

Chapter 101

Transformation Into The Spiritual Weapon (Part Two)

Zen knew how mysterious weapons differed from spiritual weapons. During the blooded test, he suffered horrific injuries from the dagger, which was one of spiritual weapons that Ryan used. Ryan would have defeated Zen if it wasn't for his body possessing the might of a top grade mysterious weapon.

Once Zen's body evolved into a spiritual weapon, his strengths would be



naturally and significantly enhanced regardless of what he was capable of withstanding.

That brought the most critical point to Zen's mind.

"The most remarkable difference between spiritual and mysterious weapons isn't in their tenacity or sharpness. Instead, each spiritual weapon has a unique, extraordinary skill of its own. Like, Ryan's had a mighty silk energy thread he could summon," murmured Zen to the empty cavern.

"Since my body has been upgraded now to the equivalent spiritual weapon, I wonder what kind of 'skill' I will gain."



Wondering about the possibilities excited Zen even more.

"Now, how do I trigger the skill of the spiritual weapon though?" reflected Zen.

Standing on the solid lake, Zen extended one hand out, breathed in and out, and loudly shouted, "Hai!" Rushing ahead two steps, he raised one leg, spinning in the air as he did, executing a spinning kick.

As he went through the motions, Zen's moves looked awkward.

After some trials and erroneous moves, Zen stood still, scratched his head and chuckled, thinking he was behaving idiotically.



Since he didn't even know if he had a spiritual weapon skill, it was impossible for him to test it the way he was.

When Zen stopped performing the senseless actions, the gold foil covering his body suddenly vanished from sight, leaving the cave in darkness all over again.

Zen pulled a fire starter out of his space ring. As he rubbed it, the cave lit up.

He looked around and saw nothing but the corpses of the queen blade locust and fire scorpion lion.

Earlier, when he jumped into the lake of lava, he had wondered whether or not the two massive beasts would battle



each other.

Now, Zen felt he was overthinking everything. These wild creatures were more ferocious than he had imagined, and Zen couldn't help shaking his head and sighing at the miserable, wasted deaths of these two creatures.

As he headed in the direction of an exit and after he took two steps, he smacked himself in the forehead, thinking his brain was addled from the burning in the lake.

If the crystal cores from ordinary blade locusts and blade locust officers could be exchanged for some points, then, couldn't the crystal core from within the queen blade locust be exchanged for



an even greater sum of points?

It would be such a waste to leave the queen blade locust's crystal core there.

While Zen thought, his heart raced. Tiptoeing to the queen blade locust, Zen took his knife out of the space ring and thrust it into her chest.

"Clank! Tink!"

came the melodious sound of a fist-sized purple crystal core hitting stone as it tumbled out of the locust and clattered to the ground.

"The crystal core of the blade locust officer is only as big as a walnut, but the queen's crystal core is as large as a



man's fist!"

exclaimed Zen while he tucked the purple crystal core into his space ring.

After that, he turned his focus to the fire scorpion lion's corpse.

Zen didn't know if a fire scorpion lion's crystal core could be exchanged for points. He did know how rare the lion's crystal core was, and that it was the most valuable treasure among pill refiners and weapon refiners.

Without analyzing it further, Zen cut the corpse of the fire scorpion lion with his knife and dug out the crystal core.

Treasures could be found over the



entire body of a supernatural beast. Human beings could become even mightier than supernatural monsters if they took advantage of these treasures. Zen wanted to make use of the fire scorpion lion's tail, so, with his broken knife, he sliced it off.

Wanting to take back the queen's blade, Zen checked his space ring, trying to make it fit, but there wasn't enough space to hold it, so he gave up. He could have carried it, but since the blade locusts had a keener sense of smell than human beings, if Zen had it on him, he would be attacked by any blade locust he encountered.

After taking what booty he could take, Zen walked back through the cave in



the direction he had entered it. ①

He retraced his steps because of how unusual the cave was. With one shocking beast like fire scorpion lion inside, Zen thought the chances were greater of encountering more terrifying creatures further in the cave.

In light of surviving the attack from the queen blade locust and coming face to face with the fire scorpion lion, he attributed mainly to his good luck, realizing he would have had no chance of survival if not for being able to withstand the lake of lava and the earth's core fire within it.

Rushing back through the caves, Zen wasn't paying close attention and



didn't know if he had gone in the right direction for a minute.

Along the way, Zen took a few wrong turns and met some class three beasts. He had some great adventures, as well as near misses, and several hours later, he emerged from the cave.

By the time he got back up to the world outside the cave, night had fallen, and it was dark. The sky sparkled brilliantly with millions of stars. Zen realized as he looked up how late it must be.

Zen carefully made his way back across the canyon and jungles, running along the paths he had followed during the daylight in the direction of the Dragon Fort.



Fortunately, blade locusts spent their night in ensconcing in their lairs, only venturing out under the rarest of unusual situations because they weren't nocturnal by nature. Any other beasts that would normally be out hunting at night were driven away by the insect aggression. Therefore, Zen didn't run into any beasts as he made his way through the thick jungles.

It took him a long time, but, finally, the Dragon Fort came into his view.

Once he reached the Dragon Fort, Zen strode to the building where Martin lived.

Martin was housed with other members of the Green Haze group in the



barracks. Zen saw two guards stationed outside the barracks as he approached the building.

When the guards saw Zen, they immediately raised their lances, shouting, "Halt! Who goes? This is the barrack of the Green Haze Group! No visitors are welcome late at night. Leave immediately!"

Author's note



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Chapter 102

Persuading Roger

"It's me, Zen Luo. I want to speak with Martin, if I might, please?" stated Zen as he neared the door.

As the light from the torches shone on Zen, the two soldiers could see it was him, and there was a look of shock on each man's face. With a grateful tone, one of the guards said, "Hey brother! I can't believe it. You're alive! Thank goodness!"

The two were soldiers of the Green Haze group, or more accurately,



surviving members of the troop!

Usually, Martin's battle plans were impressive, and he took many precautions, so he never jeopardized the lives of soldiers in his platoon, and there was rarely a death under his command.

However, in the battle that day, dozens of soldiers perished, which was a terrible blow to the Green Haze group.

The survivors knew that if Zen hadn't drawn the queen blade locust away, none of them would have survived.

If Martin were the only one to have drawn the queen away, she would've caught up to the troops after killing



Martin.

Thus, it was Zen's sacrifice that saved the rest of them.

So, the survivors would be eternally grateful for what Zen did!

Until just now, they all thought Zen died. So, they were astounded at his safe return!

The soldiers knew that Zen was an outer disciple from the Cloud Sect, and although he was only at the marrow refining level, Zen was stronger than other disciples at that same level. Even with his strength though, the gap between his power and that of the queen blade locust was immense. They



didn't know how Zen escaped.

"Zen, the captain isn't at the camp," one of the soldiers informed Zen.

Wondering why, Zen asked, "Wait, you mean he hasn't come back?"

"Oh, no, he came back, but...?" the soldier broke off his reply, not sure whether or not he should disclose the truth.

Seeing the soldier's concerned look, Zen was confused and asked, "But what? What happened?"

"Zen, the captain was... locked up!" announced the soldier in a sad tone as he bowed his head.



Zen frowned and in a deeper timbre asked, "Locked up? But, why?"

"Yesterday, someone changed our regular marching route. It must've been someone who intended for us to travel a more dangerous trail," the soldier stopped relating what had occurred, inhaling before he suddenly furrowed his brows indignantly and with an inflection of resentment in his voice said, "Captain Martin went to the higher-ups and complained, angering his superior officer. So, he was arrested. I'm afraid they will punish him for insubordination accordingly, by martial law..."

'How did this happen?' speculated Zen. What the soldier had conveyed to him,



irritated Zen.

Someone had intentionally changed their route, endangering all of the troops in the Green Haze platoon, and almost succeeded in getting them all killed! The disciples from the Cloud Sect, Roger, Sun, and Zen almost died, while a single slash from the queen blade locust brutally destroyed poor Tank!

Examining the events in his mind, Zen became infuriated!

Granted, Zen had only known Martin for a short time, but, he appreciated Martin's leadership skills. On top of that, Martin courageously sacrificed himself by luring the queen locust away, saving his troops and the disciples. It



was shocking to hear soldiers on the same side as him arrested him.

"Do you know anyone with authority who can assist us and intercede to have our captain's charges dropped, Zen?"

"Captain Martin wasn't in the wrong, and shouldn't have been unfairly punished!"

All at once, both soldiers begged Zen. Albeit, the two were the most ordinary soldiers in the Imperial Army, but, they had followed Martin for a long time and had a deep relationship with him. In the torchlight, Zen could see their eyes glistening with tears.

"Don't worry! I'm going to request an



account of the events!" reassured Zen callously. Admittedly, Zen was nobody special here or at the Cloud Sect, but, that wouldn't stop him from trying!

After leaving the Green Haze group's barracks, Zen jogged to the building he was assigned to and swung the door open. He entered and saw Roger and Sun packing their things.

Sun's jaw dropped open when he saw Zen walking into the room, and he stuttered, "Z-Zze-Zen..!? a-ar-are y-y-you a g-g-ghost?"

Roger, who was ordinarily so composed, stood, staring at Zen in bewilderment as well.



"Oh my God, Zen! Wow! This is unbelievable! You escaped the queen blade locust! Did a master come along and save you?" Allowing for Zen's strength, Roger thought Zen's surviving the queen locust attack was impossible without the aid of a much stronger refiner.

With so many powerful generals stationed at the Dragon Fort, it wasn't unreasonable for Zen to have been lucky enough to run into one out in the jungle.

Roger deemed his theory to be the most reasonable explanation.

Not bothering to respond to the questions, Zen just stared at them and



inquired, "Are you already leaving?"

Smiling, Sun responded, "Yes, I'm quitting the mission."

Shrugging, Roger added in a bored tone, "I suppose. I wasn't in it for the points anyway."

"And, what about Martin? Yesterday, Martin risked his life to save us! Do you know where he is now?" demanded Zen angrily.

Feeling slightly embarrassed, Sun had his cheeks turned pink, and he stated, "Zen, don't look at me! I'm merely an outer disciple from the Cloud Sect. What could I do about this matter?"



Roger looked offended. While it was true that Martin lured the queen away yesterday, his primary goal was to save his troops. By the same token, and for reasons known only to him, Roger didn't need to be rescued anyway.

True, Roger couldn't rival the queen blade locust's strength.

However, if he needed to, he could have used his mysterious weapons and escaped without difficulty.

In point of fact, Roger could easily intervene and bail Martin out. It would be a piece of cake to rescue Martin, and initially, he wanted to. However, when he discovered it might be big trouble for himself, Roger decided to stay out of



the matter.

But now, Zen's words had overtones of calling Roger a coward which made him feel uncomfortable, so he arrogantly rebutted, "Zen, I won't meddle in Martin's matter, and I advise you not to involve yourself as well. The person behind it isn't one you should provoke."

"I shouldn't provoke him? Who is it? Roger, will you tell me?" Zen inquired.

"The Zhuge Clan is behind it," declared Roger menacingly.

Roger watched Zen expecting to see a look of panic in his eyes, considering that the top seven clans had a well-known reputation throughout the entire



empire and that they were too large for Zen to go up against any of them.

However, Roger saw no such fear. As a matter a fact, Zen remained expressionless.

As it sunk in, Zen guffawed and asked, "The Zhuge Clan, again? Hahaha! I understand now!"

"Zen, what do you mean?" curiosity compelled Roger to ask.

Intending to murder Zen, someone within the Zhuge Clan devised this plot, without caring for any other life in the Green Haze group. They were just utilizing the platoon to push Zen into a desperate situation, not expecting he



might be fortunate and escape!

Regrettably, many innocent people died, including Tank.

Zen didn't offer Roger a response, but, instead mockingly asked, "Roger, you are afraid of the Zhuge Clan?"

"The Zhuge Clan? Me, afraid? Of them?" Angered, Roger's face was flushed. Typically, he was reserved, but, his pride was at stake, and he blurted out, "The Zhuge Clan might have power, but, the Meng Clan is prominent as well. Of course, I'm not afraid of them!"

As one of the top seven clans, the Meng Clan was known for their wealth and talented members which were on a par



with the Zhuge Clan!

When people first heard Roger's surname and witnessed his proud temperament and magnificent clothing, they knew he was one of the Meng Clan. However, since everyone was here to hunt blade locusts, they didn't care about Roger's identity.

"Well, in that case, why don't you save Martin?" challenged Zen.

"I'm not going to go looking for trouble over this! Plus, the loony Fren Zhuge came up with the scheme," asserted Roger smoothly. Children born into a prominent clan had the intrinsic sense of self-preservation and knew how to weigh the pros and cons in any given



situation.

It was okay if Roger helped Martin as long as it didn't lead to trouble for him, but, it was stupid to provoke anyone from the Zhuge Clan just to assist Martin.

Zen's dare was transparent. How could he think Roger wouldn't know his true intentions?

Warily, Zen chuckled and pleaded, "Roger, help me this one time, please. I'll remember the kindness from you and the Meng Clan!"

Shaking his head, Roger Meng responded, "Zen, I'll admit, you're talented, but, that isn't enough of a



reason for me to help you."

In all honesty, Roger wanted to befriend Zen, who was an uncommon genius even for Cloud Sect and might very well be an influential figure in the future, but, the future was far off, and after weighing the pros and cons Roger decided he couldn't help Zen.

Offending Fren for Zen's sake would be a stupid move in Roger's opinion.

Sure, if Zen were an invincible master already, Roger would help him, but Zen wasn't.

Despite Zen exhibiting an exceptional talent for refining, he could end up in an abyss for offending anyone in the



top seven noble clans.

Just then, a look crossed Zen's face, and he reached into his space ring and pulled out the crystal core he had gotten from the queen blade locust. He waved it in front of Roger and Sun, exclaiming, "Roger, no one saved me yesterday. The queen blade locust is dead, because of me. That loony Fren tried to get me killed several times until now, and yet, I'm still alive! I'm bound to rise higher in the future! I'm confident I'll be in a position to help the Meng Clan, one day!"

The fist-sized crystal core gleamed brightly in Zen's hand, reflecting light onto Zen's proud, young face!



Zen's words sounded impertinent, but exuded confidence.

Seeing the crystal core in Zen's hand shocked Roger.

It wasn't that Roger cared about a crystal core, but, the fact that Zen had it meant the queen blade locust was dead! While it wasn't clear whether or not Zen killed the queen blade locust himself, it was obvious that Zen was somehow connected to her demise!

Author's note



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Chapter 103 Teaching A Fish To Swim (Part One)

What Zen had accomplished was far beyond Roger's understanding of the marrow refining level. 'After chasing after the queen blade locust, in the insane manner Zen did, he not only survived but dealt with her and brought back her crystal core!' contemplated Roger in awe.

His mouth formed a thin, sour line. "You talk a big talk, and it sounds great, but, it's just empty talk!" he said chuckling abruptly, his head bobbing so



hard that the ponytail in the back of his head shook. "But... " There was a serious look on Roger's face. He paused and then added, " I like it! You're very ambitious, Zen. So, I have decided to get involved and help you with this mess!"

At Roger's acceptance to help, Zen's face lit up.

Almost any dispute could be resolved when one of the top seven noble clans was involved because no one would dare push back except another member of the same elite class. So, since Roger consented to assist in resolving the issue, things would go much smoother.

"One thing though, Zen. What did you



mean when you told me that Fren the loony had attempted to kill you multiple times?" Roger asked unexpectedly.

"It's sort of a long story. My dispute with the Zhuge family came about during the Blooded Test at the Cloud Sect," stated Zen. After a brief pause, he recounted the stories of what happened that got Chad kicked out from the Blooded Test and how he severely beat Fren the loony's steward, Thomas at Drizzle Peak.

With Roger staying to lend a hand with things, Sun gave up his plans to leave, even though he knew his presence wouldn't really do much. Everyone acted for their reasons, and in Sun's



case, he decided, 'Since Roger thinks highly of Zen, there's no harm in befriending him!'

Shortly thereafter, the three turned in, sleeping the rest of the night soundly, and the next morning, first thing, the three men strode to the Dragon Fort's center.

Housed in the Dragon Fort were thousands of barracks for squads, and the main barracks were surrounded in the middle.

Standing before the gates that led to the main barracks were two rows of stoic soldiers at attention, clutching spears and expressionless.



As the trio reached the gates, a soldier snapped to life and shouted, " You have no business here! You need to leave!"

With an air of authority, Roger took two steps towards the soldier and calmly said, " I'm here to see Jon Gou."

"Officer Gou?" asked the soldier, the determined look on the soldier's face softening the instant Roger spoke the name Jon Gou.

Any man, who referred to a superior by full name, wouldn't be just some ordinary person, and what was more, he uttered it casually, as if he were merely summoning one of his servants?!

