

That silent judgment from people twice her age. The Inner City walls were strong, but inside, politics still thrived like rot beneath the floorboards.

Even in a crisis like this, everyone was looking to profit and line their own pockets. No one was thinking about the city that had been razed to the ground.

Well, those rich enough could surely afford to escape to another city and live peacefully.

But there were many who couldn't. And would those people care about others? Not a chance!

"Is the Vermilion Flame Sect still not responding to our request?"

The Princess asked with a bit of hope. If that powerful sect got involved, they could surely save them from this nightmare or at least she thought.

But all the messages she had sent were met with silence.

"There is still no reply."

Minister Duan answered, but he knew better.

(What reply would there be when we didn't send any request?)

Minister Duan and the others who were responsible hadn't sent the request—so of course no help would come.

And the reason?

(We'd have to give away all our treasures to receive aid on that scale. Why empty our coffers just to save a few useless people?)

The Princess's vision blurred slightly.

In this hellish place, she couldn't see any solution.

(Can I only watch as the city my parents left behind gets destroyed?)

A thousand voices screamed in her mind: the cries of her people, the dying wails of soldiers, the silence of once-bustling streets now buried beneath rubble and bone.

She raised her head.

"Send out a search team," she said.

Minister Duan stiffened.

"Your Majesty—"

"The fastest ones we have. Tell them to check the situation in the Middle City, and fall back at the first sign of danger."

Duan's lips thinned, but he bowed.

"As you command!"

And as the hall slowly emptied, the Princess returned to her balcony. The wind felt colder now.

She looked to the east once more.

And wondered—when did being a ruler mean choosing who got to live and who had to die?

But no answer came.

Later in the Corridor

"She's still not giving up on that destroyed Outer City," Minister Duan complained.

"Tsk, tsk. She's still just a child. Just feed her a few sweet words and deceive her."

Minister Ren scoffed.

"She even wants to send scouts to check the Middle and Outer City. Should we bother?"

Minister Duan causally asked.

"Send a few incompetent ones to fulfill her wish. She might come to her senses when they bring back news of complete destruction."

Minister Ren replied with a sneer.

"But is the Middle City really destroyed? There might still be survivors,"

Minister Duan said doubtfully.

"They're just mortals, not cultivators. Without food and water for a week, they should all be dead by now. We should be focusing on preparations—if those demonic beasts set their eyes on the Inner City next, we're doomed."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 141: The First Shot![1,525 words]

Chapter 141: The First Shot!

For the next two days, Bai Zihan didn't stop working.

Every waking moment was spent clearing sectors, routing monsters, and sweeping through collapsed buildings with his squad.

Bai Zihan had also gotten used to his body and could easily take down those Demonic Beasts without much problem.

His strength was terrifying—more than a few civilians started whispering that their "Captain Bai" might be more monstrous than cultivators.

After all, in the face of Bai Zihan, even Demonic Beasts started to run away in fear.

And by the end of the second day, the results spoke for themselves.

They had rescued over a hundred more survivors—many hiding in cellars, some injured and malnourished, others too scared to speak at first.

All of them looked at Bai Zihan like he was some heroic figure, especially once they saw the beast corpses being dragged back behind him like it was nothing.

Even more valuable than people, they found enough food for everyone.

A hidden warehouse belonging to a merchant guild had somehow gone undestroyed by the Demonic Beasts.

Dozens of crates—rice, dried meat, spirit grain, even preserved vegetables. Enough to keep the entire shelter alive for weeks.

But Bai Zihan's focus wasn't just on food or numbers.

It was on a different kind of weapon.

Because he'd also found everything else he needed.

Charcoal!

Sulfur!

Potassium nitrate—already gathered thanks to Hong Tao.

The black powder was ready to be made.

Late that night, after the shelter had quieted and the rescued civilians were eating in peace, Bai Zihan stood in a secluded alley behind the shelter with Hong Tao beside him.

Lao Shen had provided a small metal bowl, and the two of them huddled around it like children preparing to commit arson.

Bai Zihan had mixed the powder by hand.

Three parts potassium nitrate, one part charcoal, one part sulfur. The ratio wasn't perfect, but it would do.

"Ready?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Hong Tao blinked at the black powder.

"Are those materials together going to do something?"

He doubted it, because those were mostly seen as harmless materials, and he didn't think anything would happen from just mixing them together.

Bai Zihan didn't answer. He lit a long stick of scavenged cloth dipped in oil and tossed it in.

"Get back!"

Hong Tao didn't understand, but did as Bai Zihan ordered.

BOOOOOM!

The alley lit up for a split second.

A deep pop thundered off the walls, followed by a cloud of acrid smoke and a scorch mark the size of a dinner plate.

Hong Tao stumbled back, coughing, his eyes wide.

"What the f*ck?!"

He shouted in shock and then covered his mouth, knowing that he had just cursed in front of Captain Bai.

He thought Bai Zihan was overestimating whatever it was, but now he realized how careless the captain was.

If he'd been a bit closer, he thought he would've been turned to dust instantly.

(Just how?)

Despite seeing everything, he still couldn't comprehend just how it was possible.

Bai Zihan smirked, brushing dust off his sleeves.

"You haven't seen anything yet."

The explosive was ready.

Now all it needed was to be paired up with a gun—and those Demonic Beasts would be nothing but target practice.

The explosion shook the stillness of the night.

BOOOOM!

It echoed through the ruined city like thunder from an angry god, rattling windows and sending terrified screams ringing out from the shelter.

Inside the shelter, bowls of food clattered to the floor.

Children burst into tears from the noise.

A few of the newly rescued survivors curled up in panic, convinced the Demonic Beasts had returned—stronger than before.

Soldiers scrambled to grab their weapons.

Even Lao Shen, half-asleep and already drunk, came stumbling out of his tent shirtless, dragging his sword behind him like some half-dead ghost.

"What was that?!"

Someone shouted.

"A Demonic Beast?"

"It's in the direction of where Captain and Hong Tao went."

"Captain must be fighting the Demonic Beast. We should go and help!"

...

A few formed a defensive line, their hands shaking as they aimed rusty spears and salvaged crossbows at the entrance.

Others were ready to go and support Bai Zihan, who they certainly thought was fighting.

Just as panic threatened to spiral out of control—

Two figures emerged from the alley.

Hong Tao, coughing and covered in black soot like a cartoon explosion victim, stumbled forward with both arms raised.

Then he saw the guards who were almost about to shoot arrows at them. He quickly came to a conclusion about why they were so on edge.

"Calm down! We are not Demonic Beasts!"

Hong Tao yelled.

Everyone froze.

"There was a huge explosion. Hong Tao, do you know what it was?"

Someone inquired.

Hong Tao wheezed, smacked his chest a few times, and then jabbed a thumb behind him at Bai Zihan, who strolled out like nothing had happened.

"Your Captain's just out here playing with fire!"

There was a pause. A long, tense moment where no one said a word.

Then someone finally asked, "...What kind of fire makes that kind of noise?!"

Bai Zihan, completely unfazed, reached up to brush ash from his hair. "A very useful kind," he said casually.

"Anyway, there is no Demonic Beast, so you can let down your guard,"

Hong Tao said.

Another beat of stunned silence.

Then the fear began to shift—morphing into a strange mixture of awe and disbelief.

Some of the soldiers who'd served under Bai Zihan before started chuckling nervously, patting each other on the back.

"Captain Bai made that?"

"That explosion came from him?"

"No wonder the beasts are scared of him..."

Hong Tao sighed like a man who'd just realized he was stuck on a sinking ship piloted by a madman.

"Listen," he said, turning back to the crowd. "It's fine. Really. We were just testing something. No more explosions tonight."

Probably.

"Go back to your food. The Captain's working on something to kill beasts more efficiently, that's all."

Someone from the rescued civilians called out timidly, "Will it keep us safe?"

Bai Zihan looked at them and smiled.

"No," he said. "It'll make them regret ever coming here."

That shut everyone up real quick.

They stared at him—some wide-eyed, some smiling faintly, others nodding like they'd just decided to worship this man as the God of Death himself.

And with that, the crowd began to disperse, murmuring amongst themselves.

The next morning, Lao Shen delivered.

The weapon looked crude. Ugly, even.

But it was a gun!

A thick, reinforced barrel forged from blacksteel, set into a stock carved from Demonic Beast bone.

The grip was clunky, the hammer mechanism basic, and the trigger creaked when pulled.

But it has all the functionality of a gun.

"I made it just like you described—those things you called 'bullets,' packed with that black powder inside. But I still don't get what you're planning to do with them,"

Lao Shen said.

"Appreciated!"

Bai Zihan thanked Lao Shen.

"How about you accompany me to test this weapon?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"That's what I want to do anyway. I want to see whether I truly invested my time correctly, or if it was just a waste of time,"

Lao Shen replied.

Hong Tao stayed silent, just watching the conversation between the two.

Just from yesterday's explosion, he knew that the weapon wasn't anything simple.

Perhaps it was really something that could save Ironmist from its disaster.

They went out to the testing range—a field outside the shelter walls that had become their designated explosion zone.