Immediately, the soldier became polite



and deferential. He tossed his spear to the nearest soldier and bowed to the three disciples. "Officer Gou is in the main barracks, now. If you could give me your name, I will inform him of your arrival, okay?" the soldier asked respectfully.

"You can tell him that Roger is requesting to see him." Roger had an inflection of tedium.

After the soldier got Roger's name, he scurried off to the main barracks.

A short time passed before the soldier came back into view. He was smiling appealingly as he sauntered back.

His smile and even strut were because



when he told Jon Gou, who was usually aloof, that Roger wanted to see him, he grew enthusiastic—more so than the soldier had ever seen, and even repeated his response, saying, "Yes, show them in at once! Yes, show them in at once!"

Not being naive, the soldier understood immediately that Roger was some big shot!

"If you three would follow me, please. Officer Gou is in the main barracks waiting to receive you!" announced the soldier happily.

Following the soldier, Zen, Roger, and Sun walked through the main compound and were soon in front of



Jon Gou.

Seeing Roger, Jon Gou was all smiles and warmly said, "Young Master Roger, why didn't you tell me that you are at the Dragon Fort? If I had known, I would have prepared a nice treat for you!"

While he gushed and fussed happily, Jon Gou received a lukewarm response in return. "The south has such poor products though, aside from blade locusts, what does the Dragon Fort have?" quipped Roger coolly. "What treat would you offer me?"

Even though he was given the cold shoulder, Jon Gou beamed happily. "That's not true," he retorted half-



heartedly. "The south has specialties all its own, Young Master Roger. You can't speculate that..."

"Cut the crap! Enough pleasantries, I've come because I have business with you," Roger cut in, impatiently, not caring how Jon Gou would feel. "You've got a Martin Lu here, right?"

Jon Gou's expression became serious, and he nodded, "Yes, he's the leader of the Green Haze Group. Are you here for him, Young Master Roger?"

"Yes, release him," Roger ordered as he gave a small nod.

When Jon Gou heard Roger's request, he hesitated and stated, "Young Master



Roger, I'm obligated to accept your orders." Then pausing a moment, he stared into Roger's eyes and added, "However, while it would be a small thing to release Martin, please let me remind you..."

"Yes, I am aware," Roger impatiently cut Jon Gou off again. Even before Jon Gou finished, Roger knew what he was about to say.

"But, the Zhuge family..." Jon Gou blurted out, unsure if Roger truly understood what he was trying to say.

"I know that Jon, I already told you that!" snapped Roger, his face set and hard.

Immediately, Jon Gou nodded briskly



and said," Well alright then, if you insist, I won't worry about it, Young Master. Follow me!"

He led the three men deeper into the main barracks.

Deep in the main grounds, there was a courtyard, where four people sat at a blue stone table. It was laden with fruits, wine, meat, and many other tasty foods.

While the imperial army was permitted drinking, it wasn't allowed in the barracks, and anyone caught would face disciplinary action.

But, the four men were sitting around drinking, unconcerned that they were



violating the rules.

"Actually, we should drink a toast to you, Randall!" Liam said laughing as he went on, "Without you, things wouldn't have gone so smoothly!" Raising his glass, Liam then chugged his drink down.

To the toast offered, Randall He tilted his head back and let the wine slide into his lopsided mouth before casually saying, "Don't mention it, Master Fren entrusted the assignment to me, and it was a piece of cake."

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Donna Frank



Chapter 104 Teaching A Fish To Swim (Part Two)

"Was it easy? We've been stuck in this barren place for three days so far, and we still have a few more days before we can leave!" the Black Fiend complained irritably as he grabbed the wine jug roughly and drank from it.

"I know." agreed the White Fiend, "I should've beaten him to death, then, we wouldn't be sitting here, waiting around!"

"No, you two, it's not as simple as that. When there's a death of a Cloud Sect's disciple that is suspicious in the Dragon Fort jurisdiction, the Dragon Fort doesn't sit idly by," remarked Randall He. "Zen's body hasn't been found yet,



but, the queen blade locust was chasing him, so he must be dead by now!"

Liam nodded, adding, "Zen's a tough guy, but he won't survive against the queen blade locust. We just need to be patient for a few more days, and then we can inform Master Fren the assignment is completed." With a smile on his lips, he raised his glass and said, "Cheers, cheers!"

Oblivious to Zen and the others approaching, the four men sat around, drinking, toasting each other and bragging about their accomplishments.

As he neared the table, Jon Gou called out, "Hello Randall. You seem to be enjoying your drink quite a bit." He stepped in front of the men seated, sniffing the air and with a big grin on his face, he said heartily, "How delightful!"

"What do you want, Jon?" demanded Randall



He, scowling at Jon Gou. Fully aware that Jon Gou would not come to see him socially, Randall He knew he had an agenda.

When Liam looked up from his wine and glimpsed Zen, his eyes bulged, and his mouth opened slightly, in shock. "How? Zen! You! You're not dead!?" Liam half-accused, half-asked with alarm in his voice.

Liam's question got the attention of Randall He, White Fiend and Black Fiend. None of those three had met Zen before and they looked over at him now.

Like Liam, they were awestruck at Zen being alive.

Since the last report they had gotten was that the queen blade locust was chasing after him, they naturally assumed he wouldn't survive.

It was what they were just talking about, and



the reason for their celebration!

Yet, here was Zen standing in front of them and very much alive!

The shock and confusion they felt were too challenging to put into words.

"I was wondering who was behind this. It was you! Very well!" accused Zen. The revelation that the mastermind of the plot to kill Zen was Liam, a fellow disciple of Drizzle Peak infuriated him, but, he held his temper in check and instead, he smiled contemptuously.

"Ha! Yes, it was me, so what?" spat Liam venomously. "Harumph! I don't know how you survived, but, since Master Fren wants you dead, I guess that's it, you will die here, at the Dragon Fort! I suggest you kill yourself here, that way we..."

"That's quite enough of that! There won't be



any fighting here!" snapped Jon Gou. Getting involved with disputes among this younger generation was one thing he tried to avoid, and he wouldn't be embroiled in this matter either if not for Roger. Turning to Randall He, Jon Gou commanded, "Where is Martin? Release him!"

"No, Jon, I don't think I will," Randall He refused outrightly, shaking his head.

"Why not?" inquired Jon Gou.

"Well, if I let Martin out, he'll stir up trouble for me, again. Why would I ask for trouble?" Being the same rank as Jon Gou in the imperial army, Randall He had no intentions on taking orders from Jon Gou.

"Oh, really? You dislike trouble, so, I will make this easier for you. If you don't let him go, you'll have even more trouble on your hands!" stated Jon Gou.



"You're kidding, right?" chuckled Randall He maliciously. "I'll have more trouble? Do you even know who I'm working for?"

"That would be the Zhuge family, correct?" replied Zen, grinning caustically.

"Exactly! So, now that you know, go, run along! Don't stick your nose in the affairs you can't afford to mess with, or you'll find yourself in too deep!" Not knowing the young men behind Jon Gou, Randall He would have been furious at them with his short temper, but for Jon Gou, he kept his temper in check.

Both White Fiend and Black Fiend stood up, and as they did, black plumes of smoke swirled about White Fiend while a white light amassed around Black Fiend. The refining methods that the two practiced were white and black, which were unique and integral to each other. The way they moved indicated that the two were



preparing an assault.

"Are you saying that you won't let Martin go?" asked Zen.

"Yes, that's what I said! I won't release him!" snarled Randall He. "Do you know who you're speaking to, Boy?" he added as he glared steadily into Zen's eyes. As Randall He stared, his bleak aura burst from his mind, towards Zen.

"Look out!" shouted Jon Gou as soon as he noticed Randall He's stare. Randall He's attack using the bleak aura was faster, and before Jon Gou could do anything to prevent it, the aura had sprung at Zen.

"Is this a chill intent?" asked Zen, a little surprised.

He hadn't expected Randall He to have the refining ability of an intent.



Now, if the chill intent had been used in an attack on anyone else, they might find their soul frozen, immediately.

But, the only thing frozen about Zen was the scornful smile on his face. Seemingly undaunted, he stood still, allowing the chill intent to assail him!

Considering that when Zen felt the intent from the Vengeful Beast at the Heavenly Library, it wasn't able to cause him any tangible harm, the meager strength of Randall He's chill intent was paltry and nothing to Zen.

Seeing Zen's soul was unharmed by his chill intent, Randall He stood there perplexed.

Using this moment to strike, Zen gave a cold snort, and a translucent gray thorn flew out of his head.



"Spiritual Thorn!"

The thorn had scarcely appeared before it struck Randall He's head.

The speed the two sparred at was so fast that before the others present realized there was a fight, the sound of a cold snort from Zen was heard, and then Randall He was on the ground, crouching holding his head and screaming in anguish.

"You were teaching a fish how to swim. Look at you now, bringing shame to yourself!" mocked Zen casually as he stood over Randall He, clasping hands behind his back.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Donna Frank



Chapter 105 Clan Influence (Part One)

A peculiar scene was unfolding in the yard.

There were ten ranks within the nature level. Huge gap existed between each two of these ten ranks.

For instance, Roger, White Fiend, and Black Fiend, who had all just reached the nature level, were at the first rank.

Cultivators at the nature level were able to generate life vitality. They could use this life vitality as weapons to kill their enemies quietly.

Randall and Jon, the best of the Imperial soldiers, had already reached the fourth rank of



the nature level. They possessed great mastery of life vitality at this rank.

That would give Randall a significant advantage if he fought against Roger or the others.

Another fact that gave Randall an edge was that he had mastered the chill intent, which could give his opponent's soul frostbite in the blink of an eye.

Jon's mouth twitched uncontrollably. He had agreed to help simply because he wanted to do Roger a favor. Otherwise, he would rather not make a dangerous enemy like Randall. He and Randall were both at the fourth rank, but Randall's mastery of chill intent made things different. If they fought with each other, Jon would have to pay a great deal of attention to Randall's intent. It would be a tough fight.

But what on earth was going on here? Jon found himself utterly at a loss of the situation.



If he wasn't mistaken, the youngster following Roger wasn't even near the threshold of the nature level. This kid was still at the marrow refining level. He couldn't even discharge life energy yet, let alone generate life vitality.

Where did he get the nerve to challenge Randall? How did he dare say something like 'you are bringing shame to yourself'?

And to Jon's surprise, not only had this kid said it, he had done it.

Jon had witnessed the unusual scene. Randall's intent hadn't hurt Zen at all. Instead, Zen had snorted lightly at the attack, and then, Randall had screamed with pain.

How could he have done that?

Jon racked his brain to find an explanation but failed.



Liam's mouth gaped open, impossibly wide. Although Randall had never revealed his true ability in front of them, Liam could sense it from their daily contact. Randall's majestic presence suggested that his force was way above those of White Fiend and Black Fiend.

Randall was far out of their reach. If it hadn't been for Fren, Liam would never have gotten the chance to work with Randall.

But again, what happened just now...

How did Zen manage to hurt Randall so badly with just a snort?

Liam knew Zen better than the others. Zen was a lowborn boy who had entered Drizzle Peak not long ago. A few days earlier, by some dumb fluke Zen had defeated Leo, his sect peer.

Liam knew Zen's past, so he was more



surprised at this scene than others.

Roger's eyes lit up as delight coursed through him.

Roger always prided himself on his knack of assessing people. As such, Roger had studied Zen and now believed that he had an accurate judgment about Zen. Although Zen was still at the marrow refining level, he would stand a chance of winning in a fight against a body refiner at the nature level.

This assessment by Roger showed how high Zen's skills were.

Roger trusted his judgment. He also knew that if he tried telling people about it, nobody would believe him.

Despite Roger's high assessment of Zen's abilities, the young boy still surprised him. Roger was now sure that although he was



confident of how Zen would perform, Zen's actual abilities and potential were still unknown to him.

How many more secrets did Zen have? Was he holding back his abilities?

Roger raised his chin as he thought about what Zen was capable of. He was smart enough to understand that it was unwise to reveal one's own true position and intention to the others. Some secrets could only be shared with your closest family members. Roger knew better than to ask stupid questions.

Nevertheless, his decision to help Zen seemed pretty wise now.

As assumed earlier, Roger was now confident that his clan could use this guy and his power to their advantage.

Randall felt as though his head was going to



split. It was like a sharp sting had pierced his soul, and the unutterable pain from his soul was tearing him apart.

Fortunately, the soul was a special form. It could heal itself as time wore on, but the excruciating pain from attacks to the soul was inevitable.

What Randall couldn't endure was that he had been publicly humiliated by this brat, a kid at the marrow refining level!

Jon had witnessed all this. He might tell the soldiers. If that happened, Randall's authority would be destroyed.

He must kill this brat to redeem himself!

As Randall got to his feet, life vitality surged through his body. The air in the yard cooled instantly. Although it was a hot summer day, all onlookers felt chilled to the bone. The



temperature must have dropped by dozens of degrees.

"You do have a death wish, don't you? But I'm afraid you picked the wrong way. You pissed me off, and you will regret it. There is going to be a hell lot of pain waiting for you before you die," Randall growled at Zen. A terrifying pressure radiated from Randall's body as he spoke. In the next instant, the force was directed at Zen.

Zen's body tensed. The pressure was like a massive iceberg. Once it fell on him, he would be crushed to pieces. Randall's force was indeed extraordinarily powerful. He was not a common body refiner at the nature level!

"Jon?" At this point, Roger called out and gave Jon a look.



Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: miko; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 106 Clan Influence (Part Two)

Jon understood. He took a step forward and placed himself in front of Zen. Then with a low voice, he said, "Just let it go, Randall. Fighting with a kid will not make you look good."

"Out of the way, Jon. His life is mine to take!" Randall roared. Normally, Randall would consider Jon's advice. But now he had completely lost it. He couldn't think about anything else except tearing Zen apart.

"Randall, just because you have the Zhuge family supporting you, you think you can do whatever you want?" Jon's face darkened. It seemed that Randall was not going to think rationally.



"So what? You want a fight?" Randall clenched his fists. As white tufts of frost covered his hands, the air around Randall shimmered with cold. This was Randall's life vitality.

"You think I am afraid of you?" Jon didn't flinch at Randall's rage.

Seeing that the two were going to fight, Roger became impatient.

"I'm in no mood to watch you two fight. Just let Martin go. Jon, if you can't get it done, I will go find my uncle," Roger said with displeasure written all over his face. He had been confident that Jon could handle the issue. Randall could do this the easy way or the hard way, but apparently, he had chosen the latter.

Jon's expression changed at Roger's words. If Roger's uncle were involved, it would take this situation to a whole different level. Jon didn't



want that. He said quickly, "Young master, there is no need to trouble your uncle with such a little thing."

Roger shrugged. He gestured around the yard and asked, "To me, it seems that they don't want to release Martin. Do you have any ideas?"

Jon turned to Randall. "You heard the young master. If you don't release Martin, the Flying Dragon General will be involved. If that happens, this can get really ugly for you."

The Flying Dragon General was one of the commanders who were in charge of Dragon Fort. Nobody knew the depth of his force. His reputation, however, was well-known. For his achievements and skill, he had earned the title of 'anchor' of the Dragon Fort. The Flying Dragon General was undoubtedly the most famous general of the Imperial Army!



"He.. He knows the Flying Dragon General?" Randall's expression conveyed the skepticism he felt when he heard what Jon had said.

If Roger had the support and protection of the Flying Dragon General, Randall would release Martin at once. But Randall had been through a lot of battles. He wasn't a man who would be easily intimidated by words.

"Try crossing me, and you'll find out!" Roger said calmly. Compared with Zen, his attitude was indifferent toward Randall, an undeniably stronger opponent. Roger had a domineering air that was exclusive to someone born with privilege, such as disciples from noble clans.

"This is the young master of the Meng Clan. As to his relationship with the Flying Dragon General, you can take a wild guess now that you know his identity," Jon sneered.



It was only when he heard the mention of the Meng Clan that Randall came to understand the situation. It was no small wonder that Jon had dared to offend the Zhuge Clan. Jon had the Meng Clan behind him now. Not only did they put pressure on Randall with the Meng Clan's name, but they also threatened to involve the Flying Dragon General.

Randall wasn't some green boy. He knew what decision to make if the situation changed.

Fren did have a certain reputation on which Randall could rely. But now the young master of the Meng Clan was standing in front of him.

Randall sighed as he knew there was no wiggle room left. Still, making a concession was never a pleasant experience. As feelings of resentment coursed through Randall, he turned and shot Zen a venomous glare.

Roger, understanding that he had won, gave a



cold laugh and turned to leave.

If Roger involved the Flying Dragon General in this, Randall knew it wouldn't end well for him. "Okay," Randall said through gritted teeth. "I will let Martin go!"

"Great!" Roger looked back when he heard Randall. Then he insulted the man further with a mocking retort. "We could have saved ourselves a lot of talking if you had been wiser."

Randall didn't respond to Roger's riposte. He turned to the side and asked his accomplice to bring Martin.

Randall was a tough guy, yet with a few words, and Roger had bent Randall to his will. Zen was impressed. Disciples from noble clans really knew how to achieve their goals by merely mentioning the influence of their clans! In comparison, an individual with no supporting



clan seemed so small and powerless.

Zen had no clan influence he could count on. All he had was his force, his fists.

But that was okay. He would climb to the apotheosis of body refining based on his skills. Then, he would have his influence!

Soon Martin was brought to the yard.

The bruises all over his body implied that he had been beaten badly while in captivity. However, his calm expression and his state of mind conveyed that he was fine. Such injuries were not a big deal for a body refiner who was half a step into the nature level.

Like others, when Martin saw Zen, he looked as if he had just seen a ghost.

"Zen... bro, you're alive! You're still alive!" Martin exclaimed excitedly.



"Yeah, Martin, I survived," Zen replied with a smile.

"That's great, wonderful..." Martin muttered. Throughout his imprisonment, Martin had been tormented over the death of his brothers during the fight with the blade locusts. It wasn't the lashes meted out to him that pained Martin the most. No, it was the thought that Zen had sacrificed himself by volunteering to bait the queen blade locust to save Martin. All these times, Martin had not been able to stop thinking about what had happened. It was true that Martin blamed himself. If only he hadn't been so careless! If he had noticed there was something wrong with the marching route early enough, those people wouldn't have died.

How Zen had survived was beyond Martin's understanding. The sight of Zen standing in the yard unscathed filled Martin with surprise and joy.



"Zen, Randall is responsible for all this. He is the culprit!" Martin turned to Randall and pointed as he spoke, "As I recall, I had no beef with you before. But you changed our marching route without permission, which put my teammates' lives on the line. I will give my life to hold you responsible for your actions!"

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: miko; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 107

Conjectures (Part One)

Randall was very depressed.

He knew that Martin would be unwilling to let things go. If Martin hadn't argued with him in the first place, Randall would not have locked him up.

He didn't know that Martin had Roger, a young master of the Meng Clan, behind him. Now Randall found himself in an awkward situation. To please Fren, a young master of the Zhuge Clan, he had offended Roger. But Randall hadn't accomplished anything.

It was too late to repent.



"Martin, if something is unclear, let's go back and talk about it," said Zen with a wink to Martin.

Now that Martin had been released, they needed to consider the matter carefully before making a decision. If they fell out with Randall, they would be in a bad situation, too.

Stubborn as Martin was he had a clear understanding of the situation in which he found himself. Hearing what Zen said, he cast a scornful glare at Randall and shut his mouth.

Seeing that everything was settled, Jon guided the crowd out of the yard.

Randall remained in the yard. He was quite upset. He glanced at Liam, who had also stayed behind. Randall growled, "Didn't you say that Zen was just an ordinary disciple without any influential background? Why is a person from the Meng Clan behind him?"



If he had known what was going to happen, Randall would never have agreed to get involved.

With his temper and ruthlessly efficient style, Randall wanted to beat up Liam!

But Liam had come to the Dragon Fort on behalf of Fren, so Randall didn't dare to offend him too much. He had already annoyed Roger, a nobleman of the Meng Clan. If he couldn't align himself with Fren of the Zhuge Clan, Randall would be in a more precarious position.

"It's ... It's because ..." Liam didn't have a reason. He was equally puzzled. Liam turned to Randall and said, "Zen is an ordinary disciple at Cloud Sect. And he has no strong background. I don't know how he made the acquaintance of a young master from the Meng Clan."

Liam was wondering about this as well. Why



did Roger help Zen?

He was aware of the rules of conduct of noblemen. There were two ways to be a part of them. The first was to bring great benefits to the children of the noble clans. The other was to be obedient and submissive to them and do what they asked. Either way, children of noble clans never considered ordinary people as friends.

However, Roger, the young master of the Meng Clan, was willing to stand up for Zen and take care of him. How did Zen attach himself to the Meng Clan? And what did he rely on? Liam was confused.

"I told you that we should have killed that boy. It was a simple and easy task. But Liam, you idiot! You wanted to kill him inconspicuously. That was too much to hope for. You wanted him to be killed by the blade locusts, but now he is alive. As far as your ability is concerned, I



consider it a joke that Fren sent you to do this!" grumbled White Fiend.

"It's not too late. The minute Zen leaves the Dragon Fort, we'll kill him," said Black Fiend with a dark smile.

"You are right. Now that we have offended the Meng Clan, we should kill Zen as soon as possible. Otherwise, we will face not only the wrath of the Meng Clan, but also Fren's anger!" said Randall.

Liam nodded and said, "Well, then, we'll do as Black Fiend has suggested. As soon as Zen comes out of the Dragon Fort, we'll kill him."

A wild look reflected in their eyes at the prospect of getting even with Zen.

They knew the rules of the noble clans. If ordinary people were useful to the noblemen they served, they would earn endless benefits.



If, however, they proved useless, the noblemen they assisted would surely kill them.

...

...

After leaving the small yard, Jon walked Zen and the others out of the main army camp. Along the way, he said, "You have upset and disgraced Randall. I believe that he will act on this humiliation. They will find every opportunity to kill you. So, I advise you to leave Dragon Fort and return to Cloud Sect as soon as possible."

Roger agreed with Jon. He said, "Zen, you have got the crystal core of the queen blade locust. You will be able to exchange it for a lot of points. It has been a rewarding trip for you! Will you return to Cloud Sect with us?"

"I'm still trying to figure out how on earth you



managed to get rid of that queen blade locust!" said Jon. He had heard about the ins and outs of the matter. He knew that Zen had not only escaped from the clutches of the queen blade locust, he had also killed her and retrieved her crystal core. But that was what he found hard to believe.

Jon knew that Zen was strong and had a great capacity for fighting. But even with his strength, Zen was not powerful enough to be a challenging opponent to the queen blade locust. He couldn't believe that Zen had killed her by himself.

Hearing Jon's statement, Zen smiled but chose to remain quiet. By no means could he afford to explain. He couldn't tell Jon that he had not killed the queen blade locust. The fire scorpion lion had killed her. While the queen's crystal core might not be very valuable in their eyes, the fire scorpion lion's crystal core was precious indeed.



The fire scorpion lion's crystal core was the best material for pill refining and weapon refining. The top seven clans in the empire would do anything to get the fire scorpion lion's core! If they knew where the fire scorpion lion was, they would send people to seek, hunt, and kill it. If that happened, the people seeking the fire scorpion lion would find the dead bodies of both, the queen blade locust and the fire scorpion lion. Then they would speculate that Zen was in possession of the crystal cores of both creatures. This would be a huge mistake! Zen would not be so stupid as to expose the matter.

Author's note

**Kyrie Durant** Author

Translator: Julie; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 108

Conjectures (Part Two)

So, Zen changed the topic and asked, "Roger, how many points can be exchanged for the queen's crystal core?"

Hearing Zen ask such a silly question, Sun, who had not spoken for a long time, began to cough violently. He even had to thump his chest with his hands to stop the coughing! He turned to Zen and asked incredulously, "Whoa, whoa, Zen! You don't know?"

Zen shrugged his shoulders, showing that he really knew nothing about it. Since he had never thought himself capable of getting the queen blade locust's crystal core, Zen had never looked into it.



"The queen blade locust's crystal core can be exchanged for a thousand points. So, you are going to have a small fortune," said Roger with a broad smile.

"A small fortune ..." Zen and Sun were both shocked when they heard Roger. A thousand points were equal to two thousand cubic crystals! In the entire Burning Sky Empire, no more than 50 clans, most of which were the noble clans, possessed 2, 000 cubic crystals.

But to Roger, it was a small sum of money. Zen and Sun couldn't help being in awe of Roger. They assumed that all children of noble clans were billionaires.

"A thousand points is a lot of money. But it's not enough. I'll stay here and earn more points," said Zen while looking at Roger.

It was true that Zen had initially sought to gain



100 points to get a ticket to visit his sister at Hell Mountain, but Zen had changed his mind. He wanted to earn as many as possible by killing the greatest number of blade locusts.

Saving Yan Luo from Hell Mountain would cost him a million points. And so far, Zen had accumulated only about one-thousandth of what he needed.

Hunting for blade locusts, especially the blade locust officers, was an excellent opportunity for Zen to earn points. The insect aggression usually lasted two or three months every year. After this period, he would have no choice but to wait for the next year. Zen didn't want to waste this opportunity.

Roger and other people looked at Zen in surprise. They didn't know why Zen wanted to accumulate so many points. Did he want to exchange them for pills? Or did he want to exchange them for refining skills? Perhaps he



wanted to swap them for magic weapons? For Zen, at this stage, a thousand points were sufficient to exchange for anything he needed.

"Are one thousand points not enough? Then how many is enough?" asked Sun.

Zen answered with a bitter smile, "Probably one million points."

Hearing this, Sun coughed violently again in fright.

Even Martin, who knew little about Cloud Sect was frightened by the figure. He had interacted with several disciples of Cloud Sect, and he knew that the crystal core of a blade locust officer could be exchanged for one point. Zen wanted to accumulate one million points, which was equivalent to hunting a million blade locust officers. The number was so unexpected. They were all scared by the figure Zen quoted.



Roger was stunned, too. After the shock wore off, he began to wonder why Zen needed so many points, and what he wanted to do with them.

A million points were equivalent to two million cubic crystals. It was a considerable sum of money even for a nobleman.

Even at Cloud Sect, only a few treasures needed a million points to be redeemed.

'Will he exchange them for a fairy weapon?'

No, he won't.' Roger knew that Zen was only at the marrow refining level. Given his strength, he was unable to unleash the power of a fairy weapon. So he wouldn't be doing this for a fairy weapon.

'Does he want to earn a ticket to the Cloud Road?'



No, he doesn't.' It was true that he could walk on the Cloud Road by the use of a million points, but considering his current cultivation stage and his strength, he wouldn't pass the trial.

'Is he going to save someone from Hell Mountain?'

Roger felt that this inference was closer to the truth.

Several people had been imprisoned in Hell Mountain. But most of them had been there for three or five years.

A million points ... that meant that the person had been sentenced to a thousand years' imprisonment there.

Could it be her?



The girl whose talent no one could match? She had been sentenced to a thousand years of contemplation at Hell Mountain. Wasn't her surname Luo?

Zen Luo was her namesake. What was the relationship between them?

Zen was trying to accumulate a million points. That meant that he wanted to save her from Hell Mountain!

So far, the results were clear. Roger was very confident of his inference.

Although he hadn't seen her before, as the young master of the Meng Clan, he was aware of what was happening at Cloud sect, especially the important things.

Roger couldn't help repressing a sigh of admiration. Zen Luo and Yan Luo were both geniuses, but it was a pity that they were not of



noble birth and that they were always offending other people. Otherwise, Yan Luo wouldn't have been imprisoned in Hell Mountain.

Zen had taken it for granted that he could save Yan Luo from Hell Mountain as long as he accumulated a million points. He was so naive.

It was not quite as easy as that. But if Zen could accumulate a million points and had the power to save Yan Luo from Hell Mountain, the Meng Clan could also give them a proper hand at the back.

But Zen's strength was the premise of everything. Meng Clan's assistance depended on whether Zen had the ability to do so.

That was what Roger thought about all this. He didn't realize that he was very concerned about Zen. He said, "Since you are determined to stay here and continue to hunt for blade locusts, you must be careful about those people!"



Zen nodded and thanked him, "I will pay attention to them, and thank you for your help, Roger."

Roger patted Zen on the shoulder as a faint smile danced on his lips. Then he said, "Don't mention it. I hope you accumulate a million points as soon as possible and bring her out of Hell Mountain!"

Zen did a double take when he heard what Roger said. He had mentioned that he needed a million points. He hadn't said anything about Yan Luo. It was amazing that Roger was able to guess Zen's purpose based on this detail!

No wonder Roger was the elite figure in the Meng clan. He was brilliant!

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Julie; Editor: Arathi

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Chapter 109 White Fiend And Black Fiend (Part One)

Intelligent people talk less and listen more. Zen smiled knowingly as he listened to Roger.

Sun had no idea what they were talking about. He wanted to ask, but he didn't think it would be appropriate to interrupt their conversation. So he kept silent.

"After I return to Cloud Sect, I will stay secluded and cultivate myself. If you want to see me, Zen, come to the Daylily Peak," said Roger.

The Daylily Peak ranked fourth among the thirty-three peaks at Cloud Sect. Due to its leading



position, most children of the Meng Clan studied there.

"So you are a disciple of the Daylily Peak. When I return to Cloud Sect, I will visit you," replied Zen.

Zen didn't think it was necessary to follow noble clans. In his opinion, a man had to strike out for himself if he wanted to get ahead. He didn't think it was suitable to rely on other people's power.

Having spent some time with the young master of the Meng Clan, Zen found that he would like to be friends with Roger.

After saying goodbye, Roger and Sun embarked the giant flying chariot to return to Cloud Sect.

On the way back from the main camp, Martin didn't speak a word.



Martin was grateful for Roger and Zen's help as they had risked their lives to save his.

But he was in a bad mood because of the death of his subordinates. As a battle-hardened soldier in the Imperial Army, Martin had seen many soldiers come and go. Over time, he had become accustomed to death. He had never been this sad, not even when he had seen his biological brother die on the battlefield.

But this time, things were different. He knew that Randall had deliberately framed the soldiers of the Green Haze Group.

With growing resentment, he vowed that he would avenge their deaths.

"Let's grab a few drinks!" Zen invited Martin. He knew that Martin needed to vent.

At the tavern, Martin gulped down more than a



dozen jars of wine. As long as they did not want to get drunk, people who were at Martin's cultivation level were able to stay sober.

"I'm so sorry, Martin. You may not know that this happened because of me. I killed your brothers," Zen raised his cup of wine and apologized.

Martin had not figured out why Randall wanted to harm him. After hearing Zen's apology, Martin asked with wonder, "It's obvious that Randall wanted to hurt me. Why are you apologizing?"

"Actually, they didn't want to harm the Green Haze Group. Their real target was me. Some people want me to die. They instructed Randall to change the marching route to place the Green Haze Group near the queen blade locust," explained Zen. His voice conveyed the regret he was feeling.



Zen was remorseful that the Green Haze Group lost nearly half its soldiers because of him.

Martin clenched his fists when he finally realized why Randall who had no enmity with him had harmed the Green Haze Group unexpectedly. He glared at Zen for a while, then gradually calmed down and said with a sigh, "Zen, don't feel guilty. Even if what you say is true, Randall is still the villain. Not you! He violated the rules of the military and changed the marching route slyly. Of course, I'm going to hold him responsible."

"We must get revenge! It's one of the reasons I decided to stay here. On the one hand, I will earn points by killing the blade locusts, while on the other hand, I will be able to find a chance to get even," Zen said before gulping down his cup of wine.

"Do you have any ideas, Zen?" Martin's eyes



twinkled with hope.

Although Martin hated Randall, it was impossible for him to fight Randall alone for many reasons. First, Randall was his immediate superior, and he had no evidence of Randall's crime. Second, Randall was at the fourth grade of the nature refining level. Therefore, Martin was no match for a man with such power.

Zen replied with a smile, "There must be a way. It's best if we wait for an opportunity. I know the tenacity of these people. They won't give up as long as I'm here. They are digging their graves. I'll kill them all!"

Martin felt a chill travel through him when he saw Zen's determination.

Roger was not like Zen. Because Roger was born in a noble clan, he had to consider many alternatives and weigh their merits and consequences.



Zen was a civilian without any significant background. And so, he could do things without having to consider interests.

Though they had been together for a few days, Zen understood who was worthy for him to make friends with.

Zen swore to fight those behind the conspiracy despite the risks. He would do this for Martin, Tank, and all the other victims.

Over the next five days, Martin reorganized the Green Haze Group and resumed their task of hunting blade locusts.

As per the regulations of the Imperial Army, soldiers were required to hand in half of the crystal cores of blade locusts hunted by them. But, it was up to Martin to decide the quantity of crystal cores that the Green Haze Group had collected. So Martin donated nearly ninety



percent of their crystal cores to Zen as gratitude.

Martin and his soldiers were well experienced at hunting blade locusts. Zen contributed to their efforts as well by using his broken flying knife. It was because of Zen that the whole hunting process was smoother and more fruitful.

During these five days, Zen had acquired quite an abundant harvest.

Along with his previous collection, Zen had accumulated about four thousand crystal cores of common blade locusts and more than two hundred cores of their officers. He earned the equivalent of five hundred points in total.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Sarah; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 110 White Fiend And Black Fiend (Part Two)

If he counted the crystal core of the queen blade locust, Zen would be able to exchange all the cores for one thousand and five hundred points.

As a new disciple who had joined Cloud Sect less than a month ago, Zen had accumulated one thousand five hundred points through his effort. If the other disciples knew about this, they would sigh at the injustice of fate.