Hong Tao set up a large plank of broken armor at the far end. It wasn't usable, but it was good to test out the strength of the gun.

"Ready?"

He asked, barely keeping his excitement in check.

Bai Zihan nodded and took aim.

Pulled the trigger.

BOOM!

The recoil jolted his arm—nothing he couldn't handle—but the force of it shocked everyone watching.

The Iron Armor was pierced.

Splinters rained down, and a smoking hole was left in the center the size of a grown man's fist.

One should know that the armor was very strong—it usually took a few attacks from Demonic Beasts before it broke down.

But now, one shot was all it took.

Lao Shen's jaw dropped.

Hong Tao screamed.

"HOLY SH*T!"

Bai Zihan simply grinned.

He looked down at the smoking barrel and exhaled slowly.

Then he turned to them.

"This," he said, lifting the gun, "is the beginning."

And it really was.

Because with black powder and a working prototype, mass production was possible.

Lao Shen was already muttering about revolver chambers, better triggers, rifled barrels, and modular sights.

He also gathered other capable people, among whom were some blacksmiths—less skilled than him but previously repairing equipment—now repurposed to make guns and bullets.

Hong Tao was testing powder stability, adjusting the ratios to make the explosions cleaner.

And the civilians—those wide-eyed, trembling people who'd once been too scared to step outside—were now lining up to get trained in how to load and fire one.

Now, it was time for the counterattack!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 142: The Scout's Revelation [1,016 words]

Chapter 142: The Scout's Revelation

Inside the Main Hall of the Vermilion Palace, ministers whispered among themselves, gathered in full for the first time in days.

Every seat was filled. High-ranking generals, advisors, and even ministers were present, their expressions ranging from curiosity to irritation.

At the head of the chamber sat the Princess—this time clad in formal robes of crimson and gold, her expression carved in porcelain calm.

But her hands were clenched in her lap, tight and pale beneath the sleeves.

The reason they were all gathered—the scout they had sent out had finally returned.

The twin doors opened with a heavy creak, and a soldier stepped forward. Dirt-streaked armor.

Blood on his sleeve. Eyes sunken from exhaustion—but alive.

It seemed he hadn't even had time to clean up after returning—whether due to urgency or eagerness to report.

"Reporting as ordered!"

He barked, then knelt on one knee.

(Hmph! Judging by his condition, the news is just as we expected.)

Minister Duan and Minister Ren thought.

"Rise," the Princess said immediately, her voice steady. "What did you find in the Middle City?"

A heavy silence fell as all eyes turned toward the scout.

He took a breath.

"The Middle City... still stands."

Gasps and mutters exploded through the chamber like a thunderclap.

"What?!"

"Impossible!"

The Princess, who had braced herself to hear the worst, widened her eyes in surprise—and hope.

Minister Duan's face stiffened. He quickly stepped forward.

"What do you mean it still stands? Our last reports—"

"We were mistaken," the scout cut in.

"We assumed the city had fallen because the barriers crumbled and no reinforcements arrived. But a large group of survivors has gathered in the inner ring of the Middle City. They've formed a defensive line."

The Princess leaned forward, her eyes sharp.

"Defensive line? You mean to say they are fighting back against the Demonic Beasts?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. They're still under attack, but they are holding their ground. Many civilians and soldiers are leading the defense."

Another ripple of disbelief swept through the hall.

"How can untrained civilians stand against Demonic Beasts? Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

Minister Duan asked with a deep frown.

What shocked them wasn't just the survival—but that civilians were fighting.

"Minister Duan, that's the amazing part!"

The scout replied, eyes gleaming with excitement.

"They had weapons—some kind of long sticks—that could kill the Demonic Beasts instantly. One pull of the trigger, and the beasts dropped dead on the spot!"

"They had about twenty of them. One person could take out three Demonic Beasts before they even got close. It was incredible!"

Bang!

Minister Ren slammed the table angrily.

"Don't you dare feed us such nonsense!"

He yelled.

"W-What I said is true!"

The scout stammered. "You can ask the other scouts as well!"

"This is ridiculous! A weapon that can instantly kill a Demonic Beast—wielded by civilians? That's just a fairy tale! Princess, we must interrogate him—make him tell the truth instead of spinning stories."

He didn't believe a word the scout said—or perhaps, he simply didn't want to believe it.

Others nodded in agreement. It was too unbelievable.

"Wait!"

The Princess raised her hand.

Unlike the ministers, she saw a flicker of hope. Even if it was a lie, she wanted to believe it.

"Can you tell me more?"

The scout nodded and began recounting what he had seen.

He and his team of ten had been dispatched to investigate the fate of the Middle City.

At first, they thought it was a death zone—completely overrun by Demonic Beasts. No one could possibly survive.

As expected, on the first day of their investigation, there was nothing except rubble and Demonic Beast.

They thought it would be the same for the second day of the investigation.

But they were wrong.

On the second day, they spotted a group of survivors.

What surprised them most wasn't that they were alive—it was that they looked well-fed and in good health.

Judging by their clothing and equipment, it was a mixed group of guards and civilians.

When the scouts saw them, they were facing off against three Demonic Beasts.

At that moment, the scouts believed they were as good as dead.

Even a squad of elite guards would struggle against three Demonic Beasts.

But then—it happened.

Two of the people pulled out strange long sticks. The scouts had no idea what they were—at first, they thought it was suicidal last stand.

But in an instant, with a thunderous crack, two of the Demonic Beasts fell.

The third, startled and enraged, was swiftly dispatched by another man.

The scouts could hardly believe their eyes. They rubbed them, wondering if it was a dream.

But turns out everyone of them had seen the same thing.

They secretly followed the group to their shelter—a fortified area packed with hundreds of survivors, talking and laughing as if they weren't in a disaster at all.

Joyful and Alive!

And many of them were carrying those same long sticks.

With weapons like those, it made sense—they could actually defend themselves.

The Princess listened quietly.

It was difficult to believe. Hundreds of survivors? Weapons that could kill a Demonic Beast in one shot?

Moreover, there were more than 20?

It all sounded more absurd than the wildest cultivator legends.

"You said they formed a shelter... Did you find out who their leader is?" the Princess asked.

The scout nodded.

"It seems he's one of the captains of the Middle City guard. I didn't recognize him—he's young—but the people there seem to trust him deeply."

A long silence followed.

Minister Duan and Ren looked furious. They didn't believe a single word. They wanted the scout jailed—or fed to the Demonic Beasts themselves.

But the Princess was deep in thought.

After a pause, she spoke.

"Can you bring this leader here? I want to speak with him personally. And bring one of those weapons too."

"If what you say is true... he might know how to make more of them."

She stood.

"Perhaps... there is a way that we can still save the city!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 143: An Invitation Refused[1,182 words]

Chapter 143: An Invitation Refused

"Your Highness!"

Minister Ren said, his tone sharp, with no pretense of respect.

"Surely you don't truly believe the scout's... fantasy? Weapons that can kill Demonic Beasts in a single strike? Civilians leading a defense? He must be hallucinating!"

A few of the other ministers nodded in agreement.

They didn't want the Princess taking the scout's words seriously and pulling another stunt like last time—talking about saving the Middle City.

Why waste valuable resources on saving commoners who are as good as dead?

Better to hold onto the resources until the Demonic Beasts got bored and moved on.

"I didn't say I believed it," she said honestly. "But I do intend to find out whether it's true or not."

"Let's just wait for the scout to bring back the leader of the shelter and the weapon. We'll all know the truth then."

Five hours later...

The sun was beginning to dip behind the Vermilion Palace's towering spires when the twin doors to the Main Hall creaked open once more.

All eyes turned as the scout—still in the same bloodied, dirt-streaked armor—stepped in.

Alone.

Again.

No leader.

No weapon.

Just him.

The silence was immediate. Heavy and Suspicious.

The Princess, still seated at the head of the chamber, stood slowly, her crimson and gold robes rustling softly.

Her gaze sharpened.

"Where is he? The leader of the shelter?"

The scout halted in the center of the hall, lowering his head.

"Your Highness, he... he didn't come with me."

Whispers ignited instantly—furious, scornful, incredulous.

"He lied! There never was a weapon! Hell, I doubt there's a group of survivors."

"Of course! We should've known. He must have some kind of scheme in mind. Princess, we must capture and interrogate him."

"Why did we even entertain this farce? Wasting our precious time on this man?"

...

Minister Ren slammed his palm against the marble railing in front of his seat.

"You insult us all by returning empty-handed! Do you take the Vermilion Court for fools?!"

"Answer carefully," Minister Duan added coldly. "Because without evidence, your testimony holds no weight—and spreading false hope in wartime is a crime punishable by execution."

The scout clenched his fists, trembling slightly—but when he spoke, his voice was clear.

"I told the truth!"

The scout replied quickly.

"Then where is this so-called leader? Where is the weapon that supposedly kills Demonic Beasts in a single strike?"

Minister Ren snapped.

The scout looked up, jaw tight.

"H-He refused to come."

The Princess narrowed her eyes in surprise.

"Did you tell him it was my request?"

"Yes, Your Highness!"

The scout nodded, clearly uneasy.