Early on the sixth day, Zen prepared to hunt with the Green Haze Group.

They went into the jungle and killed two flocks



Chapter 110 White Fiend And Black Fiend (Part Two) -
of blade locusts. While the soldiers were stripping the corpses off their crystal cores, Martin asked Zen, "You said that as long as you stay here, the conspirators will plan another attack on you. But nothing has happened in the past few days. What happened to them?"

Since Zen had promised to help Martin get his revenge, Martin hadn't reported Randall to the main camp. Martin knew that his complaint would backfire as he had no evidence and his superiors at the main camp wouldn't believe him.

Zen had reassured Martin that they would take action again, but it had been several days, and no one had come for Zen. Martin was understandably anxious.

"I didn't expect these guys to be so patient. Don't worry. We will kill our blade locusts and wait," said Zen. He pulled out the crystal core of a leader of the blade locust and stuffed it



into his space ring.

Sensing tension in the air, Zen looked up and said, "I've just praised the conspirators for their patience. But it seems that they can no longer wait."

Zen was more acute than the average people. He was able to feel a person's intent to kill from far away. ❶

After a while, three men came out of the jungle.

Liam of Drizzle Peak led the way. Behind him walked two men. One was dark-skinned, and the other was white-skinned. Zen had seen them in the military camp's yard before. He had been deeply impressed by their contrasting skin colors.

Liam came closer and sneered, "You know we want to kill you, but you still stay in the Dragon



Fort. You are bold enough to step out of town and hunt blade locusts. Are you confident or are you stupid?"

During these six days, they had many chances to kill Zen, but they had waited patiently.

They needed to study the relationship between Roger and Zen before making their move. They wondered why a young master of a noble clan would help a humble civilian like Zen.

Since this matter involved two noble clans, the Meng Clan and the Zhuge Clan, the three conspirators knew they needed to handle the issue with caution. Otherwise, they would face the wrath of both noble clans.

After six days of observation and gathering intelligence, they had reached a conclusion.

Roger and Zen had met by chance and adventured along with the Green Haze Group.



In fact, their friendship was not deep.

Zen persuaded Roger to intervene and save Martin's life. Roger just did Zen this favor, nothing special

Now that they were sure that Zen and Roger were not friends, their concerns about the Meng Clan getting involved were gone, and they could proceed boldly.

Zen narrowed his eyes and pointed at Liam. "You followed me all the way from Cloud Sect to kill me. I haven't settled this matter with you. How can I leave? It has been six days since your last attempt. Since then, you have not dared to come out. I overestimated you," Zen sighed and shook his head.

Despite facing strong enemies, Zen did not show any traces of timidity.

He had been refined by the fire of the earth's



core and stepped into the rank of spiritual weapon a few days ago. Now, he wanted to see how much his strength had improved.

Liam and his two co-conspirators were just practice targets for Zen.

Liam's heartbeat quickened when he saw the confidence in Zen's eyes. He didn't understand why he felt afraid when he faced Zen, a person who was only at the marrow refining level. 'He must be putting on a show of confidence. He's not that strong.' Liam reassured himself. He didn't want to be known that he was afraid.

"Really? Since you can't wait to end your life, then we will help you," said Liam with feigned placidity. Liam waved his hand toward his companions and said, "Black Fiend and White Fiend, my friends. Kill him now!" Liam grinned at Zen and retreated.

White Fiend and Black Fiend had been restless



all this while. They had stayed at the Dragon Fort for many days. Killing Zen should have been a short day's work. However, this assignment had stretched to well over a week. So they were very displeased.

A fierce fight was about to begin. Soon a constant flow of life vitality was running through White Fiend and Black Fiend's bodies.

The two Fiends slowly approached Zen. A cold smile danced on their faces as they imagined the pain they would mete out to Zen. Zen could feel the pressure in the air that only those at the nature refining level possessed.

"Green Haze Group, get ready to fight!" shouted Martin.

As soon as the soldiers heard Martin's order, they wielded their weapons and rushed into battle formation.



However, Zen waved his hand to stop Martin. He quickly explained, "You don't have to get involved in this. They came for me, and I have to deal with them myself."

Zen stepped forward to prepare for the battle. The Green Haze Group had lost so many soldiers because of Zen. He didn't want to involve them anymore.

Black Fiend and White Fiend emitted strange laughter when they heard Zen.

"Not only will you die today, but the whole Green Haze Group will also die with you."

"If I were you, I would kneel and kill myself at once. Now fall into our hands, you will die miserably."

After saying that, White Fiend and Black Fiend mutated their life vitality into black and white



smog. In the next instant, the smog turned into two pythons and swept along the ground toward Zen.

'They are releasing their life vitality, ' thought Zen while dodging two Fiends' attacks.

Although Zen was confident of his body, which had become a spiritual weapon, he still needed to be cautious. After all, this was the first time he was facing cultivators at the nature refining level. What made the fight even more challenging was that he was fighting two people at the same time.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Sarah; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 111 All Living Creatures Below The Nature Level (Part One)

There was an old saying that best described the refining of martial arts. 'All living creatures are below the nature level.'

To some extent, the journey of martial arts only started after entering the nature level.

After stepping into the nature level, life energy was completely transformed into life vitality. The refiner could then continuously absorb the vitality from the outer world, from heaven to the earth, and became a creature of a higher level.

Once they had attained this transformation,



refiners at the nature level were called nature creatures. Although they were still human, they were very different from a normal person. A clear boundary separated nature creatures from normal humans!

This boundary was called longevity.

The life span of an ordinary human being was about 70 to 90 years. Although a few humans could live until 100 years of age, they were considered to be very old and long-lived.

However, these natural creatures had a minimum life span of 150 years! Being able to live longer and stronger was one of the most fascinating aspects of martial arts.

This was the reason why refiners at the nature level were called nature creatures, thus differentiating them from ordinary humans.

The white smoke and black smoke that was



purposes that Zen did not know of so far.

Zen remained alert to solve this mystery. Before long, the mass of black smoke began morphing into a human figure brandishing a long knife. Then it headed straight for Zen!

'Wrap yourselves in smoke to hide your figures and attack under this camouflage. If that is another function of the smoke, then it is not hard to deal with!' Zen thought after analyzing the situation quickly.

Without any hesitation, Zen rushed toward the smoke and punched it before the long knife could injure him.

Zen channeled all his power to his fist. As his blow landed on the black human-shaped smoke, a deafening sound replaced the silence.

Then the smoke exploded and dissipated.



After his body had been refined to a weapon, Zen noticed that there had been considerable improvement in his resistance against strikes. So, he had absorbed almost all the power of the Black Fiend's punch.

The warm current coursed in his blood-vessels, refreshing his body. But Zen was not satisfied.

He had not found a solution to break through barriers set by the black smoke and white smoke.

Since Black Fiend was hiding in the black smoke, White Fiend must be in the white smoke. These two people's talents were peculiar! Zen could not spot them even though he had been studying the smoke all this while.

He stood still, observing his surroundings. It was not long after he stood up that a mass of white smoke began changing its shape. And this time, it turned into thousands of troops that



Bam! Bam! Bam! The sound from the break-up of the smoke followed Zen's punches.

Instantly, more than ten clouds of smoke in human form were smashed by Zen's ceaseless blows.

However, as quickly as Zen had broken up these clouds of smoke, new smoke appeared.

It appeared as though White Fiend and Black Fiend were generating the smoke-troops and attacking Zen continuously. In this situation, Zen could not get a break. He began struggling with defending himself from the smoke-troops that were running toward him from all directions.

"Hahaha! Let me see how long you can withstand our attacks!" While people were easily exhausted, the smoke-troops generated by White Fiend and Black Fiend would never get



"I am here! You brat!"

White Fiend's voice echoed from far away. But strangely, his fist connected with Zen's Back.

Zen staggered forward several steps. However, before he could gain his composure, Black Fiend's leg appeared before him. Zen could not dodge this time, and the kick landed on his belly...

Owing to the thick smoke and the unexpected appearances of his rivals, Zen was bounced back and forth just like a ball, beaten by White Fiend and Black Fiend. Sometimes, he could avoid a blow from White Fiend, but soon, he found himself under attack of Black Fiend.

Even though Zen seemed to be in a passive state, inside his body, the warm currents were refreshing his marrow through his blood vessels. In this way, his energy was recovered,



The beating had lasted for a long time, and Zen needed a reprieve.

Meanwhile, White Fiend and Black Fiend had finally figured out that Zen's body had anomalies.

"Black Fiend, this guy is indeed a little weird. Even if a stronger refiner at the nature level were standing here, I am afraid that he would not be able to stand after so many punches. But you see how this guy is now?" White Fiend asked him while still hiding in the smoke.

"Yes, buddy. I also think so. Despite our beatings, he still looks fresh! There is little change in his body. On the contrary, he looks more energetic than before. That is so strange!" Just as White Fiend had noticed, Black Fiend also sensed the abnormality in Zen.

"Maybe he knows some special refinement



What was more, the two Fiends' speed and strength were also significantly improved when the smoke camouflaged them.

However, while the fog could cover their bodies, it could not conceal White Fiend's and Black Fiend's strong killing intents!

It seemed that Zen finally found a way out of this dilemma. He closed his eyes when he thought of this.

People had six senses.

They were sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and feeling.

The first five senses corresponded with vision, audition, olfaction, gustation, and somatosensation. And the sixth sense, feeling, was the most metaphysical.

When humans turned off one of these six



senses, the other senses would be enhanced.

For example, the senses of touch and hearing in visually-handicapped people were more powerful than those of ordinary people. They could recognize uneven braille with their fingertips.

And people who had lost their sense of hearing used their eyes to compensate. For instance, they read lips as people spoke, which was difficult for a normal person to learn.

Since the attack by White Fiend and Black Fiend began, Zen's senses of hearing and sight were pointless as the smoke prevented him from seeing and hearing correctly. Now, he could only rely on his consciousness!

At this thought, Zen closed his eyes. Then he made a conscious effort not to use his other senses.



Zen's soul was far more powerful than an ordinary person's. Since the soul directly affected the agility of the consciousness, Zen's ability to 'feel' was stronger. With no other alternative, Zen had complete confidence that he could use his consciousness to identify White Fiend's and Black Fiend's location.

Although these nine black and white dragons were rushing toward Zen, he closed his eyes and began searching for the direction of killing intents from his rivals.

At this point, a surge of obscure consciousness was emitted from Zen's body and formed a circle around him.

In this circle space, Zen found that he could feel many details that he had not noticed when he was seeking the two Fiends through his sense of sight.



The uneven ground, small stones, and even the sand scattered on the ground, as well as growing low weeds, even cicada pupae which had been dormant underground for several years. All these appeared vividly before his closed eyes.

This was a wonderful feeling, as marvelous as the time when he managed to forget himself at the Drizzle Peak.

But Zen had no time to enjoy this special feeling. When the nine black and white dragons rushed into his circle, Zen found what he was searching for in an instant.

White Fiend and Black Fiend were hiding in between two of the nine dragons. One dragon was in front of Zen, while the other was behind him. They were standing amid these two smoke dragons. Each Fiend held a halberd in his hand.

Their faces were twisted because of their strong



Chapter 113

Humiliation Amplified

The two halberds were more likely to penetrate Zen even though his body was a powerful spiritual weapon, resulting in Zen being severely wounded or worse.

But, Zen was able to sense the positions of both White Fiend and Black Fiend, which upset the coordinated efforts of the two evils.

Suddenly, Zen's eyes flew open, and he moved a step to the right.

After skillfully dodging the attack, Zen hurled the broken flying knife at the Black Fiend.

Not expecting Zen to have the ability to



discover where he was, the Black Fiend used the halberd to defend himself.

The halberd was a top-grade mysterious weapon and when the two of them attacked people together, their power could be equal to that of a spiritual weapon. Black Fiend lifted the one in his hands to parry the incoming attack from Zen's flying knife.

Regrettably, the Black Fiend underestimated the power and strength of the broken flying knife.

As the two weapons collided, the halberd was halved, and the knife continued to fly to its original target, the Black Fiend.

With his head separating from his neck, the Black Fiend's final thoughts were a mass of confusion, 'How did Zen discover me...?'

How is that blade so strong...?'



Filled with excruciating pain, the White Fiend fell over. His neck was severed and he surrendered to the power of the broken flying knife.

The two evils perished in combat!

Shortly afterward, the black and white mists, along with the life vitality that brought them to be, began to disperse slowly.....

In front of the Green Haze group, Martin stood, staring at the vast expanse of mist fearfully.

Fully aware that there was a fierce battle between two evils and Zen beside him, Martin was concerned when all he could see was mist.

Although he was confident in Zen's martial art skills, he didn't think Zen had a chance winning because the gulf between Zen's expertise and his foes' was overwhelming.



Seeing Zen walking in his direction carrying the halberds, Liam fell to the ground.

Fear filled his widened eyes.

"Stop Zen!"

he shouted as his limbs shuddered out of control.

"Why? Aren't you dying to kill me? Dying to doom me? Didn't you say, you wanted to finish me off, here, at the Dragon Fort?" taunted Zen while he glared down at Liam!

"I did say that, but, only because of the orders that Fren gave! Please, Zen, spare me!" begged Liam. Facing Zen now, he lost his bravado.

"I would have spared you because of our shared fellowship, but, you were intent on killing me here, at the Dragon Fort. There's no way for me to justify sparing you!" warned Zen as he



came the sound as the golden needle whizzed through the air, making its way to Zen at tremendous speed.

Granted, Zen had a body similar to a spiritual weapon, but it didn't stop the golden needle from piercing his skin and lodging firmly in his chest.

"Zen, that was the Strychnos Thorn. It was made by an expert at forging poisonous needles in the Zhu Clan. And now, you're as good as dead!" exclaimed Liam full of exuberance after landing his unexpected blow.

Removing the golden needle effortlessly, Zen said, "This secret weapon is famed throughout the Eastern Region, but..... it won't bring my death!"

"Ping, ting-ting-ting-ting!"



Zen dropped the needle on the ground. It clacked as it rebounded, clattering against the ground a few times before coming to a stop. Zen grinned.

"But? How? You.....!" staring up at Zen, Liam's confusion mounted, and he demanded, "Anyone poisoned by the Strychnos Thorn dies! How is it you are an exception!?"

Shaking his head, Zen replied, "That's a secret that you don't need to know since you're done for!"

Almost the second that the broken flying knife left Zen's hand, poor Liam's neck was parted from his head. After looking down at his dead enemy, Zen turned and left without looking back.

Notorious for its remarkable fatality rates, the strychnos poison would be ejected from a hidden weapon to kill rivals even at the nature



The crystalline blossom was striking in appearance but fatal by nature.

Had Zen not evaded it in time, it would have impaled him.

At that moment, Zen suspected that this was Randall's doing.

Several of the trees ahead were snow-white.

There was a misty pine up ahead. Usually, misty pine was matched with the weather around it, so that on the coldest of days, it reflected that. Ahead, it performed a beautiful winter scene, which was an abnormal sign, indeed.

Randall appeared from behind an icy tree.

"Are you presuming that you'll manage to leave the Dragon Fort, alive?" asked Randall as he



stepped closer to Zen. His steps were deliberate, slow, as snowflakes fell around him. Randall scoffed, "At sixteen, I joined the Imperial Army. I rose in fame and rank by my abilities, only to be humiliated by you, a brat. That alone gives me a good reason to kill you here!"

Giving a slight shake of the head as he grinned, Zen returned, "I'm ready for your assault at any time you want to try!"

"I promise if you don't resist, I'll kill you swiftly!" said Randall while his life vitality began to move, shaping itself into a long and ice-encrusted spear.

With his heart thumping, Zen's first inclination was to run.

Refiners at the nature level could be divided into ten ranks according to their power. Each rank was disproportionately more powerful than the last.



Presently, Randall was a leading master, blessed with rank four in the nature level of refining. With that level, he was bound to be able to defeat Zen, who was only at the marrow refining level.

"Are you going to attempt to run away from my fatal strike, Zen?"

ridiculed Randall, grinning as he took a step, just as Zen made his way to escape. Where Randall stepped, the ground became covered with ice.

As Randall ran, the ground iced over and was in constant motion. Actually, Randall wasn't running. He was skiing over the surface.

It didn't take much effort to overtake Zen.

When Randall was nearly on Zen, he stopped to aim his icy spear and launched it at Zen.



But, Zen had a few tricks up his sleeve still.

In an earlier battle, when he went against the queen blade locust, Zen wasn't able to counter her strikes as he could now.

Zen had a secret weapon that would turn the tables in his favor.

As Randall drew nearer, Zen volleyed his broken flying knife, throwing it behind him, at his antagonist.

During Zen's encounter with the two evils, the mist was so thick that Randall couldn't see, so he was unaware of the might of Zen's secret weapon.

Smirking when he saw the paltry attack Zen sent his way, Randall waved his hand to form an icy shield.



His blunder was classic. Considering a mysterious weapon couldn't endure the impact of the broken flying knife, there was no hope in his icy shield surviving. The shield shattered as the knife hit it, leaving Randall's forehead vulnerable.

Caught off guard, Randall barely had time to duck and fell to the ground.

While Randall might have been Zen's superior at the martial arts level, he was left humbled beyond measure.

His humiliation magnified at tenfold being overwhelmed like this by Zen.

Randall flew into a rage, as the blue veins became visible and were bulging on his forehead. "Zen, that was an underhanded move, and sooner or later, I will make you suffer for this!"



Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Zoe Lin; Editor: Donna Frank



speed at Zen.

Randall learned from his earlier blunder to be wary of Zen's peculiar weapon.

As wise and intelligent as Randall was, he came up with an idea to counter Zen's life-threatening weapon.

Waving his hands, Randall summoned five small, sharp ice spikes that glimmered, emitting trails of light using his white life vitality.

Taking successively deeper breaths, Randall flew at Zen, overtaking him and renewing the battle.

As Randall came up, poised to strike, Zen unexpectedly turned, taking aim at Randall, who triumphantly let loose the five ice spikes.

"Scha-wing!"



The five ice spikes clashed against the broken flying knife, causing it to veer and embed in the icy ground.

"Zen, I've seen through your ruse!" Rushing, Randall sped to catch Zen.

As Zen tugged, retrieving his knife from the ice, he felt an icy chill along the nape of his neck. Randall brandished an icy spear, planning to run it through Zen's back.

"The spiritual thorn!"

Poised, Zen used his soul strength to create his gray colored thorn meant for his enemy.

Meanwhile, the knife circled around Zen, reversing direction and flying toward his opponent.

While Randall was focused on killing Zen, he



felt a stabbing pain shoot through his head, so exceptionally sharp that he fell over in pain.

Due to Randall's experience in battles, heightened senses alerted him to dangers and he was able to survive Zen's attack.

Maneuvering so he could endure the strike, he was then able to elude the broken flying knife through rolling on the ice surface.

However, his injured shoulder was bleeding.

"Aah!"

seethed Randall between clenched teeth as the pain gripped him. His frustrations were mounting.

Thinking of Zen as an easy target, Randall believed he should have managed to kill Zen with little effort by now.



that it was nearly inexhaustible.

Intent on escaping, Zen took advantage of the fact that Randall was distracted at the moment and frustrated.

But, his antagonist relished skiing at Zen at an incredible speed.

Actually, Zen didn't stand a chance of fleeing Randall.

Consequently, Randall could overtake Zen in a short span of time.

But, the closer Randall got to Zen, the more determined Zen became, and he opted to leverage his two signature moves, The first was the spiritual thorn, and the second was the broken flying knife!

Alongside the two having continuing quality, the two moves also adversely affected Randall's



"Freezing thousands of miles!"

As he punched the ground with his strong fists, Randall produced two bright snow lines extending in front of him and growing more rapidly than Zen could flee.

The two lines flew over Zen and were suddenly transformed into two icy crystals which began increasing, spreading and doubling.

"Whoosh!"

came a deafening sound as millions of icy thorns intertwined and filled the area.

Ultimately, the frost crystals reshaped themselves into an icy crescent-shaped hill, leaving Zen trapped in the valley beneath them, with no avenue of escape.

With no other recourse, Zen turned to confront



Staring at Randall's colossal weapon, Zen had no means of escape, which made Randall giddy with excitement at his invincible strike.

Unexpectedly, the colossal weapon's progress halted, and half of its front shattered, falling back to the surface of the ice along with many flakes.

It was as if an invisible barrier stood between the invincible weapon and Zen.

"What's this?" asked Randall, a twinge of fear in his voice.

"As Zen stated, you couldn't be more foolish than you are!" accused a husky voice from behind the icy valley. Looking in the direction, he saw a figure in green emerged, approaching the two combatants.

As soon as Randall saw who it was, he became



irate. "Dammit Jon, no more of your meddling!"

"You're wrong! I'm not interfering, I am enforcing the law you violated! You altered the marching route the Green Haze Group was to take, and you plotted to murder your fellow soldiers, who fell victims to the blade locust queen because of your actions. What's more, you secretly interrogated Martin using brutal means. If not for our timely rescue, Martin would be dead! You should reflect on your errors and make amends to be worthy as a member of the Imperial Army!" admonished Jon as he rattled off Randall's numerous crimes.

In view of how harshly the Imperial Army disciplined, Randall's crimes would be deemed treasonous and punishable by death, though the numerous soldiers from the Green Haze group that lost their lives meant little to the Imperial Army.

Martin was a victim, but he was too



underprivileged to file a lawsuit, so Randall decided to keep him in custody, avoiding any trouble.

"Jon, what you are saying is true. But, I don't believe you can best me in combat!" threatened Randall while remaining cool, calm and collected because he believed he could best Jon in battle by a narrow margin.

"I'm aware of your consummate skills which enable you to confront me!" said Jon admitting to Randall's martial prowess.

Smiling pompously, Randall cautioned, "Since that is so, you should back off and leave me to conflict with Zen, otherwise, despite our fellowship, I won't spare you!"

"You might be brawny, but Randall, you're brainless!" insulted Jon smiling as if he and Randall were joking around.



Chapter 115 The Homecoming (Part One)

Standing on the other side of the crumbling icy hill was an authoritative-looking man. He was taller and stockier than most of those present and had a squared, rugged face. Thick eyebrows gave him an intimidating air, while his eyes sparked with wisdom. His cheeks were cut high, clean and deep, giving him a chiseled aspect. Adding to this daunting visage was the heavy armor he wore, bearing lifelike flying dragons carved on the ends in the front.

The imposing man was Floyd Xun, one of the two vice generals, and was known as Flying Dragon General, the anchor of stability within the Dragon Fort.



him on, was a setup from the start!

"The Zhuge Clan? It doesn't matter how powerful the Zhuge Clan is! The imperial army is not for sale! As an officer in the imperial army, you have a responsibility! Yet, you dared to ignore the military disciplinary protocols willfully. You really failed me!" Shaking his head slowly, and then looking at Randall, Floyd barked, "Tell me, do you have any last words?"

The imperial army was under the direct command of the Burning Sky Palace. Many soldiers from within the top seven noble clans also enlisted in the imperial army; however, Floyd held a high rank, and he wouldn't kowtow to the pressure that the Zhuge clan exerted.

"I..I.."

Randall's response ended before he finished it. As it dawned on him what Floyd had just said,



his face turned ashen, and he gulped hard. If he had understood Floyd, there wouldn't be a trial or prison. Floyd was proposing to execute him on the spot! Randall turned to run!

While he chased Zen, Randall sprinted very quickly, and now, he ran faster!

However, Floyd caught up to him, with just one step.

In a single step Floyd was able to cover a distance of nearly a quarter mile, and in the blink of an eye, he was right behind Randall. He reached out and with his finger, Floyd poked Randall's back.

"Snap!"

Although Zen didn't see any wounds on Randall's body, he did see blood spurting from his mouth. Randall fell to the ground gurgling as he choked on his blood. Within seconds, his



suffering was over, and he was dead.

'So... So very strong!'

thought Zen. This man, Floyd, was a real martial arts master!

Watching Floyd's attack techniques, Zen felt as though his blood was boiling.

Randall might have been at the fourth rank in the natural level, but, he was a fragile ant compared to the Flying Dragon General!

Zen deemed, 'After I study for years and master such great skills, I shouldn't have any problem in saving Yan easily!'

After slaying Randall, Floyd turned to Jon and ordered, "This matter is over. I don't want to see anything affecting the morale of the Dragon Fort army!"



Jon knew Zen was much stronger than other refiners of the same level, but Randall's strength was much higher. Among the mid-ranking officers at the Dragon Fort, Randall was the only one to learn the "intent". Jon didn't even have complete confidence that he could beat Randall.

However, Zen ran a great distance while Randall chased him, so Jon thought highly of Zen. It had taken some doing, but he eventually understood why, before Roger left, he insisted Jon should do his best to coordinate with Zen.

If Zen survived many decades into the future, he might very well become an influential figure. By then, Zen would be worthy of great admiration from the Meng Clan.

However, right now, there were too many geniuses in the world, and too few of those would ever be successful. Zen's future would be



written over time.

After disposing of Randall's remains, Jon returned to the Dragon Fort.

Zen, on the other hand, went to join Martin on the original road.

Martin didn't know Zen's plans, but he trusted Zen. The last time Zen fled, he was pursued by the queen blade locust, and he escaped unharmed. Therefore, Martin was confident Zen would rid himself of Randall during the chase.

Commanding the Green Haze group, Martin and his troops lingered on the spot. Two hours passed before Zen got back.

"Zen, where's Randall? Is-is he...?" questioned Martin. Honestly, he wanted to find out whether Zen had killed Randall, because he knew Zen managed to obtain the crystal core from the queen blade locust.



Chapter 116 The Homecoming (Part Two)

Shrugging, Zen smiled and said, "How could I kill him? No, the Flying Dragon General killed Randall."

"The Flying Dragon General?!" At the mention of the vice commander from Dragon Fort, there was a look of awe on Martin's face.

"Now that Randall has been executed, the Flying Dragon General doesn't want the news to spread. Tell your soldiers," cautioned Zen.

"Yes, of course! You can rest assured that my soldiers won't breathe a single word of what's happened!" replied Martin guardedly. It was



beyond his expectations to think that the Flying Dragon General would handle this matter himself.

After the Green Haze group and Zen finished hunting blade locusts, they returned to the Dragon Fort.

With the hardships Martin had endured over the past few days behind him, a weight was lifted, leaving his heart lighter, and he wanted to celebrate, so, he led Zen to a pub for a drink. After a few drinks, Martin was itching to tell people what he'd been through, and if Zen hadn't reminded Martin not to, Martin would have blurted something out. By the end of the evening, Martin was drunk.

After boozing it up at the local pub, Zen returned to his room and removed the alcohol from his blood using purple life energy.

He looked at his harvest of crystal cores and



decided it was quite a rich trip.

Along with exceeding the number of blade locusts that he anticipated he could hunt, Zen had also unexpectedly, harvested a crystal core from a fire scorpion lion. Further, he raised his body's refinement to that of a spiritual-weapon-like body through the fires from the earth's core.

Sitting on the bed, Zen pulled two short halberds out of his space ring, which he took after slaying the White and Black Fiends.

The halberds were top-grade mysterious weapons. Although Zen's flying knife had halved one of them, there shouldn't be any negative impacts, since they would both be melted into iron essence.

Sitting cross-legged on the bed, Zen communicated with the furnace in his mind. After that the black flame darted out, and



with the halberds simultaneously, or their power would've been shown.

The fifteen drops of iron essence were drawn into Zen's mind by the black fire. A few moments later, he could see the cyan dragon relief within his mind. There were three dragon scales being lit up, emitting a turquoise glow. ①

So far, a total of seven scales were lit up on the cyan dragon sculpture, and Zen's strength was significantly increased.

Zen realized his weakness was actually in his refining level and not strength!

There was a broad contrast between the lazy noble clan disciples and Zen.

Having a variety of magic pills available to them, the noble disciples were slack in working hard to improve their refining techniques, which resulted in a considerable gap between their



more warm currents so he could refine his body.

If he couldn't find someone willing to do so, he would spend some cubic crystals and hire someone.

That thought stayed on Zen's mind all night.

The next morning, Martin came to see Zen off, along with several soldiers from the Green Haze platoon.

As an officer in the imperial army, Martin's salary wasn't high, so, he brought some excellent bottles of wine to give to Zen.

After saying goodbye, Zen boarded the giant flying chariot.

A few hours later, the chariot neared the Cloud Sect.



Chapter 117 Getting Nervous (Part One)

Zen didn't tell them that he had accepted the task of killing blade locusts when he left Cloud Sect.

So they didn't know what he was doing during this period.

"It's a long story. Let's talk about it later. What's going on here? Why are so many people gathering here today?" asked Zen as he surveyed the scene before him.

Generally speaking, disciples could hardly wait to improve their strength after they joined Cloud Sect. Most of them would indulge in martial arts and cultivation upon being accepted



the masters of the two peaks had to intervene. Since the matter couldn't be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the masters of Vulture Peak challenged Drizzle Peak."

"Challenged? Only disciples can throw down the gauntlet, right?" asked Zen with total confusion.

Sean smiled and continued to explain, "One peak can also challenge another. There are a wide variety of competitions and rankings in Cloud Sect, including inter-peak rivalry once every three years, the annual trial for the inner and outer disciples, the free challenges between different peaks, and so on. This challenge between Vulture Peak and Drizzle Peak is one of them. All outer disciples will be able to participate in the competition as long as they get the approval of their masters."

"Rub-a-dub!"

Just as Sean was explaining the various



competitions to Zen, the sound of drumbeats filled the air.

Once all the outer disciples heard the sound of drums, they swarmed to the arena.

Seeing this, Sean said, "Zen, today's rivalry is about to begin. Let's go over there and take a look. We can talk about it as we walk."

On the way to the arena, Zen got a general idea about the rules of the challenge.

From Sean's explanation, Zen gathered that Cloud Sect permitted contests where disciples of different peaks could compete with each other. The masters at Cloud Sect believed that such competitions could motivate disciples to make rapid progress.

The challenge between two peaks did not involve the outer disciples only. Similar contests were organized for inner disciples of disputing



peaks. This time, however, the challenge between Vulture Peak and Drizzle Peak was open only to outer disciples.

Sean believed that it was a deliberate and carefully planned competition. The Vulture Peak asked several outer disciples to stir up trouble first and escalated it into a major conflict. Then the masters of the two peaks had to come forward to alleviate the tension. Finally, the two sides decided to end the dispute with a contest. Vulture Peak must have planned the battle for a long time.

Vulture Peak ranked 24th in Cloud Sect. Why did Vulture Peak choose to challenge Drizzle Peak?

The answer was obvious. They thought that Drizzle Peak was the weakest peak in Cloud Sect and hence, it would be the easiest to defeat.



the outer disciples, almost all of them were present to watch the competition. The number of disciples watching the competition today had doubled, if not tripled, compared with the last contest between Zen and Leo. Although the area around the battle ring was very spacious, the sheer number of onlookers made it seem as though the place was too small.

After all, it wasn't just the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak that had come to watch the event, but also some inner disciples, who were wearing black robes. They stood in the crowd, keeping a close eye on the situation in the battle ring.

The inner disciples couldn't take part in the challenge. They wouldn't be affected even if the outer disciples were defeated. But the result of the challenge affected the reputation of Drizzle Peak. So they were very concerned about the game.



Zen found a good place to watch the competition. He looked up and saw Wurth Zhang standing in the battle ring.

"Why is Wurth in the arena?" asked Zen with curiosity.

Sean said, "Vulture Peak has won three games in recent days. They have defeated three outer disciples of Drizzle Peak, namely, Otto Chen who is ranked 16th, Samson Zheng who is ranked 13th, and Truman Xu who is ranked 9th. So it's Wurth's turn this time."

Hearing this, Zen understood that things hadn't been going well for Drizzle Peak.

Zen didn't care about the money and pills that Drizzle Peak would receive every month. Those pills were of limited benefit to him, and the money was a small sum for him. But as an outer disciple of Drizzle Peak, he was a member



of the group. If he had the opportunity to contribute to Drizzle Peak, he would head up and fight for the peak's honor.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Julie; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 118 Getting Nervous (Part Two)

"Look, the match is on. The candidate chosen by Vulture Peak is Tan Tian. He has defeated three of the outer disciples from Drizzle Peak already. I hope Wurth can beat him!"

"Alas, it's hard to say. Yes, Wurth is strong. But even if he defeats Tan, what's the use? Tan has already proven to be too strong for our disciples. But he only ranks 16th at Vulture Peak. Even if Wurth defeats Tan, Vulture Peak will send a higher ranking person next. Then how will we deal with it?"

The outer disciples of Drizzle Peak were talking about the challenge. Obviously, they thought that the prospects of Drizzle Peak were not



good.

At this time, Zen saw a man jumping into the battle ring. He was six feet tall and as thin as a rail. He must be Tan Tian.

As soon as Tan jumped into the battle ring, he looked around. Arrogance shimmered in his eyes. He leisurely surveyed the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak, and then he fixed his gaze on Wurth. He sneered and with a curl of his lips said, "Is there anyone better in Drizzle Peak? Why send a butterball here?"

"Wow ..."

To challenge one of the other peaks was to stand and fight on someone else's turf. In general, challengers tended to keep a low profile, even if they were sure to win.

After all, if they enraged all disciples of that peak, they would be at the risk of being



attacked by the bystanders. No matter how powerful they might be, they couldn't withstand the attacks of a crowd of cultivators. Though the rules of Cloud Sect were strict, they couldn't punish numerous offenders. So if Tan were beaten to death by an angry crowd, perhaps no one would be held responsible for his death.