"I told him that the Princess of the Vermilion Throne wished to speak with him personally."

The room went dead silent.

"And he said," the scout continued, "that even if it was the Princess herself... if she wanted something from him—then it's only right that she should come to him."

Gasps. Outrage. A stunned silence that swiftly exploded into chaos.

"Insolence!"

"How dare he?!"

"This so-called leader is nothing more than a disrespectful savage!"

"A civilian dares command the presence of royalty?!"

...

Of course, while yelling those things, many were laughing inwardly—seeing just how far the Princess's status had fallen.

"Then perhaps we need to send an invitation from our side."

Minister Ren said, thinking that the leader of the shelter might be pro-minister and would accept his summons instead.

"Sorry, but the Captain—the leader of the shelter—said that no matter who it is, if they wished to speak with him, they had to go to him themselves."

The scout said bluntly.

The scout also might have considered the possibility that he hated the Royal Family like many others and asked him on behalf of the minister instead but that too got rejected with the same condition.

If they want to talk to him, then they should be the ones going to him—not the other way around.

Minister Duan rose from his seat, trembling with real fury now.

"Your Highness, we should send a detachment immediately! Arrest this man for treasonous defiance!"

Others were in agreement. Since when did tolerate such arrogant behaviour from commoners?

But the Princess raised a hand, and once more, the hall fell still.

"He didn't give you one of the weapons either?"

The scout shook his head.

"No, Your Highness. I asked to bring one back, but he declined. Said they had a limited supply—and couldn't afford to part with a single one."

A few ministers scoffed.

"Paranoid delusions!"

The Princess's expression was unreadable. Her hands were tightly clenched within her sleeves—but her voice remained calm.

"And what else did he say? Did he have any demands? Any interest in coming to the Inner City?"

She was thinking—maybe this man wanted a deal. A bribe. Protection. Some selfish trade to save himself and enrich himself.

It would be greedy, yes—but could she really blame him?

She had been protected within the palace walls, powerless to save the Middle or Outer City.

She wasn't in position to blame anyone but herself.

The scout shook his head.

"He didn't seem interested in any of that. In fact... I don't think he's even afraid of the Demonic Beasts. He mocked us—said that incompetent people couldn't even protect a city from such weak creatures."

Another burst of outrage.

Ministers shouted over each other, demanding retribution, dismissing the scout as a liar, the leader as a traitor.

Calls for military action echoed across the hall.

But the Princess simply closed her eyes for a moment.

Then opened them.

"Enough!"

She said softly, and her voice cut through the uproar like a blade.

The ministers stopped.

(Could the leader of the shelter really be so arrogant while facing disaster? Are their weapons so powerful that he doesn't even worry about the Demonic Beast roaming around?)

The Princess thought.

She could already tell: the person leading the survivors in the Middle City was extremely arrogant. Bold beyond reason.

But... if he had achieved what the scout claimed... perhaps he deserved to be arrogant?

"So," she said quietly, "he's willing to meet me... if I go to him?"

"It seems so, Your Highness!"

"Mmm... And do you think we can trust this man?"

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

The scout answered firmly.

"He is trusted by every survivor. He helped them all—whether they were injured, useful, or not."

The scout still couldn't believe the man had disregarded the Princess's authority so casually—told her to come to him.

He had tried to persuade him with everything he could think of—promises, promotions, wealth—but the man was unmoved.

Still, he had tested the weapon.

Personally saw how powerful it was.

He knew the Princess and the upper management had to witness the power of this thing they called a "gun."

If they did, maybe... just maybe... they could protect their city without needing to rely on anyone.

"...Okay then!"

The Princess finally said, voice steady.

"I have made my decision. I will go and meet with the leader of the survivors. Those who want to accompany me may come."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 144: The Vermilion Princess Arrives[1,650 words]

Chapter 144: The Vermilion Princess Arrives

Guns were introduced in the land of Cultivation.

And just like that—everything changed.

The next time the Demonic Beasts came, thinking they were returning to an easy hunting ground, they didn't find fear or screaming civilians.

They found bullets.

It started with a single patrol.

Bai Zihan led the way, the crude gun slung over his shoulder like a divine instrument of war.

Hong Tao and Lao Shen followed behind, each carrying a fresh prototype.

They were supposed to just test range and accuracy.

Instead, they got ambushed.

A pack of Four-Eyed Hellhounds, gnashing their teeth and howling with bloodlust, surged from the shadows of a ruined building.

In the past, this would've been a problem. Hellhounds were fast, their hides tough.

Usually, it took a team of elite soldiers to bring one down—if they were lucky.

But this time?

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Three shots. Three corpses.

The hounds didn't even reach them. Their speed was nothing before the speed of a bullet.

Bai Zihan lowered his gun, his face calm.

Lao Shen blinked.

"That's it?"

Hong Tao stared at the smoking ruins of the beasts.

"They didn't even get close..."

They knew the gun was a powerful weapon, but even then, they seemed to have underestimated it.

Four-Eyed Hellhounds who once terrorized with insane speed—dodging attacks and launching ambushes—were killed without being able to do anything.

Lao Shen and Hong Tao were also excited about their first Demonic Beast kills.

Normally, for people like them—weak, ordinary—killing a Demonic Beast was nothing more than a dream.

But with a gun, they had achieved it. And easily, at that.

They went around testing—or more like, it turned into fun after a bit—and before they returned to the shelter, they had already killed almost twenty Demonic Beasts.

An insane number for a team of three, made up of two who had never killed a Demonic Beast before.

Moreover, Bai Zihan didn't even participate in most of their kills.

When they returned, Hong Tao couldn't help but brag about his achievement to the other people of the shelter, though all he did was pull the trigger.

The other people listened in amazement and couldn't stop praising Bai Zihan for developing such a weapon in a time of need.

Five more people were selected to test and try the gun. They were all amazed and excited after their first try.

With these weapons, they had high hopes that they could reclaim what was once theirs.

Ironmist's reclaiming began!

It was brutal! Efficient! One-sided!

Beasts that once inspired terror became nothing more than training targets.

Armed patrols—led by Bai Zihan, supported by black powder and a growing arsenal of guns—swept through the ruins like a cleansing flame.

In the past, clearing a single block might take half a day. Now?

Ten minutes!

Bang. Reload. Bang. Move on.

Ruthless!

Some tried to dodge. Others charged blindly.

Didn't matter.

As soon as that click came, they were dead.

Their hides might resist swords. Claws might shatter shields.

But none of them could stop a bullet traveling faster than sound and fire.

Even Demonic Beasts—those with stronger defense—were no match for the sheer destructive force of a bullet to the skull.

So what if you had thicker skin?

You might survive one bullet—but can you survive ten?

Those who were only good at defense had no method of counterattack and just stalled for time until their defense broke and a bullet pierced through their brain.

They were like sitting ducks—it just took an extra bullet to kill them.

But Bai Zihan understood that while the gun was efficient against low-grade Demonic Beasts, it wouldn't be as effective against high-grade ones.

It took quite a lot of bullets and skilled tankers to kill a Grade-2 Demonic Beast. Previously, even that was impossible with soldiers and civilians.

But that also made him realize that it wouldn't be of much use if they were to face Grade-3 Demonic Beasts and above.

Well, he already anticipated that.

Even his real body wouldn't be scratched by a bullet. Guns were only effective because they were dealing with low-grade Demonic Beasts.

Anyway, for their situation, a gun was the best weapon they could have.

The shelter expanded outward, one cleared street at a time.

Collapsed buildings were repurposed into watchtowers and outposts.

Survivors trapped in pockets of the city were rescued in droves—dozens, hundreds at a time.

Each time, they were greeted not by frightened soldiers, but grim-faced warriors holding smoking barrels and cold steel.

To the rescued, Bai Zihan became something else entirely.

Not a man.

Not even a hero.

A reaper in human skin, wearing soot and blood like a crown.

He didn't rest. Didn't smile much. Barely even talked.

But when he stood in front of charging beasts, he killed them all without giving them a chance to resist.

Although guns were developed and distributed, Bai Zihan hardly used them. He still preferred his sword.

Inside the shelter, things changed too.

Children played with wooden rifles, mimicking gun sounds and pretending to be Bai Zihan.

Soldiers trained day and night, their hands blistered from reloading drills.

Guns were still rare, but production was ramping up, with Lao Shen prioritizing getting out as many guns as possible.

Because he knew this was their hope of getting out of this hellhole.

Every new one was greeted like a newborn child.

Each bullet was counted. Tracked. Honored.

Because each bullet was worth a life.

Or a death.

Lao Shen's smithy never slept.

Black powder was being stored in reinforced chambers.

But Bai Zihan was deep in thought.

He didn't know just how long it was going to take to complete this trial.

It had already been a week since this Trial started, and there seemed to be no end.

No matter how many Demonic Beasts he killed, how many people he saved, and how much territory he reclaimed, he still had no idea what the Trial was about.

(Just what is this Trial about?)

Bai Zihan wondered.

By now, he thought he might get an idea—but all he saw was endless destruction in this massive city and nothing else.

(Just what does Immortal Emperor Feilian want from this Trial?)

He had no idea.