But Tan didn't rein in his arrogance. Winning three games consecutively seemed to have increased his ego. After hearing what Tan said, the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak got angry and burst out a storm of abuses.

Tan, without the slightest fear, stood on the edge of the battle ring and shouted, "Why do you abuse me? If you have the guts, come up to the arena and challenge me. I'm waiting for you. No matter how many of you come, I'll defeat you. Drizzle Peak ranks last every year, and there are no outstanding disciples in it. I think it would be better to remove it from the



attacked by the bystanders. No matter how powerful they might be, they couldn't withstand the attacks of a crowd of cultivators. Though the rules of Cloud Sect were strict, they couldn't punish numerous offenders. So if Tan were beaten to death by an angry crowd, perhaps no one would be held responsible for his death.

But Tan didn't rein in his arrogance. Winning three games consecutively seemed to have increased his ego. After hearing what Tan said, the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak got angry and burst out a storm of abuses.

Tan, without the slightest fear, stood on the edge of the battle ring and shouted, "Why do you abuse me? If you have the guts, come up to the arena and challenge me. I'm waiting for you. No matter how many of you come, I'll defeat you. Drizzle Peak ranks last every year, and there are no outstanding disciples in it. I think it would be better to remove it from the



He was unassuming and easy to get along with. He hadn't offended anyone in Drizzle Peak.

He was a quiet and under-the-radar guy.

But it was clear to all that the strength hidden under the fat body was astonishing.

Some people still remembered what had happened when he had entered Cloud Sect and become an outer disciple of Drizzle Peak. At that time, a few disciples thought he was weak and could be bullied easily. But when they went to cause trouble, they were easily slammed to the ground.

Only then did they realize that this fat man, who looked kind and harmless to all, was definitely a fierce man.

His strength was stable ever since. No one had been able to take his rank at Drizzle Peak.



Wurth, seeing that Tan had exhausted his tricks, approached his rival with sarcastic remarks, "It seems to me that you are not that powerful."

Upon hearing what Wurth said, Sean explained to Zen, "Tan's signature martial art with Sacred Wood Thrust resulted in three successive defeats for Drizzle Peak. However, Wurth seems to be a smart opponent."

Zen nodded in approval.

Tan's assault revealed that his strength was like Randall's, however, the latter was superior to the former in terms of martial skills.

Tan's attacks did pay off to some degree.

But having only one signature, excellent way of attacking would leave some part of the refiner vulnerable.

A signature move, once being seen through by a



rival, would put a person in a disadvantageous position.

Tan's skill that had earned him three previous victories was vulnerable to some counter-blow.

At that moment, Zen noticed a yellow halo beneath Wurth's feet and then realized it was Wurth's countermeasure.

If Zen were in Wurth's place, the former would crumble the Sacred Wood Thrust through his mighty feet.

However, Wurth decided to defend from Tan's fatal blows in an ingenious manner. He concentrated his life energy on his feet to sense his rival's direction.

Since his strategy was not yielding results, Tan became increasingly frustrated. As time wore on, his aggression and arrogance diminished as well.



Tan was ultimately angered to display his ultimate martial prowess.

An instant later, a dozen brown eddies of life energy began taking shape. They produced sacred wood thrusts that were aimed at Wurth.

"Whizzing....."

Such violent assaults were supposed to be insurmountable.

But Wurth was dodging them dexterously like a butterfly, though he was rather fat.

"They are useless and futile because I have seen through your tricks," Wurth grinned amid the heat of the fight.

Leveraging his momentum, Wurth confronted his rival face-to-face and gave his rival a stunning blow.



That blow proved overwhelmingly strong.

Tan was flung out of the battle ring.

The outer disciples at Drizzle Peak marveled at Wurth's victory and were gleeful about Tan's failure.

"Wurth, well done!"

"Wurth gave Tan a phenomenal blow!"

Since the disciples were thrilled with Wurth's success, their gleeful uproar could be heard all over Drizzle Peak.

There were twenty disciples that came from Vulture Peak standing outside the battle ring, the head of which ordered others to send Tan for treatment.

They were surprised to see that Tan had been



severely wounded and that his gown was marked with footprints.

The outer disciples at Drizzle Peak must have added their blows after Wurth flung Tan out of the ring.

Feeling invincible, Wurth said to the other disciples of Vulture Peak, "So, who's the next?"

A light voice rang from the crowd. It came from a short man who braved the challenge. He said harshly, "I thought that Tan could only beat two of you at most, but surprisingly he has won three battles and made it to the forth one. Drizzle Peak has been proved worse than I have imagined."

Wurth frowned and asked the short man to introduce himself by sharing his name and rank.

But the short man refused to answer him



The two rivals battled so fiercely

that it was an enthralling performance indeed.

Some inferior disciples including Nory who was at the bone refining level became confused about the developments.

But Zen became anxious when he realized that

Wurth was not in a position to win the battle.

The short man was a halfway into the nature level. He was moving much faster and fighting with much more strength than Wurth.

His endurance was to Wurth's disadvantage.

"Pounding!"

"Flopping!"



"Clicking!"

As Zen had predicted, Wurth lost the fight quickly.

What led to Wurth's defeat was that his back was vulnerable. When he made a careless move, the short man took advantage.

"Pounding!"

The stunning blow threw Wurth out of the battle ring despite his massive size.

In the blink of an eye, Zen darted toward Wurth and held him effortlessly.

On examination, he saw that Wurth was as grievously wounded as Tan had been.

"Ahem!"

Wurth spat out a mouthful of blood. His face



Chapter 120 With Just One Punch (Part One)

The outer disciples of Drizzle Peak were crestfallen. After three humiliating defeats, Wurth had finally earned them a victory. However, that had been short-lived.

When the short man that defeated Wurth challenged the remaining disciples from Drizzle Peak, none accepted. It was indeed sad that from all the disciples at Drizzle Peak, none were suitable for the challenge.

When Zen said he was going to fight, his voice was not loud. But it was penetrating so that all the people could hear him.

"What? Zen wants to fight with them on behalf



usually the top 30 ranked outer disciples, namely each peak's most elite students, were selected to fight.

It was rare to see a disciple within the top 30 ranks who was not even half-step into the nature level!

Now a guy at the marrow refining level was going to represent Drizzle Peak against them, which undoubtedly surprised the disciples from Vulture Peak.

"Hey, Drizzle Peak, did you give up so soon? Are you going to let a guy at the marrow refining level fight against us?"

"I bet it's going to be a big joke at Cloud Sect. I was worried that Drizzle Peak would send Henry to fight. Now, it seems that I worried needlessly."

"Your concerns were certainly superfluous. Even



if Henry was not cultivating in seclusion, would Jesse Liu lose to him? How is that possible?"

Not many people from Vulture Peak had come to watch the contests. As few as they might be, the disciples from Vulture Peak now looked arrogant because they believed that Drizzle Peak had no disciples who could match their skills. And now, a disciple at the marrow refining level was offering to battle with them.

The disciples from Vulture Peak were not the only ones to think it was ridiculous. Many outer disciples from Drizzle Peak also felt that way.

Unfortunately, there really was no suitable disciple from Drizzle Peak who could compete in the ring.

Henry Hao, who was ranked first, was refining in seclusion, and the disciples who were ranked higher than Wurth did not dare to go into the battle ring.



Their concern was not the short man who defeated Wurth. No, they were confident that they would be able to parry with him successfully. What worried them were the contestants from Vulture Peak that would come after they vanquished the short man.

If they fought indiscriminately, they would not only humiliate themselves after their defeat, but they might also be seriously injured, which was even worse.

This was why the top few disciples were now silent and cowering in the corner. They felt that they had no choice even if Zen failed. Drizzle Peak had lost most of the competitions anyway, and they didn't mind losing another if it meant that they would not sustain any injuries.

They were afraid even before the battle!

Zen slowly and deliberately walked to the ring.



I was going to teach you a lesson by kicking you out of the ring directly. Now, I have changed my mind. I'll show you how significant the difference is between the marrow refining level and half-step into the nature level!"

No sooner had the short man said this than his figure disappeared from the spot and sprang at Zen, like a gust of wind.

"Boom!"

Zen took a step forward just as his opponent was halfway through the sprint, and his fist hit the short man in the face with great precision.

At this point, the seven dragon scales in Zen's mind were radiating green light, and a tremendous amount of power was transferred to Zen. Combined with Zen's strength, it converged at his fist. His punch carried a terrifying amount of power!



The short man was shot back more than a hundred feet. His body collided with the battle ring's sidewall with such force that half the bricks exploded and fell over him. Everyone present was uncertain of whether he survived the blow.

"I also want to know what the difference is between the marrow refining level and half-step into the nature level... And I'm not really interested in knowing your name..." Zen stated while flexing his wrist with a deadpan expression.

As these words were spoken, a deathly silence hung in the ring and its surrounding areas.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 121 With Just One Punch (Part Two)

No one was talking around the ring whereas before, it had been noisy. Everyone's mouth gaped open as if they could swallow a basin.

Nory's eyes sparkled. Although he was excited about the strength Zen was going to show before the fight, and he was convinced that Zen could win against the short man, he had no idea that Zen would do so with just one punch.

It had taken Zen only one punch to defeat a man who was half-step into the nature level!

All eyes reflected horror.

Even the black-robed inner disciples of Drizzle



Peak, who had come to watch the battle, looked astonished.

"Glenn, what do you think of his strength?" asked a black-robed disciple.

"He has shown such power, and he's only at the marrow refining level," analyzed Glenn cautiously, who was also dressed in a black robe. "Then it won't be long before he is promoted to an inner disciple..." He then paused briefly before correcting himself. He said, "No, not only that. If he becomes a nature creature, Ronald Su would probably lose his Number one rank among the inner disciples to him..."

"He is so awesome?!" cried the black-robed disciple, his eyes widening.

Glenn shook his head and replied, "I can't judge his strength with this one blow. But I dare say that's just the tip of the iceberg.



the short man out of the rubble, and carry him back to their side. But the disciples of Drizzle Peak took advantage of the situation and caused trouble. Mischief glinted in their eyes as they jostled each other so that the disciples from Vulture Peak had a hard time getting the short man back.

Zen walked along the edge of the ring to the people from Vulture Peak and shouted, "Vulture Peak, who else wants to fight me?"

Who else wanted to fight him?

Zen put this question in a flat tone of voice, but what he said actually was subtly aggressive.

His words implied that he had already defeated one person and that his next opponent would also meet the same fate.

This sentence was more pernicious than Tan's and the short man's rambling sarcasm!



The strong man, though keen to show his force, was upright, and not sarcastic like the short man had been.

Since Keith Hu was polite, Zen cupped his hands toward him in return. "I'm Zen Luo, no ranking at Drizzle Peak," he introduced himself briefly.

"No ranking?" Keith Hu paused for a moment and then realized that Zen had been recently admitted to Drizzle Peak. If that was the case, then it was normal for him to have no ranking. "Well, let's start now!" he exclaimed.

Keith Hu then roared and channeled his life energy. The result was clear—his muscles doubled in size.

Then came the sound of cloth tearing.

His snow-white robe representing his identity as an outer disciple was torn because of his



Zen observed his face and realized that Keith Hu was sincere. It was for Zen's sake that he asked Zen to surrender.

"No, thank you anyway," Zen refused with a laugh.

"Then, be careful!" Keith Hu took a deep breath and charged at Zen, like a wild, ancient beast.

"Thump, thump, thump..."

a deafening sound accompanied each step taken by Keith Hu.

As the saying goes, a man of great strength can defeat ten men of martial arts. Keith Hu's attacks did not involve tricks or false moves, because he wanted to surpass Zen based on his power alone.



Chapter 122 Jesse Liu (Part One)

"Get out of the way! Move! Once hit by a savage beast like that guy, I am afraid that the impact will jar Zen's bones!"

"Is Zen in a daze? Or does he want to stay rooted and withstand Keith's might directly?"

"Hey, Zen has great strength at the marrow refining level. He would have a promising future. But this time, he is overconfident. It will be a pity if he suffers serious injury or death by Keith's attack."

Although the strength of the outer disciples at Drizzle Peak was inferior to most, these disciples were knowledgeable. They understood



that a disciple with considerable strength at the marrow refining level would have a bright future. That was why they felt sorry for Zen.

Meanwhile, Zen stubbornly stuck to his previous strategy.

A punch. That was all he used.

The seven dragon scales erupted with extraordinary power. This power mingled with Zen's when he punched Keith. The blow landed on Keith's shoulder, which was the sturdiest part of him.

Keith had intended to collide into Zen with his shoulder. He wasn't deterred when he saw that Zen had decided to use his fist as a countermeasure. Confident of his strength, Keith rammed his body into Zen's fist instead of evading.

According to Keith's estimation, once Zen's fist



touched his shoulder, Zen's arm would be broken by the force.

However, when Keith's shoulder crashed into Zen's fist, his facial expression changed.

He could feel that there was a greater force, which was much stronger than his, coming from Zen's fist.

If Keith's power was like that of a furious savage beast, momentum vigorous and extremely explosive, then Zen's energy was like that of the sea, boundless and unfathomable.

"Bump!"

At the moment of contact, the greater of the two forces was easy to figure out.

Zen's punch consumed all the impact, and the considerable back-draft transmitted through Keith's body immediately caused Keith to



But when they saw that Jesse condensed life vitality and formed a hoop in his hand, their expressions changed dramatically.

"A nature creature! This guy is actually a nature creature! Is he an outer disciple?"

"That's unreasonable. Zen is an outer disciple. How can an inner disciple be sent to challenge Zen? This is a violation of the rules! If the other peak sends an inner disciple, we should also send an inner disciple!" said some indignantly.

Many people had turned their eyes to those disciples dressed in black robes. They had been standing close to the arena, watching the matches. Since they were inner disciples of Drizzle Peak, they should have stepped forward for this challenge.

The nature level was a hurdle for ordinary cultivators.



There was a big difference between life energy and life vitality.

Zen used one blow to defeat every challenger from Vulture Peak.

But to fight with someone at the nature level? That was hugely unfair! Only a nature creature should challenge a disciple at the same level. Otherwise, the battle would be too unsporting.

Everyone noticed this gap in Jesse's and Zen's abilities and commented on the underhanded match.

"Jesse is ranked first at Vulture Peak. He has just stepped into the nature level. And there just wasn't enough time to promote him to inner disciple status! Of course, he is still an outer disciple. How is it against the rules? If you can't beat him, then just give up!" Jesse was the biggest hope for Vulture Peak now.



regarding the use of weapons inside a battle ring, he knew that the flying knife would cause serious injuries, even death, if he used it. In a peak-level challenge of this caliber, Zed didn't want to kill his opponent.

The golden hoop was full of life vitality. Gleaming with metallic luster, it fluttered in the air, humming and buzzing.

As the golden ring drew closer to Zen, it became bigger, as though it was going to encircle him.

"That's great!" exclaimed Zen. He had already planned a counter-attack for the golden ring.

As a streak of purple light enveloped his body, Zen fiercely flung his fist toward the golden ring.

"Bang!"



The golden ring produced a crisp sound when it came into contact with Zen's fist. It turned flat upon impact and flew back for about 60 feet from the battle ring.

In spite of this, Jesse chuckled. Seeing his golden ring flying so far away, he stretched out his hand. A buzzing could be heard as the golden ring whizzed toward its master. As soon as the ring returned to Jesse, it regained its original shape. In the blink of an eye, Jesse tossed the golden ring at Zen, in an attempt to trap him.

At the same time, another golden ring showed up in Jesse's hand. This new ring had been crafted from Jesse's life vitality as well. Jesse directed the second ring toward his opponent without giving Zen a chance to defend against the first ring.

"Bang! Bang!"



can't get away when my sky-binding hoops fetter them. You will be unable to break away even though your strength is far mightier than others who are at the same level as you. Now, you have been defeated."

Spectators from Vulture Peak were stunned at this scene and took a deep breath.

They had witnessed the incredible power of Jesse's sky-binding hoops many times before.

Before Jesse was a half-step into the nature level, his sky-binding hoops, which were only filled with life energy, had been so insuperable that no one at Vulture Peak could break free from them.

Now, Jesse had become a nature creature. The power of his sky-binding hoops was substantive. To be sure, Zen, who was only at the marrow refining level, couldn't break away from the rings.



As soon as he heard Zen's quibbling, Jesse sneered at Zen who was trying to play a petty trick on him. Then, he retorted, "Well, since you feel so strongly about this, let me throw you out of the battle ring! Afterward, I will be the winner!"

As soon as he finished speaking, Jesse extended one of his hands and pointed it at the golden rings trapping Zen. Immediately, the rings trembled and jingled as though they had received an order from Jesse. After that, they pulled Zen toward the edge of the battle ring.

Just as Zen reached the corner of the battle ring, Jesse felt a sharp pain in his brain. This pain seemed to be spiritual, as a result of which, Jesse nearly fainted.

"Ahh!"

Jesse gave a horrible shriek while holding his head with both hands.



had said.

Jesse had held his head in his hands for quite a long while before he finally resisted the great pain and returned to his senses. His calm expression had turned furious. In his eyes reflected a tinge of fear.

Even at this moment, Jesse still insisted that he and Zen were not of the same caliber.

Before this fight, Jesse had known that Zen had demonstrated very stunning skills. He knew that it was particularly rare for a guy at the marrow refining level to have mastered those skills.

In spite of that, Jesse hadn't feared battling Zen at all. He had great confidence in his abilities. After all, he was a nature creature, who dominated ordinary people.

Thus, Jesse had compared himself to a heavily-



next instant, it sliced through the rings. "Bang, bang, bang, bang..." Several loud and crisp sounds were heard.

The old and dilapidated flying knife had cut through all seven golden hoops. Their glittering golden light disappeared right away and turned into life vitality, which dissipated in the air.

Seeing Zen's flying knife, Jesse raised his eyebrows. He wondered why Zen hadn't used his flying knife before since he had been carrying the knife with him.

At the same time, Jesse had no idea that Zen hadn't intended to use this flying knife to fight his opponent. After breaking away from the sky-binding hoops, Zen casually tucked the flying knife back into his space ring, smiled, and said, "It seems that the outcome of this fight is hard to foretell."

"That's funny!" Like Zen, Jesse hadn't planned



to make an all-out effort in this fight, but he had started to take this fight and his opponent seriously after being subjected to Zen's spiritual attack.

A faint golden aura of life vitality emitted from Jesse's skin and started to condense slowly.

"Since you want to make more trouble out of nothing, I will show you my real strength as a nature creature! Sky Rending Hoop!"

As soon as Jesse shouted those three words, a golden hoop showed up on his hand. But it was a little different from his sky-binding hoops in terms of shape. This ring had neatly lined saw-teeth all around it. The sky-rending hoop was faster than the sky-binding hoops as well.

"Whooshing!"

Very soon, seven sky-rending hoops were suspended in the air around Jesse, swirling



crazily.

"Go!"

Jesse extended his hand and pointed at Zen. His eyes were full of apathy. Zen had enraged him. Jesse felt humiliated by Zen who was only at the marrow refining level. And anyone who infuriated Jesse would pay for what he had done at any cost.

The seven sky-rending hoops flew at Zen from different angles.

Two of them flew high. Their flying route made up a parabola.

Another three sky-rending hoops flew toward Zen along a straight line.

The remained two hoops rolled on the floor of the battle ring, aiming for Zen's legs. Deep furrows were noticeable in the direction where



the rings had passed as if the floor of the battle ring was muddy.

In the face of these seven sky-rending hoops, Zen looked rather nervous.

He knew that his strength wasn't powerful enough, so he had to take a confrontation with every nature creature seriously from now on.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Arathi



'We can afford to lose this challenge, but Zen should not die!' All the disciples of Drizzle Peak clenched their fists. They kept shouting at Zen to avoid the attack.

The refiners from Vulture Peak, however, were satisfied to see the current scene in the arena. Their lips curled in a contemptuous sneer.

"Look! This guy must be insane!"

"Yes, I think so. Maybe it's better for him to die. There is no friendship in a battle. If he wants to die without any defense, the hoops will not have any mercy on him."

"Well, that is a pity! Drizzle Peak just enrolled a genius disciple, and Jesse is going to shred this genius!"

According to the disciples of Vulture Peak, Zen's nonresistance would eventually lead to



The first sky-rending hoop crashed into Zen and made a clear sound like a piece of gold bumping into an iron weapon. To everyone's surprise, the golden hoop did not cut Zen into pieces but instead, it bounced to the side.

Even though the hoop did not cut Zen's body, it did shred his white robe. The torn white robe exposed Zen's back to the public.

On his naked back, people could only see a light trace of blood. They held their breath and couldn't utter a word. They could not believe that such a powerful weapon only left such a small injury on Zen's skin. That was so unimaginable!

However, this was only the start of how much Zen would astound them today. The remaining sky-rending hoops continued to hurtle toward Zen. When they crashed into him, each of them also made the clear sound like the first hoop. "Bang!" The second hoop clashed with Zen and



Chapter 127 Fantastic Scene (Part Two)

Even though Jesse was in great shock by the hardness of Zen's physical body, he soon regained his senses. Other spectators, however, were still deeply immersed in the surprise. As the most outstanding outer disciple of Vulture Peak, Jesse did not rely only on his powerful weapon, but his strength and his sensitivity to danger. And this time, a feeling of danger awoke in him from the threat Zen posed.

On the other hand, Zen who had withstood this wave of attacks from the sky rending hoops rushed toward Jesse and aimed a punch at him.

His fist was hard, and the force contained in it was overwhelming. The blow was like stormy



sea waves, continuous and unrelenting. That was the power Zen obtained after he awakened seven dragon scales.

And his rival was not weak. Jesse soon recovered from his surprise and raised his hands before Zen's punch reached him. The life vitality condensed between Jesse's hands soon formed light green rings.

"Thick earth hoops! Come out!"

Jesse shouted out as his hands moved up and down, making quick gestures. Thick Earth Hoop was Jesse's defense refinement method. It generated circles of green rings from life vitality and then combined these rings to form a solid shield. The shield glimmered in the sun as it stood before Jesse protecting him from Zen's powerful punch.

"Clink! Clank! Clink! Clank!"



The thick earth hoops withstood Zen's heavy blow. The rings rattled against each other and gave out a burst of clinking sound.

Even though Jesse's thick earth hoops protected him from Zen's punch, most of the force from the blow did not disappear and was transferred from the rings to Jesse, which pushed him back.

The force of this punch was so tremendous that Jesse flew out of the battle ring! Jesse did not break the one-punch defeat record of Vulture Peak.

However, Jesse was not a normal refiner.

If he had only relied on arduous training and consistent hard work to enter the nature level, he might become a common inner disciple of Vulture Peak, an ordinary refiner.



The thick earth hoops hit the ground beside the arena at tremendous speed, then bounced against the wall, and rushed back toward Jesse.

Jesse straightened his body as per his estimation of the direction of the flying rings. His feet landed on the thick earth hoops, and with the help of their force, he flew toward the arena again.

"Great move! What a perfect throw and leap by Jesse!"

"Yes, an excellent move. Indeed, within Vulture Peak, only Jesse is capable of staying calm and solving a problem in such a predicament!"

"When he was in the air, he threw his thick earth hoops. He needed to calculate the angle and the force to return his rings just below his feet. Such precise calculation in a short time is not an easy feat. I think most people would not



annoyed at his helplessness. He had witnessed the hardness of Zen's physical body and didn't want to fight against Zen, body to body. How could this man refine his body to such overwhelming strength that he could bear the attacks of the sky rending hoops without being grievously injured?

Unfortunately, he had no other choice but to meet Zen head-on.

With a sigh, Jesse formed his thick earth hoops to protect his body in the hope that they would withstand Zen's punch.

He hoped in vain. Same as the last time, Jesse was pushed back by the force of the blow, and he shot out of the battle ring before his feet could touch the ground of the arena.

Jesse was not the kind of person to give up. And so, he used the reverse force of his thick earth hoops to push himself back into the



four and even five times, they were speechless, and a dull expression came on their faces.

Even Mia Mu and Aura Su who were standing in the distance felt speechless at the strange fight between Jesse and Zen. They looked at each other, noticed the same confusion in each other's eyes, and turned back to observe the fight in the battle ring.

After a long time, Mia could not resist saying with clenched teeth, "Aura, your outer disciple, Zen Luo is awful. How can he treat Jesse as if Jesse were a ball! Throwing him toward the sky, and not allowing him back to the ground?"

On hearing her complaints, Aura touched her long hair and murmured, "And, that.... I think Zen is afraid of Jesse's strength. After all, Jesse is a nature creature, and he has many advantages over Zen."

"But isn't it unreasonable for them to keep



fighting this way? When will it come to an end?" Mia was a little anxious.

However, Aura was not as anxious as Mia. She was calm most of the time and even smiled slyly when Mia was not looking. She did not need to be worried, as she had thought through this impasse long before. She was well prepared to lose this challenge. And if she happened to win, of course, she would not refuse it.

Mia was concerned about the current situation.

Although Jesse was a nature creature, he had been in the nature level for a short time. The life vitality in his body was not infinite. If the situation continued to go on like this, Jesse would most likely lose the battle after his life vitality was exhausted.

Mia was not the only one aware of this point. Jesse also knew this shortcoming.



Chapter 128 Cheers (Part One)

Suspended in the air and bathed in heavenly golden light, Jesse looked like a God. Everyone could feel the power and pressure radiated from Jesse.

The weaker outer disciples were so overwhelmed by this pressure that they were forced to kneel on the ground.

The golden light turned into a huge golden circle and fell toward the battle ring. Eventually, it surrounded the arena.

Jesse stood by the edge of the golden circle with outstretched arms. A few quick gestures later he said, "Destruction Hoop! Go!"



If he revealed his secret weapon in advance, his future opponents would be cautious and prepared.

Given how the battle between him and Zen was going, Jesse couldn't think of a better idea.

Aside from the Destruction Hoop, Jesse was unsure of what other attack methods would secure his victory against Zen.

What upset Jesse more was that he was forced to use this key advantage for a boy at the marrow refining level!

The marrow refining level...

Jesse had been confident that he could beat Zen easily. For a nature creature, dealing with a refiner at the marrow refining level would be as simple as squishing an ant. However, he didn't expect to face such a difficult situation.



could concentrate all of its power within itself. Even if someone was standing outside but near to the circle, he would not suffer any injuries.

Thus, the energy within the Destruction Hoop was concentrated, just like a volcano waiting to erupt.

The outer disciples of Drizzle Peak turned pale when they saw the terrible power of the Destruction Hoop.

The area inside the Destruction Hoop looked like hell. Under such a powerful attack, they all thought that Zen's body would be torn to pieces.

Most disciples were horrified and shook their head when they thought that Zen would not survive this time.

Since the Destruction Hoop's golden light continued to twinkle, the disciples of Drizzle



"Zen won! Drizzle Peak won!"

Nory was the first to regain his senses. As the realization hit him, Nory shouted with glee.

Then countless voices chimed in.

At last, all of the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak began to chant loudly.

"Zen! Zen!"

"Zen! Zen!"

They roared, whistled, and waved their hands.

Zen's face flushed. He had been so focused on surviving the battle that he hadn't noticed that he was standing at the edge of the arena, naked. Although all the disciples at Drizzle Peak were male, Zen felt embarrassed.

Sean noticed Zen's awkward expression.



toward the battle ring. They appeared joyful.

If defeated, the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak stood to lose a month's supply of pills and elixirs. This victory by Zen had earned them the supply of elixirs and pills that would have gone to Vulture Peak. The disciples of Drizzle Peak were not celebrating this win because they had earned more supplies. The real highlight had been Zen's perfect performance. He was the hero of Drizzle Peak!

Not far away, Mia's face darkened.

She clenched her teeth and said to Aura, "Well, you can uncover your eyes. That kid has put on clothes."

Aura pulled her hands off her face and said with a sly smile, "Mia, I'm sorry!"

"What good is an apology? Vulture Peak has been defeated. We've lost a month's supply of



pills and money. While that is not a big deal, Jesse, who is my best outer disciple, has been beaten by a little guy at the marrow refining level. It is a big blow for him," said Mia, sounding depressed.

Since Jesse was one of her key disciples, Mia certainly felt upset.

As Zen had defeated Jesse, Mia worried that his confidence in his martial arts cultivation would be destroyed. The speed of his progress would also slow down.

With a serious expression, Aura said, "While on the road of cultivating martial arts, we all run into strong enemies. If his confidence is damaged so easily, he is too self-conceited. We all know that failure is the mother of success. isn't it?"

Hearing Aura's words, Mia didn't contradict her.



disciples from noble clans rivaling you all the time.

Zen thought all of these things while preparing and could not help but get a little worried, but this did not stop him from leaving the confines of his own room to go for the ridge.

As he walked out of the door, there was an extensive amount of outer disciples that greeted Zen very warmly along the way.

They knew Zen not as the new disciple that he used to be. They had already been certain that this man was going to make a huge reputation for himself after he defeated Leo who was ranked thirtieth among all the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak.

What they had not anticipated was the immediate rise of Zen and no one had foreseen that it would happen in this way.



report to you," said Zen who then entered the room.

When Aura saw him, she was only kind enough to give him a cold nod with her grim expression on her face.

Just because Zen made it out alive, did not mean she had already forgiven him for his carelessness. She knew better than to just forgive such a reckless decision.

"Look who we have here," Aura would boldly say. "An outer disciple of Drizzle Peak has joined the blade locusts hunt, but how many of these beasts can he actually kill? Did this man take a hundred? Maybe two hundred?" She said all of these things in such a sarcastic tone, clearly mocking the man she had no mercy for.

Zen knew that Aura had no tolerance for what he had done and simply let out a sigh to express his frustration. She was still angry after



all. On top of that, it was never as if Aura had a great hold of her temper in the first place.

All the helpless man could do was silently take the crystal cores out of his space ring; these crystal cores were from ordinary blade locusts.

One, two, three...

A small mountain of crystal cores were piled on the ground.

"I counted them again yesterday just to be sure. All in all, I've gathered 4, 626 common crystal cores." Zen said wearing a smile, knowing that the amount he presented would move Aura.

Aura smirked and said, "Four thousand, huh? And you're already cocky enough to think that this is an impressive number? This only gets you two hundred points. This is just like I expected."



She crossed her arms, but before she could turn away Zen took out more crystal cores from his space ring and made a new pile next to the first one he had made.

"I also acquired higher kinds of these crystal cores from blade locusts officers."

The arc on Aura's thin lips grew steeper when Zen once again exceeded her expectations. With the additional crystals, he would get five hundred points, which was not a small number for an outer disciple.

"You got five hundred points now, but what of it? Five hundred points won't get you very far here in Cloud Sect."

Her eyes narrowed and she still hadn't lost the sarcastic tone she was talking with. Despite her high status, Aura was still a capricious-natured woman.



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being generated from the life vitality of White Fiend and Black Fiend covered Zen from head to toe.

Zen looked up and around. Except for the black and white smoke, everything else around him had disappeared. He could not even see Martin who had been standing right next to him.

This smoke could not only obstruct a person's vision, but it could also mute sounds. Because of this, Zen could not hear any other sound, except his breathing.

In the face of such a bizarre scene, Zen stood quietly without moving around. He knew it would be wise for him to remain calm and adjust to the changing surroundings. He needed to think carefully before taking any action.

The black smoke and white smoke was so strange that their function could not be limited to isolating a target. There must be some other



Zen frowned when the smoke vanished. He hadn't been expecting this result.

He had thought that White Fiend and Black Fiend were hiding in this cloud of smoke. But now, it seemed as though the human figure and the knife were illusions generated by the smoke.

After he scattered the black smoke, other masses of black smoke floated toward him from the side. This smoke also transformed into human shape, armed with a long knife aimed at Zen, just as the previous smoke had done.

"Bum!" "Bum!"

Faced with three clouds of smoke, Zen aimed two punches at the nearest clouds of human-shaped smoke. They, too, disappeared like the previous smoke.



Just as Zen was about to attack the third cloud of smoke, a black fist silently appeared and landed a blow on Zen. Since Zen had not been expecting this, he was caught off-guard.

"Peng!"

The sound of the fist punching his body was deafening. It also indicated the extent of the power wielded by a refiner at the nature level.

Besides his powerful punch, Zen was defenseless. He wasn't even dressed in armor! As a result, he was pushed back dozens of feet before he landed on the ground. The impact and force were so strong that Zen rolled on the ground several times before coming to a stop.

'The power of a refiner at the nature level is terrifying! Fortunately, I have refined my body to be a spiritual weapon. Otherwise, I would have been severely injured by this punch!' Zen thought as he slowly stood from the ground.



rushed toward Zen.

Soon, Zen was encircled by the smoke-troops. Unsure of what to do, Zen cautiously studied the smoke-troops. It was hard for him to identify the location of White Fiend from the smoke around.

At this moment, Zen had not yet been a half-step into the nature level. Although he could form mature life energy, he could not release his life energy to disperse these thousands of troops quickly.

He could only fight against them passively. Zen steadied himself and began attacking the smoke-troops nearby to disperse them. Equally, he was quick to dodge any attacks from the smoke-troops.

"Go to hell!" Zen shouted to the smoke. As quickly as he could, Zen launched a series of attacks.



tired. They recovered soon after Zen smashed them. This was the reason why White Fiend was very proud of his abilities. It was also why he spoke to Zen with arrogance and confidence.

As soon as White Fiend finished his provocation, he formed a fist from a cloud of white smoke and punched Zen in the ribs.