He looked at the Inner City.

(Is the objective inside the Inner City? Should I go there?)

Bai Zihan considered entering the Inner City.

Though the Inner City seemed to be protected by a barrier, Bai Zihan could tell it was nothing but a low-level formation that even the weakest of the sect wouldn't use.

But for mortals, perhaps they considered it an impenetrable barrier.

He could easily sneak into it without so much as sweating.

But of course, who knows what's inside?

He didn't want to underestimate this place just because it had been too easy for him until now.

Just then, a team returned from their hunt of Demonic Beasts, smiles on their faces.

But Bai Zihan sensed someone trailing them.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes.

He could see a few figures at quite a distance.

They seemed skilled in keeping their distance and erasing their presence—though that didn't work on Bai Zihan.

He didn't do anything but feigned ignorance for now.

After some time, Bai Zihan came to the conclusion that they weren't assassins or enemies.

He thought they either came from another shelter of survivors or—more likely—from the Inner City.

After some time, they disappeared.

They didn't appear for a few days before finally coming to him personally, where he learned that they were indeed from the Inner City.

They explained their mission and talked about how great guns were and how they could potentially save the city.

Then they asked Bai Zihan to come with them, saying it was an order from their princess.

Bai Zihan refused on the spot. There was no telling whether who he was going to meet was an ally or an enemy.

And with how the Inner City had abandoned the Middle and Outer City, he was more inclined to think it was the latter.

"Captain Bai, the Princess of the Vermilion Throne wishes to speak to you personally. Can't you spare a bit of your time?"

The scout leader tried to persuade Bai Zihan.

He thought the reason for his refusal might be because of his care for the survivors and his need to look after them.

"Even if it was the Princess herself—if she wants something from me—then it's only right that she should come to me, not the other way around."

The scout leader, thinking Bai Zihan disliked the princess, asked again.

"The Ministers also want to speak with you."

The scout leader lied, trying to make Bai Zihan come along with him.

???

(If I don't even want to answer your princess's call, why would I come just because of the ministers?)

But Bai Zihan figured it out quickly. There was politics everywhere, and this city was no different—power was divided.

He gave a similar response, telling them that no matter who it was, if they wanted something from him, they should be the ones coming to him—not the other way around.

The scout leader also asked to take one of the guns with him, but Bai Zihan refused.

He considered the possibility that their real objective was to get the weapon. If they got their hands on it, he might never meet the Princess or the Ministers.

He knew he had to meet them eventually to perhaps understand the objective of the Trial—but he would do it in a place where he had the advantage.

Bai Zihan figured the princess might not come herself—it was too dangerous.

But who could've guessed—

Just a few hours after his conversation with the scout leader...

The princess actually came to their shelter.

"Hello, I am Princess Feilian! Can I speak with you?"

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Chapter 145: Princess Feilian!

(Feilian?)

There was no way Bai Zihan wouldn't recognize the name.

It was the same person whose Ruin he was in—the same Trial meant to obtain her inheritance.

(So this is when Immortal Emperor Feilian was young?)

Looking at the princess again, Bai Zihan could see that she really did resemble the appearance of the Remnant Soul, though she looked immature.

In any case, he was finally feeling a bit of relief.

Perhaps the young Feilian might be able to give him an idea of what the objective of this Trial was going to be.

Along with her was a haughty guy who looked disgusted to be in that place.

One look and you could tell he was the kind of guy who cared only about vanity and didn't give a damn about anything else.

There were also four guards with them, and they seemed pretty strong—especially the fierce-looking one beside the arrogant guy.

Bai Zihan was sure that one had some cultivation.

He could sense some Qi from him, although not clearly since this current body was weak and not very sensitive to Qi.

Anyway, back to Princess Feilian.

She wasn't what he expected.

No haughty air. No look of superiority.

Instead, she bowed slightly.

"I came to thank you... for what you've done. You have saved the lives of my citizens which should normally have been my responsibility."

Bai Zihan remained silent, observing her carefully.

If the Remnant Soul knew her younger self had thanked him—the same person she didn't seem to like—he wondered what kind of expression she'd make.

Feilian glanced at the half-repaired buildings, the watchtowers, and everything which has been destroyed but people still trying to survive.

She let out a quiet breath.

This was the same place she'd essentially abandoned, and looking around, she couldn't help but feel guilty.

She even felt she couldn't look into the eyes of the survivors—some curious, some hostile.

She didn't think it was wrong for them to feel that way. After all, the one who was supposed to protect them had abandoned them.

But at least, the saving grace was that—unlike what she thought—the leader of this place didn't seem to hate her.

She could tell he didn't hate her, but also didn't fear or respect her either.

Instead, he gave off a sense of quiet arrogance, like someone who was above her—even though she was the princess.

Well, that was to be expected. She was just a princess who ruled over a single, average-sized city.

Bai Zihan, on the other hand, was like a prince—heir to a clan that controlled hundreds of cities which are similar to Ironmist.

"This place was supposed to be a death zone," she murmured.

"And yet... you turned it into hope. You've managed to save and help hundreds of people."

The haughty man beside her scoffed.

"Hope? For what? A pile of rubble and insects with toys that go bang?"

Bai Zihan's gaze flicked to him—flat, unamused.

The fierce-looking guard subtly stepped forward, placing himself half a step between the two—just in case.

Feilian frowned but didn't rebuke Minister Duan. Instead, she turned back to Bai Zihan.

"I won't waste your time. I came because I need your help. For the city's sake."

"You want the weapon that I made?"

Bai Zihan asked bluntly.

He didn't mind giving them the guns or letting them create more. But was that what he needed to do for the Trial?

Was it that simple?

He didn't think so.

If the only problem was the Middle City being destroyed, Bai Zihan doubted the original military force couldn't have handled it.

He reckoned that if they had ten people like that guard protecting the haughty guy, they could easily save the city from the demonic beasts.

Princess Feilian nodded honestly.

"I heard about its capabilities and would like to create more using the blacksmiths we have. Of course, I'll give you proper compensation for your contribution."

"What can you give me?"

Bai Zihan wasn't particularly interested—he didn't even know if he could bring anything from this illusion back to reality.

But he asked anyway. He wanted to see her sincerity.

"Anything and everything you want from the Treasury!"

Princess Feilian offered without hesitation.

A top-tier offer—she was essentially saying he could take whatever he wanted.

"Princess!"

The haughty guy yelled, angry.

He really seemed pissed like the treasure princess wanted to give away belongs to him.

Well, Minister Duan does think that everything in the Inner City belonged to him including the treasures in the treasury.

So, of course, he would get angry when what he thought of was being given away.

"We can't just give anything to this guy! Who knows if those things even work like the scouts claimed? Maybe it's all a scam to cheat us out of our treasures!"

The princess hesitated, then turned to Bai Zihan.

"Can you show us a demonstration of your weapon?"

She asked.

Despite her high status, she sure didn't act like it.

"Sure!"

Bai Zihan replied.

Later, at the training ground—

The survivors were using this space temporarily to train with the guns. It was also the same place where Bai Zihan had first tested black powder.

Princess Feilian's group waited in silence—though not all of them patiently.

The haughty man kept tapping his foot, arms crossed, looking like the very air of the slums offended him.

Soon, a group of survivors appeared, each holding a gun.

They walked to the training field, where wooden dummies lined the far wall.

"Fire!"

Bai Zihan commanded.

With a casual flick of their fingers, the group fired at command.

Bang—a clean, sharp crack echoed like thunder in the yard.

The farthest dummy, at least two hundred meters away, also had its armor pierced.

The haughty guy flinched, startled by the loud noise.

Feilian's eyes widened as she stared at the shattered remains.

Though she didn't think her scouts had lied, the story had sounded too bizarre to be completely trusted.

But now that she'd seen it for herself, she had no choice but to believe.

Bai Zihan didn't even blink.

"Would you like another demonstration?"

He asked with mock politeness.

Princess Feilian slowly shook her head, lips parted.

"No, that's enough!"

The haughty guy snapped out of it first.

"Hmph! So what? It's just a bit stronger than a crossbow. Can it really change our situation? I doubt it."

This, despite the fact he'd just jumped in fear from the shot.

Bai Zihan didn't respond. He didn't care to prove that guns were the ultimate weapon or anything.

If they didn't want it, that was their loss.

Well—actually, the question should be whether he even wanted to give them the method to make such weapons.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 146: Leashing the Minister[1,329 words]

Chapter 146: Leashing the Minister

"Sorry for doubting you. Your weapon is really powerful, and I would like to once again request your help."

Princess Feilian said.

"With your weapon, we should be able to eliminate all the Demonic Beasts who invaded the city and protect it."

Bai Zihan agreed, as he didn't think there was any loss for him.

Moreover, he knew that the objective of the Trial probably had something to do with Princess Feilian—after all, she was the younger self of the Immortal Emperor.

Of course, Bai Zihan was going to accompany her—but not alone.

The group of survivors was also going to be taken to the Inner City.

The Princess probably thought Bai Zihan might get worried about them, and now that they'd been found, it was only right to save them.

Save them—as in, take them to the Inner City, which basically meant the same thing.

After all, staying in the Middle City was as good as being dead.

Though there hadn't been any casualties thanks to the guns, the survivors still hoped to go to the Inner City, which they believed was a safe haven.

Bai Zihan walked over to the tired group—people with soot on their faces, torn clothes, and weapons made from scrap.

Some held each other, others just stared silently into the dirt.

"We're heading to the Inner City," he announced.

His voice wasn't loud, but it cut through the silence like a blade.

"And you're all coming with us."

At first, no one spoke.

Then one by one, expressions lit up.

"Really?"

Someone whispered.

"Well, the princess personally promised. So, I don't think that it is going to be a lie."

Someone laughed—just a small, broken laugh—but it felt like the start of something whole again.

A chorus of quiet thanks followed. Heads bowed. A few knelt outright, but Bai Zihan waved them off like it was no big deal.

He had Hong Tao call upon everyone to assemble and get ready to move.

It didn't take time for them to get ready to leave the place.

Throughout the entire process—from accepting the deal to deciding to take the survivors—Minister Duan couldn't help but protest at every turn.

"Princess, if we take in so many survivors, our food reserves will take a toll. We might even all die of hunger."

Minister Duan tried to persuade Princess Feilian with his words, but against her good conscience, no words were enough to stop her from rescuing people.

The survivors couldn't help but bristle at Minister Duan's words—he spoke of them like they were nothing but dead weight.

In their eyes, if Minister Duan and the so-called upper management had actually done their jobs, the Middle City wouldn't have fallen in the first place.

However, although they wanted to curse, they kept quiet, fearing they might actually be denied entry to the Inner City if they went against Minister Duan.

Bai Zihan was also getting annoyed with Minister Duan always trying to interfere.

"Why is your servant so arrogant? Princess, you need to leash your dog properly."

Bai Zihan said.

He obviously understood that Minister Duan was of high status—perhaps even greater than the Princess, judging by how he acted.

But still, Minister Duan was presenting himself as someone working for the Princess, so Bai Zihan decided to treat him like that.

Minister Duan's face darkened at Bai Zihan's insult. This was the first time he had ever been humiliated like this.

After all, who dared to insult him in Ironmist?

Even Princess Feilian didn't treat him like that.

"You! A mere captain dares talk to me like this? "

Minister Duan barked.

"Hmph! Who do you think you are? And why do you keep acting like you're the Princess? You should know your place and help your master with her desire rather than annoying her."

Bai Zihan shot back.

Before Minister Duan could reply, a hand stopped him.

"That's enough, Minister Duan!"

Her voice wasn't loud, but it carried weight. The kind of weight only someone who had finally grown tired of excuses could carry.

"I have already decided. We are not going to leave these people behind."

She turned to face the crowd of weary, dust-covered survivors—

Men and women who had survived against demonic beasts.

Who bled and cried and still stood tall.

"I had once failed to save them. I will not fail again."

The survivors looked at her with mixed expressions—hope and uncertainty.

Minister Duan, clearly irritated at being ignored, muttered under his breath,

"Then when we all starve to death, don't blame me!"

"Starve?"

Bai Zihan finally spoke, looking at Duan like he was something stuck to the bottom of his shoe.

"You talk like you haven't eaten well for days, but looking at your fat belly, anyone can tell you've clearly eaten enough for the next five years."

Minister Duan's face turned red from Bai Zihan's insult and his own anger.

Minister Duan scoffed.

"What would a barbarian like you know? I speak of logistics. Of long-term planning—"

"Of your own ass, more like!"

That shut him up. Bai Zihan slowly stepped forward, hands behind his back, his voice calm but cold.

"You keep barking in her ear, hoping to scare her with talk of food and rules. But let's be real here."

He stopped just short of Duan's personal space. The guard beside Duan instinctively stepped in, but Bai Zihan didn't even look at him.

"You're only thinking about your own well-being. So don't act like you care about others. One look and anyone can tell—if things get bad, you'll be the first to run away."

Duan tried to glare back, but Bai Zihan's gaze made his spine itch.

"I've seen rats with more spine than you," Zihan said coolly.

"At least they don't pretend they're saving lives when all they care about is hoarding crumbs."

Feilian didn't interrupt. She just watched quietly.

Minister Duan exploded.

"You insolent—!"

And that's when Bai Zihan smiled—a calm, infuriating smirk that made Duan's teeth grind.

"Princess," he said, not looking away from Duan, "you should really leash your dog better."

"You—!"

"I mean it," Bai Zihan added, his eyes cold now.

"If he keeps barking, I might just break something."

Minister Duan's face twisted with fury.

"Guards! Teach this insolent brat a lesson—now!"

The fierce guard rushed forward, muscles tense and ready to strike.

But before he could land a blow, Bai Zihan moved like a shadow—quick and unpredictable.

With a flick of his wrist, Bai Zihan caught the guard's incoming fist and twisted it behind his back.

The guard gasped, struggling briefly before Bai Zihan flipped him effortlessly onto the ground with a harsh grunt.

The stunned guard lay there, winded and defeated, while Bai Zihan stood over him victorious.

He didn't even glance at the guard and kept his eyes on Minister Duan.

Slowly, Bai Zihan took a step forward, then another—closing the distance between them with an effortless calm that made the air feel heavier.

"Stay back!"

Minister Duan snapped, voice shaking slightly.

"Or—"

Before he could finish, his footing faltered on a loose stone. He stumbled back, nearly falling over, his face pale with a mix of fear and disbelief.

A few of the survivors chuckled quietly.

The result was as expected. Even without a gun, Bai Zihan was strong enough to kill multiple Demonic Beasts.

Although uncertain about their future, they all felt that with Bai Zihan, they would be okay.

Feilian sighed, but there was the faintest trace of amusement on her lips.

Minister Duan was fuming, face red, but he didn't say another word from fear.

Without his guard, he was powerless as it gets. He knows that he was no match for Bai Zihan who can easily defeat his guard.

Bai Zihan turned back, then he looked back over his shoulder where Princess Feilian was watching.

"Do you want me to teach you how to make people like him obedient?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 147: Inside The Wall[1,522 words]

Chapter 147: Inside The Wall

Minister Duan said nothing.

His lips were pressed into a thin line, his face the color of old bricks—anger and shame wrestling for dominance.

His eyes glared daggers at Bai Zihan, but he didn't dare open his mouth again.

Bai Zihan didn't even spare him a glance. As far as he was concerned, Duan was already irrelevant.

Princess Feilian stepped forward, her expression composed but thoughtful.

She looked at Bai Zihan, then at the crowd of survivors, then back at the wall of Inner City.

"There's something all of you need to understand," she said, her voice clear and steady.

"Even the Inner City isn't as safe as it once was."

Murmurs rose immediately.

The survivors had been clinging to hope that the Inner City was a fortress—a paradise untouched by the nightmare that had consumed the outer and middle districts.

For many of them, reaching the Inner City had felt like reaching salvation.

But now—

Feilian continued before the whispers could grow louder.

"The barrier is holding, for now," she said, "but the attacks are becoming more frequent. Stronger. There has even been a sighting of a Grade-3 Demonic Beast."

She looked to the horizon beyond the ruined buildings, where smoke still curled into the air like the fingers of a dying god.

"If we don't act soon, the Inner City may suffer the same fate as the Middle City."

She said this with a solemn look.

That was why she had come—to check the weapon the scout had reported. It was the only hope she could see.

"What about the sects or clans? Didn't you ask for their help?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"Yes, we sent out emergency requests for aid, but there's been no response. Perhaps... we've been abandoned."

Feilian said with a trace of disappointment.

Unbeknownst to her, those requests had never reached the Vermilion Flame Sect. That was why there had been no reply.

Bai Zihan thought for a second.

(So no reinforcements?)

Of course, he didn't know the exact reason.

But based on what he understood, if a crisis like this arose, any sect or clan that claimed this territory as their own should have sent people to help.

To such powerful entities, a Grade-3 Demonic Beast should be nothing more than an ant.

At least, that was how it worked in his era. He wasn't sure about this era though.

There was a possibility the sects and clans here were too weak—or too selfish—to act without incurring losses of their own.

There could be many reasons. But one thing was certain: no help was coming.

That meant he might need to save Ironmist himself. And if this was truly a trial, then saving the city had to be the objective.

After all, this younger Princess Feilian was likely the same person who would one day become the Immortal Emperor Feilian.

Perhaps it was a Trial to see whether the participants could help her and potentially be able to save the City.

In any case, he had to proceed with that assumption.

However, it was easier said than done.

The gun might be effective against Grade-2 Demonic Beasts or weaker, but not against a Grade-3.

Not unless he could detonate a large quantity of black powder—something that would take time, resources, and careful planning.

Moreover, there were many other burdens than that. He glanced at Minister Duan.

People like him weren't just useless—they were obstacles. Rather than help, they'd drag others down to protect their own interests.

Bai Zihan suspected Duan was one of the main reasons why no rescue had come for so long.

Princess Feilian didn't seem like someone who would abandon her people. Duan, on the other hand, clearly would.

From his words alone, Bai Zihan could tell: Duan had no intention of giving up a single treasure, even if it could save countless lives.

Truly a lowlife!

Bai Zihan didn't care about people like that—unless they interfered with his work.

And if they did, there would be no mercy.

If saving the city was the goal, he couldn't do it alone. Not with this weak body.

So, for now, he had three priorities:

Firstly, help Princess Feilian produce firearms. That alone could drastically improve the Inner City's defenses.

Secondly, gather intelligence. He needed to understand the enemy—their numbers, their strength, their movements.

Thirdly, teach Princess Feilian how to rule.

Minister Duan's behavior made one thing clear: Feilian didn't wield true authority within the city.

Though she was called "Princess," there was no real respect behind the title. No deference. Nothing that suggested she stood above minister Duan.

There might even be a conspiracy to replace her.

It was a common tactic—strike when a city is in crisis. Remove the symbolic figurehead when everyone is too overwhelmed to object.

He wouldn't really have interfered if the person they were trying to replace wasn't Feilian.

The gates of the Inner City's palace loomed ahead—tall, elegant, yet bearing the faintest cracks of wear.

Its once pristine white walls were streaked with soot and dust. Even royalty wasn't untouched by the creeping rot of chaos.

Princess Feilian led the group forward, flanked by her silent, grim-eyed guards.

Bai Zihan followed with measured steps, gaze sweeping across every shadow and crack as though the stones themselves might whisper secrets.

Inside, the palace retained a degree of splendor—tall arches, delicate murals depicting ancient battles and victories, and polished stone floors that echoed every footstep.

Yet there was no hiding the tension.

Every servant they passed moved quickly, eyes averted, faces tight with fear or fatigue.

The scent of scented oils could not fully mask the iron tang of blood or the bitter smoke that clung to their clothes.

"This way!"

Feilian said, her voice polite but distant, leading Bai Zihan through a side corridor lit with flickering crystal lamps.

"This wing is still secure. We've converted it into a command center and living quarters for what remains of the leadership."

She gestured toward a balcony overlooking the courtyard.

From here, one could see soldiers drilling, engineers repairing crossbows and ballistae, and wounded being treated in hastily erected tents.

It seems like unlike what Bai Zihan initially believed, the people of Inner City weren't hiding like turtles.

At least, some of the soldiers were fighting with the Demonic Beasts.

"The morale is holding, barely," she murmured. "But if Grade-3 Demonic Beasts appear..."

She didn't finish the thought. She didn't need to.

They passed through several more halls—some filled with maps and reports, others with crates of supplies.

Finally, she stopped before a heavy wooden door carved with the crest of her house: a silver crane soaring above storm-tossed waves.

"We'll speak here!"

She said softly.

The guards opened the door, then closed it behind them with a quiet 'thud', leaving the two alone.

Inside, the chamber was modest for royalty. A long table with scrolls and inkstones dominated the room.

Feilian turned to face him, her eyes sharper now, no longer veiled by the mask of formality.

"I appreciate you coming," she said after a pause. "More than you realize. Things are... unraveling."

Bai Zihan didn't speak immediately.

He studied her carefully—the slight tension in her shoulders, the weariness behind her gaze, the strength hidden beneath it.

It didn't seem like she was as naive as he had thought. She must know about her enemies both outside and inside.

"You don't hold real power here," he said bluntly.

Feilian blinked, surprised by the directness but nodded in honesty.

"No. I don't!"

"You're a symbol. A hope the people can cling to. But symbols don't give orders. And right now, this city doesn't need a symbol. It needs a ruler!"

Bai Zihan said.

A shadow passed over her expression.

"You saw Minister Duan. He's not the only one. Half the council thinks I'm too young. Too idealistic. That I should step aside and let them manage things. I know they all are waiting for an opportunity to replace me."

"And they'll do it the moment things get worse."

Bai Zihan said flatly.

Her hands clenched at her sides, and for a moment, she looked very much like the ruler she could become.

"They won't. Not if I became a True Ruler!"

Bai Zihan looked at the young girl, her shoulders far too small for the weight she carried—yet she bore it anyway.

Sometimes in life, fate doesn't care if you're ready. You simply have to carry on!

Anyways, it was great that Feilian already made up her mind and is thinking about the same thing as Bai Zihan had planned to do.

"Do you think you can?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"That's why I need your help," Princess Feilian said firmly.

"With someone like you by my side, I believe I can do it!"

"Smart girl," Bai Zihan said with a smirk.

"Then start by listening," Bai Zihan said.

"If you want to become a ruler with absolute power, you need weapons, information, and control. I can help with the first two. But the third is up to you."

Feilian nodded slowly.

"What do you need?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 148: A City on the Edge[1,620 words]

Chapter 148: A City on the Edge

The two of them had a conversation, discussing various things.

What Bai Zihan needed right now was information to come up with the best possible plan.

First, he needed to know about his enemies and asked about the most powerful and influential people on the other side.

The first was Minister Duan, who controlled the military.

That explained the reluctance to mobilize the army even as the outer districts burned—he was saving soldiers for himself, not the people.

Minister Ren held the treasury.

That meant every ration, every bit of funding for weapons, repairs, and medical supplies—all filtered through him.

Without his approval, the city would starve or rot.

The Elder Council? Useless.

Old men clinging to prestige, offering advice no one asked for, demanding respect they no longer deserved.

They probably hadn't drawn a blade in decades.

With Minister Duan and Ren promising to keep their power intact, they also fully support every decision of the ministers.

And the merchants... they were even worse. Kings without crowns, letting coins dictate life and death.

They'd sell the city brick by brick if they thought they could profit off the ashes.

Despite the state of the city, they were busy hoarding money without a care in the world.

With all the bribes they had given to ministers—and vice versa—they were one of the reasons the ministers had gained so much power.

Then Bai Zihan asked about the people on Princess Feilian's side.

Princess Feilian just gave a self-pitying smile, which gave all the answers one needed.

No loyal ministers. No hidden supporters. Just her.

A single girl standing against all the most powerful people of Ironmist.

All she had was the title left behind by her late parents—and nothing else.

But even if it was just a title with no actual power, she still felt that it was her responsibility to take care of Ironmist, which her parents gave their lives for.

She 'knew' that if she didn't do anything, Ironmist—already one-third destroyed—would be completely ruined, either by the demonic beasts or by those seeking power from within.

That's why she was ready to take the risk of meeting Bai Zihan and seeing the weapon for herself—because she thought that perhaps he could help her.

And he didn't disappoint.

With a weapon never seen before—one that could easily overturn their situation with the demonic beasts—his attitude that even Minister Duan couldn't counter, and finally, his agreement to their alliance...

Her gamble had paid off.

Of course, it was just one single positive thing compared to all the other negative ones.

But she believed that one single thing might be enough to overturn everything else.

Although she didn't know whether she could trust Bai Zihan, that was all that she could do.

If Bai Zihan chose to betray her, the outcome would be no different from what it was before their meeting.

Bai Zihan thought for a while.

The situation for Princess Feilian was almost hopeless, but it was her fate that she met him—the one who could easily change her situation.

"What you need is public support."

Bai Zihan said after thinking for a while.

She didn't have any support, nor was she likely to get any from the people who stood at the top.

With their close relationships with the ministers and the benefits they enjoyed, their support for her was unlikely.

So their target should be the group that made up the largest population: the general public.

As far as he could tell, the ministers didn't bother to gain the people's support.

Moreover, they didn't treat them well—more like peasants than citizens.

So, Bai Zihan decided that Princess Feilian should gain the trust and support of the general people, especially the soldiers.

At the very least, it seemed she was well-loved by most—likely thanks to her parents, who had always treated the citizens well.

But there were also those who blamed Feilian for the destruction of the city and her failure to save the Outer and Middle City.

To earn their trust, the first step was proving that Princess Feilian wasn't just a figurehead clinging to a dead legacy.

She had to do something. Something visible. Tangible. Something to regain the trust 'of' the people.

And Bai Zihan already had the perfect plan for that.

To earn the trust of 'the' people was easy considering the situation that they were in.

As long as Princess Feilian managed to show them 'hope' and save them from the Demonic Beasts, getting people's support was easy.

And lucky for her, he already 'had created' the perfect weapon for it.

In the lavish, incense-filled chamber of the Ministerial Hall, the city's power brokers sat around a crescent-shaped table of blackened ironwood.

Gold-threaded banners hung from the high ceiling, bearing the symbols of Ironmist's various ministries—symbols that meant nothing to the common folk now struggling to survive outside.

But here, politics thrived like mold in darkness.

Minister Duan explained everything that he 'had' gone through in the Middle City.

Most of which were useless complaints, but it still gave everyone the idea that what the scout said was true.

For people, the weapon known as a 'gun' might be their salvation, but for them, it was the mark of their collapse of control and power.

It would be good if such powerful weapons were to fall into their hands, but if not, then they must do everything that they can to stop the Princess from increasing the number of said weapons.

"You don't know how much I suffered. That mere peasant dares to insult me time and again. We must take him down!"

Minister Duan rambled on, and his grudge for Bai Zihan was clear, and his desire for revenge couldn't be 'clearer'.

But for most of them, especially Minister Ren, their top priority was the weapon and the blacksmith who created it.

They didn't really think much about 'Bai Zihan', even with Minister Duan clearly showing his aggression against him.

Of course, with Minister Duan being the one who wanted revenge, others had no choice but to help him—not that they took it seriously.

"Just a boy, what can he do here? Minister Duan, don't worry, we can take care of him any time we want."

One of the elders said.

"Now that he is in our territory, dealing with him is easy. Minister Duan just be a little patient."

Another added.

The elders murmured their agreement, wrinkled faces twisted in disdain.

"The Princess has also started to act out of our control. Perhaps," Minister Ren continued, "it's time we reminded her who actually runs Ironmist!"

A murmur of approval went around the room.

"Cut off the supplies to her and the people," said one of the elders, drumming skeletal fingers on the ironwood.

"No food, no medicine. When people starve, they'll surely blame the princess for it. We will make it seem like it's her fault!"

"All she has is pity and a title. Let's see how far that gets her when the bakeries are closed and the sick are left dying in the streets."

"That's still too slow!"

Minister Duan snapped, slamming his palm on the table hard enough to shake the ink pots.

How could he wait for all this to happen when he wants revenge right now?

"By the time that happens, who knows how many more of those things he'll make? That gun—"

He bit off the rest, face twisted in hatred.

Although everyone there understood that Minister Duan was hasty because of how quickly he wanted his revenge, he did raise a good point.

"We can accuse them," suggested a fat merchant whose rings clinked every time he moved.

"Spread rumors. Maybe she's working with the Demonic beasts. Maybe this 'weapon' is a trick. A scheme to weaken Ironmist from within."

The room buzzed with dark interest.

"Traitorous bloodline!"

One muttered.

"Foreign influence," another sneered.

"Wasn't her mother from the Northern Tribes?"

Minister Ren smirked.

"Good. Very good! The people are stupid enough to believe anything if it's repeated enough times. Let the whispers grow. Add fuel to the fire when times come."

"But the best option," said Elder Gao, voice low and hoarse from disuse, "is always the simplest one."

All eyes turned toward him.

"Kill her!"

The word dropped like a stone in water. Silence, then slow nods.

"But not yet," he added. "If she dies now, all eyes will turn toward us. The Demonic Beast attacks give us chaos, yes—but not enough for clean hands."

"Then we wait for the next siege," Minister Ren said.

"Let the Demonic Beasts break through by 'weakening' the barrier. Let the people panic. In the chaos, her carriage is destroyed, her guards slaughtered, and her corpse unrecognizable."

"We'll blame it on the demons," Duan said with glee. "A tragic loss... and one we'll publicly mourn."

"The people will cry," said another, "and then they'll forget. They always do."

"And if we play our cards right," Ren added, "we might even turn her death into justification for seizing full control. 'To honor the Princess's legacy, we must not falter...'"

The merchants chuckled.

The elders raised their cups. Minister Duan's rage simmered down into cold satisfaction.

But none of them—not a single one—understood what was really coming.

They were used to plots and whispers, to knives in the dark and power bought with coins.

They had no idea that Bai Zihan was the kind of enemy who wouldn't play their game.

He would flip the table, burn the cards, and shoot the dealer in the head.

And soon, Ironmist would learn that the boy Minister Duan mocked... was a storm wrapped in skin.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 149: Feeding the Fire[1,516 words]

Chapter 149: Feeding the Fire

A Few Days Later...

The wheels had already been set in motion.

With Princess Feilian's full support, Bai Zihan wasted no time.

He gave full authority to make guns and bullets to Lao Shen, and with a mixture of blacksmiths from the Inner City, Bai Zihan expected them to produce 100 guns per day.

Well, it might be slow at the start, but with their expertise, he believed it was totally achievable—even if it came at the expense of their sleep.

The forges of Ironmist glowed red day and night, and the clanging of metal became a lullaby for the desperate.

Bullets were packed, weapons distributed quietly to soldiers and volunteers—those who still had the will to fight, even when their stomachs were empty and their morale worse.

The Princess visited the workshops herself. She spoke with the refugees.

She stood on ruined walls and addressed anyone who would listen.

Her voice cracked. Her words weren't polished—but they were real.

And sometimes, that was enough.

At least, they could feel that the Princess really cared for them unlike most other people.

The Princess also deployed the scouts on Bai Zihan's demand to get a rough estimate of the Demonic Beasts.

But while Bai Zihan and Feilian worked on building something, their enemies worked just as hard tearing it down.

The rumors came slowly at first.

Then like a flood.

"The refugees are spies from the North. They're here to capture our city and the princess is fully supporting the idea."

"The Princess is hiding rations to feed her own supporters. Look, we got less food ever since she brought them."

"It seems like they want to let the demonic beasts enter and destroy the Inner City of Ironmist like the Outer and Middle City!"

...

None of it had to be true, but with those words echoing, people began to believe they were.

Worse still, Minister Ren had stopped supplying food to those in need, making it sound like it was because most of the food had been confiscated by the Princess to feed her own people—and that she had abandoned the rest.

People didn't care about the truth.

Everyone knew their suffering was ultimately caused by the Demonic Beasts—but since they couldn't do anything about that, they turned their anger elsewhere.

Previously, they blamed the Princess for not saving them.

This time also, they all knew Minister Ren was the one in charge of the city's resources. But Minister Ren was ruthless—he'd tortured anyone who dared go against him.

Princess Feilian, on the other hand, was an easy target.

And with dissatisfaction already brewing, it didn't take much for the blame to fall squarely on her shoulders.

The smart ones—those who still had working minds, hearts, and enough food not to go mad from hunger—they knew what this was.

An agenda! This time it was against the Princess.

But the smart ones didn't speak up.

Not in public. Not when you could be beaten or worse for defending the "enemy."

So silence reigned.

And into that silence, poison poured.

There were people who didn't only speak with dissatisfaction but took action.

Refugees were assaulted, and there was no way they would take it lightly.

They retaliated—sparking growing tension between the Inner City residents and the refugees.

In one of the crumbling courtyards converted into a makeshift resting area for refugees, the atmosphere was thick with tension.

The refugees sat in a loose circle, their faces drawn and weathered.

Most had swords or makeshift weapons within arm's reach—not for the Demonic Beasts, but for the city's own people.

"This is bullshit, Hong Tao! At least back at the shelter, we only had to worry about the Demonic Beasts. Now we're being accused of things we didn't even do!"

"Taking their food? We haven't even taken a single grain of rice from them. Do they think we were helpless, starving refugees? We still have the supplies we collected back in the Middle City."

"And how the hell did we turn into spies? Do they really think we survived because we're spies? What kind of idiotic accusation is that?"

"They had already injured many of us. If we don't do something, those people might even kill one of us."

...

The refugees were filled with resentment after facing discrimination—despite being from the same city and suffering through the same crisis.

In truth, their situation was even worse.

They had witnessed their homes destroyed and barely escaped with their lives from direct attacks by the Demonic Beasts.

Now, they had to endure this kind of humiliation.

"Maybe we should go back. Seriously! We survived out there once—we can do it again. And now that we've got guns, there's no real danger."

One of them suggested.

Many murmured their agreement.

That just showed how much they hated it here—where they were treated like dirty rats instead of fellow citizens of Ironmist.

What they once thought was Heaven had turned out to be Hell. And what used to be their Hell now felt more like Heaven.

At least, at the shelter, they all worked together for a single same purpose of survival and respected each other.

More and more began to feel they should just return to the shelter.

All eyes turned to Hong Tao, who stood silently with his arms folded and jaw clenched.

He was the one Bai Zihan had appointed to look after everyone—a temporary leader in Bai Zihan's absence, tasked with making difficult decisions.

"We wait!"

Hong Tao said finally, his voice low but firm.

"Captain Bai is working with the Princess. He's doing something that might perhaps save Ironmist. We can't disturb him right now."

A few scoffed quietly, but no one challenged him outright.

After all, he was Bai Zihan's chosen representative—and it was Bai Zihan who had rescued them and given them the strength to fight back against the Demonic Beasts.

They still respected him, believed in him—more than they did in the Princess or any other authority.

So even if they had to endure a few more days of humiliation, they were willing to do it—for Bai Zihan.

But Hong Tao knew there was a limit to everything.

And if things kept going this way, some of them might leave.

He just hoped Bai Zihan would act before that happened.

Princess Feilian had been receiving more and more bad news.

Rumors were spreading like wildfire, and the tension between Refugee and resident of Inner City grew with them.

Her name was also being dragged through the mud.

At this rate, it wouldn't be surprising if a mob stormed the palace and tried to take her head.

She didn't even need to investigate to know who was behind all this.

Who else could cut off food supplies to the Inner City besides Minister Ren?

Why were the guards standing by while riots broke out and innocent people were attacked?

Because they'd likely been ordered to by Minister Duan.

While those men stayed behind the scenes pulling the strings, she was the one taking all the blame.

She had tried to call a meeting—tried to urge Minister Ren to resume food distribution, to do his damn job.

But he and the others refused, claiming they were "too busy with critical state matters."

Powerless as she was, what could she do if the entire council chose to rebel?

"So, they're finally making their move."

She muttered, brow furrowed.

She knew why.

They felt threatened by Bai Zihan—and rightly so.

What she hadn't expected, or maybe hadn't wanted to believe, was that they'd stoop so low as to use innocent people as pawns to get to her.

Her fists clenched.

She gave a short, bitter laugh.

"Of course! They won't come at me directly. But they know the people will do it for them."

While Bai Zihan had planned to rally the people to help her regain her authority, it seemed her enemies had thought of the same thing.

They were using the people too to go against her.

And now, unless Bai Zihan moved quickly, they might succeed.

"Captain Bai, what do you think we should do?"

Princess Feilian asked her only ally in all of this.

Bai Zihan was aware of the general situation, but he didn't see it as a major problem.

After all, no matter how many rumors were spread or how much trouble was stirred up, none of it would matter in the end—so long as they could fight back against the Demonic Beasts and reclaim the lost territory.

But of course, there was always the chance that their enemies wouldn't give them that opportunity.

And just as he was thinking that, one of the guards burst into the room, face pale and full of urgency.

"Did something happen?"

Princess Feilian asked with a frown.

A guard would never enter like this unless it was an emergency—and judging by his expression, it was.

"Yes, Your Majesty! A large group of Demonic Beasts has been spotted. It looks like they're preparing to attack the Inner City!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 150: Demonic Beasts Invasion! [1,572 words]

Chapter 150: Demonic Beasts Invasion!

Bai Zihan and Princess Feilian made their way towards the wall where they could see a large group of Demonic Beasts.

It was around 150-200 and made up of Grade-1 and Grade-2 Demonic Beasts, which was a relief since they could mostly be dealt with by the guns.

Still, such a sight was enough to send shivers down the throat of anyone who saw them, including the refugees.

Although they had fought with many Demonic Beasts and killed them with guns, they had never seen such a huge group of Demonic Beasts ready to attack together.

Bai Zihan was fairly unimpressed as he had seen far more powerful, bigger and larger numbers of Demonic Beasts than this.

Of course, at the moment, he was very weak and even he wouldn't make it out alive from this group of Demonic Beasts if he dared to fight alone.

But he didn't think that he needed to fight it as the number of guns was around 50 and there were thousands of bullets waiting for those Demonic Beasts.

He didn't think that this group of Demonic Beasts would be a threat to him at all.

Moreover, he actually felt the opposite and felt that it was good since it would be faster to eliminate every one of them as they had grouped up.

No need to waste time searching for them.

(But such convenient timing...)

He didn't think it was a coincidence that the Demonic Beasts attacked in full force right after he had arrived in Inner City.

Moreover, Demonic Beasts rarely work together like this unless they are being controlled or led by some other powerful being.

On the other hand, Princess Feilian was quite panicked and scared.

This was the first time she had witnessed such a huge number of Demonic Beasts.

Although there was still a barrier shielding them from Demonic Beasts, those Demonic Beasts were attacking and trying to break through.

It didn't seem like the barrier would be able to hold them down even for an hour but still she calmed down knowing that she had to take charge.

Princess Feilian's gaze swept over the soldiers gathered along the battered walls.

Their faces were tight with fear and exhaustion, but her voice cut through the murmurs like steel.

"Listen up! This is the moment we've been preparing for—our chance to prove that Ironmist won't fall!"

Her voice trembled slightly but grew stronger with each word.

"Those Demonic Beasts think they can scare us with their numbers. Well, they haven't seen our new weapon."

She raised her hand, fists clenched.

"These new weapons called guns in your hands are capable of shooting those things down like mere animals."

The soldiers straightened, some nodding, others gripping their weapons tighter.

"Hold your ground! Fight with every last breath! Remember who you're protecting—your families, your homes! Kill every one of those beasts, here and now! I will stand with you all!"

Feilian's voice rang with conviction, spreading courage like wildfire.

CRACK!

However, a sudden, deep crack echoed through the city.

All eyes turned to the barrier—a shimmering dome of light meant to hold the demonic tide—now flickering, then shattering with a terrible explosion of sparks and energy.

The ground shook.

A gasp rippled through the crowd, then chaos erupted.

Soldiers stumbled backward, some dropping their weapons in shock.

"What? The barrier is broken!"

"Damn! They are charging towards us."

"Run away!"

Many people screamed and scrambled for cover.

Princess Feilian's heart lurched. Her hands clenched into fists, nails digging into her palms.

"How... how is this possible?"

She whispered, disbelief thick in her voice.

The barrier was supposed to be their last defense, something that didn't even break under the attack from Grade-3 Demonic Beasts.

But here it was—gone in an instant.

She thought that at least for an hour it should be able to last.

Her eyes flicked to the soldiers, their faces pale with panic, some faltering.

(No!)

She took a deep breath, forcing herself to stand tall amidst the storm.

"Soldiers!"

She shouted, voice steely now.

"This is no time to freeze! We must hold the line! Form your ranks! Watch your flanks! Protect the wall!"

Her voice was an anchor in the chaos, however against fear, not many could think straight.

Not to mention, for many this was their first time facing Demonic Beasts.

All they faced was helplessness against the sheer aura that they were releasing.

Princess Feilian didn't know what to do and the Demonic Beasts was almost reaching their wall, their last defense before they could enter the Inner City.

Bang!

But then, suddenly someone fired at the Demonic Beast charging towards them and he dropped dead without even touching the wall.

The one to shoot was no other than Bai Zihan!

With his face that looked more annoyed than fearful, he said, "If you are scared, run away and leave behind the gun. Don't disturb me! Those who are ready to fight, shoot these f**king uglies with your gun."

No encouraging words and only insults.

Well, that was who Bai Zihan was.

But at least, that had made many of them calm down, especially since Bai Zihan showed that the gun could easily take down the Demonic Beasts.

"Yeah, what's there to be afraid of? Didn't we already kill many of them?"

Hong Tao said to the group of refugees.

They had come to help Bai Zihan as soon as they heard the news about Demonic Beasts getting ready to invade the Inner City.

Many were in doubt whether it was worth it to risk their lives to save those people who discriminate against them and insulted them.

But that didn't matter because before them were the enemies that they needed to kill.

"I will practice my shooting to my heart's content this time."

"I was getting bored anyways."

"Hehe... Let's have a little contest to see who can take down the most Demonic Beasts!"

...

Others also feigned bravery even though they were scared to face such a huge group of Demonic Beasts.

But fake it until you make it!

With such courageous words being said one after another, they began to regain their courage and confidence.

With the display of courage from the group of refugees, the soldiers also stopped panicking, thinking about the people that they need to protect.

If this wall falls, then the Inner City will face the same fate as the Middle and Outer City.

"Everyone, in formation!"

Immediately they formed a defensive line which was ready to take on the Demonic Beasts charging towards them.

"Shoot!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Bullets rained down like droplets hitting the ground, each one hitting the Demonic Beasts.

One fell, then another, but the Demonic Beasts didn't stop—they kept charging toward the wall with the intent to destroy it.

Unfortunately for them, the bullets continued to pour down, and their numbers dwindled like flies.

"Haha... Look at these pathetic Demonic Beasts. I was scared for no reason."

"I never thought I could kill even one of them, and I think I've already taken down five."

The soldiers who were once afraid now felt the complete opposite.

They were excited as they continued reducing the initial 150–200 Demonic Beasts to roughly 50.

Even before the beasts reached the walls, they had already lost nearly 70% of their number. But the real problem came now.

The Demonic Beasts had reached the wall, and it was time for the soldiers to switch to swords and stall them while others kept firing.

Of course, this wasn't going to be as easy—or as casualty-free—as when they had simply shot the beasts from a distance.

"Hold them!"

The soldiers with swords did their best, but at most, they could only buy one or two seconds before being flanked by the Demonic Beasts.

Bang! Bang!

But there was still one group handling the Demonic Beasts with ease—the refugees.

Thanks to their experience and teamwork, they were able to bring the beasts down efficiently.

Princess Feilian watched with a mix of excitement and sorrow at the casualties but knew she had to remain calm.

Still, it seemed like the invasion of Demonic Beasts was coming to an end, with them being the clear victors.

Just then, while she was distracted by the battle, a group of five people emerged from the shadows.

Their target was clear!

Bang!

But as soon as they appeared, one of them had their head blown off by a bullet.

"Finally showing up? I was about to get tired of waiting!"

Bai Zihan muttered as he looked at the group of assassins.

"Wha—what?"

Princess Feilian was also shocked by the sudden appearance of these people. It was clear they were targeting her.

As for why—there was no need to guess.

Among them was the guard of Minister Duan, the one Bai Zihan had previously knocked out, now glaring with rage.

"Princess, stay behind!"

Bai Zihan ordered as he drew his sword.

Although guns were powerful, they weren't ideal for protecting someone—especially against cultivators.

And those assassins were clearly cultivators, or at least had some cultivation.

He had taken one of them out with a surprise attack, but he didn't think that would work again.

Besides, gun needs time to reload, which would give the assassins an opening to strike.

Anyways, he didn't think the four of them were capable of defeating him.

"Come!"