"Bash!"

The blow was so mighty that Zen was pushed back again. He seemed like a kite with a broken line. With this attack, Zen found himself flying dozens of feet before hitting the ground. The force was so strong that a loud sound echoed in the otherwise quiet scene.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: huangxiahan; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 112 All Living Creatures Below The Nature Level (Part Two)

Since Zen's body was a spiritual weapon, it was not easy to injure him. However, he could still feel the pain from the blows. Thus, the piercing pain that resulted from the punches still made him groan. Despite the agony, Zen stood and took several deep breaths to ease the pain.

At the same time, he was watchful. It would be careless of Zen not to pay attention to the smoke around him. The thick black smoke and white smoke mixed and billowed around Zen, forming human figures now and then.



Maybe Zen's injuries instigated Black Fiend and White Fiend. They began forcing the smoke toward Zen much quicker than before. Shrieking with crazed laughter, they rushed toward Zen under cover of the thick smoke. In their minds, Zen was like a lamb to the slaughter. He could not escape.

However, Zen was far from what they thought. He had been observing the smoke. Since he couldn't see clearly, Zen had also been listening carefully. He wanted to identify the location of the two arrogant rivals by their distinguished laughter.

Soon, he noticed a cloud of black smoke forming beside him. Not surprisingly, a laugh like that of Black Fiend came from inside this block of smoke. Without hesitating, Zen swung his fist into the smoke and broke it up. However, there was nothing in it. Black Fiend was not there.



and his strength and power improved tremendously. Stimulated by the warm currents, Zen could not feel more comfortable.

However, he knew that this assault by the two rivals at the nature level could not continue. Zen thought, 'I must think of a way to deal with them.'

Their voices were sometimes far away and sometimes nearby. Their laughter might originate on Zen's left and immediately after, be heard on his right. It was hard for Zen to locate them by their sounds. That meant, if Zen could not find their actual bodies in the smoke, he could only stay in this impasse.

'What can I do?' After a few more rounds, Zen lay on the ground, gasping for breath. He did not stand up immediately as he had done previously. He used this short break to think of a strategy.



methods or has magical defensive weapons to guard his body." On thinking this, White Fiend felt excitement surging through him.

"Ha-ha, that could be! Let's kill him. We will not only complete Fren's assignment, but we will also gain his magical weapons or refinement methods. My buddy, let's channel all our power and use our best skills. I don't believe that his body is made of iron and that it cannot be smashed!" Black Fiend laughed wildly.

"Well, I could not agree with you more, buddy. We have played with this boy for a long enough time. Now it's time to let this boy know what real fear is!" White Fiend nodded as he replied.

"Taste my Nine-dragon kill!"

The black smoke and white smoke billowed and rolled up to the sky.



Then the two clouds of smokes mixed and transformed into nine giant dragons. They hovered in the sky, before roaring and flying around. Their mouths were wide open, showing their sharp teeth. The environment changed suddenly as huge clouds rolled up accompanied by thunder and lightning.

After the nine dragons formed by the smoke circled in the sky several times, they roared and rushed to Zen from nine directions.

Seeing the nine flying dragons approaching at high speed, Zen frowned in deep thought.

This thick smoke was only deceptive tricks.

And they were formed by White Fiend's and Black Fiend's life vitality. So, the thick fog would not cause any trouble to these two Fiends.



killing intents. It seemed as though the two Fiends wanted to kill Zen in one attack!

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: huangxiahan; Editor: Arathi

as he lay there, the Black Fiend faded and questioned everything.

"No! Black Fiend!"

Shrouded in mist, the White Fiend hollered in anger at the sight of his partner dying at Zen's hands and vengefully sent the halberd hurtling at Zen.

Having already penetrated the veil of invisibility cloaking the White Fiend, Zen dodged his attack easily.

Realizing he was at a disadvantage, the White Fiend decided to conceal himself amid the mists and waited for the right moment to destroy Zen.

Without mercy, Zen stabbed her utilizing his soul strength.



However, gradually, the mist dissipated and Zen came into view, standing near the remains of his two opponents.

Emerging the victor was Zen!

Sighing in relief, Martin admired Zen's ingenuity and ability to create consecutive miracles.....

Meanwhile, Martin realized Zen could defeat him with a single blow.....

However, he thought it was reasonable and he could accept the fact.

As soon as he saw the severed heads of the two evils, Liam's shocked panic paralyzed him.

His entire body was racked with violent, uncontrollable shuddering.



pointed his broken flying knife menacingly at Liam.

"I... I am nothing! A beast without human feelings..." Liam whimpered as he groveled, prostrating himself before Zen until blood covered his forehead.

Softening somewhat, Zen's heart was moved by Liam's suffering.

Raised in a scholarly family, Zen was gentle by nature, though he'd come to realize that by killing, all disputes ended.

But, killing still was not a way he liked.

A glimmer of mercy crept into Zen's mind.

In that instant, Liam triggered his golden needle, sending it at Zen.

"Ppffft!"



level.

Even though Roger was at the nature level, if Liam had attacked him, Roger would die on the spot.

But, Zen was blessed with a superhuman ability and was invulnerable to poisons.

As Zen walked away, chilliness greeted him.

The chilly force spread, covering the ground and freezing everything, including the plants, rocks, and soil as it moved past them.

Heading at Zen, the chilly force raced along.

A chill touched Zen's feet causing him to jump to one side.

"Cre-ka-rack!" crackling noises rose as ice crystals covered with thorns fanned out in front of Zen.



The icy spear whizzed along the air at Zen as fast as the golden needle that Liam had sent at him earlier.

Sensing the threat behind him, Zen was about to turn and dodge it, but that proved to be a futile move.

"Swoo-oosh!" as the spear sliced the air, it passed Zen's shoulder, the razor-like tip shredding his tunic and cutting into his skin as it flew. Blood spurted like a geyser from the fresh wound.

'Randall's prowess is worthy of his reputation in martial arts!' Zen admired his rival's talent silently.

Glancing at the graze on his shoulder, Zen knew he had barely managed to escape death. Randall's ability and force were, indeed, a threat to take seriously.



Chapter 114 The Raging Battle

Surprising Randall with the daunting power of his broken flying knife gave Zen an upper hand.

Overconfident in his icy shield which normally could hold up under several blows from even nature creatures, Randall was left vulnerable to Zen's secret weapon.

All of this left Randall seething with resentment over his failures in battling Zen.

Extending his arm, Randall channeled his life vitality, instantly transforming the area into a smooth surface of gleaming ice.

After it formed, he got to his feet to ski, at full



Randall had several decades of combat experience, and all of it was proving useless at that moment.

Randall howled as his life vitality flowed, transforming into numerous ice spikes that were unleashed in every direction.

"Ping, ping, clatter, clank, tink...." the sound was like a shower of crystalline glass falling.

Racing and dodging to reach the safe zone, Zen found his enemy was hot on his trail. When Zen reached the supposed haven, he looked back amazed at the degree of destruction Randall had delivered.

Wherever Randall passed, anything and everything in reach, including the shrubs and grass, were penetrated with ice spikes.

Randall's rank four life vitality was so strong



chase.

As Zen continued though, he noticed, the more time went by, the more ineffectual his attacks were proving.

With how nimble and light Randall was on his feet, the powerful broken flying knife didn't pose much threat to him.

Adding to that, with the distance Randall was keeping from Zen, it meant the spiritual thorn was less useful against Randall.

Given the fact that Zen hadn't developed a thorough understanding of the spiritual thorn technique yet, his range of attack wasn't wide enough to be much of a threat.

The two of them covered another stretch quickly, and Randall dodged Zen's offense, sneering, "You're finished now Zen!"



his rival.

"As a leading master, I would be ashamed if I wasn't able to seize you!" Heading for Zen, Randall took calculated uniform strides, in an effort to intimidate Zen as he approached.

"Randall, you're worthy of your reputation," acknowledged Zen in a tone of admiration.

Randall shook his head and said, "I would be depressed if I were you at my weakest!"

"Really.....?" prodded Zen, pretending to be engrossed in what Randall had to say in an effort to catch him off guard, all the while applying a sharp thorn.

"The spiritual thorn!"

Regrettably, his rival evaded the attack, moving as nimble as a sparrow to dodge the fatal blow before beginning his slow, calculated approach



at Zen again. "No more of your tricks! I've become tired of them!"

"You're not a fool," offered Zen his tone dripping with sarcasm.

"Thanks for the recognition! But, I'm not all that flattered because you're done for!" As Randall spoke, a colossal ice spike was taking shape gradually in preparation to deal a fatal blow to Zen.

But, Zen just shook his head, smirking as he continued, "I mean you're more of a fool than I imagined!"

Slightly stunned, Randall grinned slyly, as though he was ready to strike his final blow against Zen and dramatically stated, "I hope you are prepared because today you meet your end!" With that said, Randal aimed the colossal weaponry at Zen.



After the last of the ice crystals shattered, Floyd Xun continued pointing his index finger.

Impressively, Floyd only needed to gesture using one finger to crush the icy hills and the entire ice valley.

Watching his display of talent, Zen couldn't help but be stupefied. He thought, 'Wow! His talent is amazing!'

"Randall, you repay my kindness with this? Even after being granted three promotions, you go and do something like this! You're a disappointment to me!" In Floyd's eyes disappointment flashed.

"Gen... General... I.. I didn't mean to. It's just that the Zhuge Clan..." related Randall, stumbling over his words. Floyd frightened Randall out of his wits. At that moment, it dawned on him, that the chase Zen had led



Jon replied, "Yes sir, general!"

For a moment, Floyd gave Zen a meaningful glance, before briskly striding away. It only took a few seconds before he was out of Zen's line of vision.

After being scrutinized once for mere seconds by Floyd, Zen felt a disturbing pressure, and within, it was as if the general had gone through all of his secrets. Even quite a while after his encounter, Zen's heart was still racing.

While calming himself, Zen faced Jon. Gesturing respectfully, he said, "Thank you, Officer Gou! If it weren't for you, I'm afraid I wouldn't have survived this ordeal."

Laughing briskly, Jon said, "Think nothing of it! Roger has reminded me repeatedly, that it's my duty. But to be honest, it's more amazing that you lured Randall out so far!"



Nodding, Zen confirmed, "Yes, he is dead."

"Did you really kill him?" Martin asked, his eyes widening.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Donna Frank



Chapter 116 The Homecoming (Part Two)

Shrugging, Zen smiled and said, "How could I kill him? No, the Flying Dragon General killed Randall."

"The Flying Dragon General?!" At the mention of the vice commander from Dragon Fort, there was a look of awe on Martin's face.

"Now that Randall has been executed, the Flying Dragon General doesn't want the news to spread. Tell your soldiers," cautioned Zen.

"Yes, of course! You can rest assured that my soldiers won't breathe a single word of what's happened!" replied Martin guardedly. It was



snatched the two blades up to melt them into iron essence.

From past experiences, Zen felt confident that he'd receive ten drops of essence in total since one short halberd should melt down to five drops of iron essence.

Pleasantly surprised, Zen was able to procure fifteen drops of iron essence from the halberds!

Seeing how much the two blades produced only served to confuse Zen about how much iron essence could be obtained from a mysterious weapon. Only one thing was certain, and that was, the higher the grade of the mysterious weapon was, the more iron essence would be received.

What Zen didn't know was that the pair of short halberds together was comparable to a fairy weapon. It was a shame the White and Black Fiends were killed before they attacked



strength and Zen's. Zen's strength was superior to refiners at the same level, while he was only at the marrow refining level, which was low.

Nevertheless, Zen couldn't do anything about advancing his refining level faster. There was no shortcut, only a lifetime of persistent practice.

Zen entered Drizzle Peak a month ago, and it was a fantastic feat that he was able to attain the marrow refining level in such a short time. While he was gaining experience at the Dragon Fort, Zen felt a lot of the impurities in his marrow had been removed, and he was closer to the peak of the marrow refining level.

As there were many superb disciples at the Cloud Sect, the marrow refining level was not remarkable.

After a great deal of thought, Zen decided that after he paid a visit to Hell Mountain to see Yan, he would find a way to be beaten to create



When the chariot flew by the towering Hell Mountain, Zen felt his heart beating faster.

He'd taken part in the task to hunt blade locusts to collect points, just to become qualified to gain entry into Hell Mountain.

At the thought of seeing Yan soon, Zen's mood was light.

After the giant chariot slowly landed on Bluesky Parking Ground, Zen and the other disciples of the Cloud Sect rushed out. Zen strode briskly to Drizzle Peak.

Zen accepted the task from Master Su, so, he felt he should report the results to her.

As he walked, Zen was lost in thought speculating about the blade locust task, and about halfway up the middle peak where outer disciples met for practices, Zen came across all



of the outer disciples with nervous looks on their faces as they discussed something.

"Sean, Nory, what's going on? Why are all the outer disciples here?" asked Zen curiously.

Seeing Zen, Sean's and Nory's eyes lit up.

"Hey, buddy! You left the peak secretly, disappearing for almost a month. Where were you, messing around in the Imperial Capital?" questioned Sean while a broad smile spread across his face.

"Zen isn't like that! He must've had urgent business to deal with!" argued Nory, shaking his head and scowling slightly. What Nory lacked in physical strength, he made up for in perceiving a person's character.



at the Sect. Some disciples were so diligent that they rarely left their cultivation sites except for meal times. It was thus beyond Zen's expectation to see so many disciples gathered at Drizzle Peak.

"Zen, you've been away for a while. You probably don't know that Drizzle Peak has gotten into trouble recently!" said Nory. "But the matter doesn't relate to us. After all, we can't interfere in the disputes of those disciples."

"Drizzle Peak has gotten into trouble? What kind of trouble?" asked Zen in surprise. Although Drizzle Peak was ranked last among the 33 peaks, it was still a part of Cloud Sect. Who dared to cause trouble?

Seeing the bewilderment on Zen's face, Sean said, "A few days ago, there was a conflict between disciples of Drizzle Peak and those of Vulture Peak. It grew increasingly serious, and



The comprehensive strength of Drizzle Peak ranked last from among all peaks, which made other peaks feel that their strength was far better than that of disciples at Drizzle Peak.

According to the rules of Cloud Sect, if the disciples of Vulture Peak won in the challenge, they would get a month's expenses and pills distributed by Cloud Sect to the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak.

The masters of Drizzle Peak knew that their outer disciples were no match for those of Vulture Peak. They were not supposed to accept the challenge. But the truth was they had accepted the fight. Sean did not know why they did so.

Zen, Nory, and Sean crowded into the arena with the other outer disciples.

Since the challenge involved the welfare of all



Chapter 118 Getting Nervous (Part Two)

"Look, the match is on. The candidate chosen by Vulture Peak is Tan Tian. He has defeated three of the outer disciples from Drizzle Peak already. I hope Wurth can beat him!"

"Alas, it's hard to say. Yes, Wurth is strong. But even if he defeats Tan, what's the use? Tan has already proven to be too strong for our disciples. But he only ranks 16th at Vulture Peak. Even if Wurth defeats Tan, Vulture Peak will send a higher ranking person next. Then how will we deal with it?"

The outer disciples of Drizzle Peak were talking about the challenge. Obviously, they thought that the prospects of Drizzle Peak were not



33 peaks!"

Zen frowned when he heard what Tan said. At the same time, the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak were getting even more hostile, and the name-calling became louder. Things were going to get out of control.

At this moment, Wurth, who had been smiling and standing silently in the battle ring, suddenly raised his hand.

At the moment, his expression grew serious and all traces of his smile disappeared. It was a weird thing to see a smiling, fat man showing such a calm expression.

His action immediately caused the other disciples to stop.

Wurth stood at the seventh rank from among the outer disciples at Drizzle Peak.



But many disciples suspected that Wurth had concealed his real strength. If he did his best, he would be in the top five.

"Tan, the challenge between two peaks is a very ordinary competition in Cloud Sect. It's unacceptable for you to talk like that," said Wurth with a straight face.

Wurth was a good-tempered man. If anyone else had been contesting Tan, he would have been scolding Tan. But Wurth wouldn't do that. As a matter of fact, people who really knew Wurth could say that despite his pleasant demeanor, Wurth was furious at the moment. They knew that Wurth displayed his anger differently from others.

However, Tan couldn't detect Wurth's anger at all. He shook his head and with a contemptuous sneer asked, "But I did speak like that. Now, what are you gonna do? And



what's wrong with what I said? I think you should give up right now. If there's no one stronger, we Vulture Peak will win the challenge. It's a real pity that I can't find an outstanding disciple from Drizzle Peak to fight. It disappoints me to see a fat man up here."

"We will play, and then you can tell us who is more powerful. Let's stop talking and get started. I really don't like the way you guys whine. So much for Vulture Peak," Wurth shook his head and retorted.

"Don't want me to whine?" Tan laughed and said, "OK, then, let's begin. I'll give you a good hiding and ensure that you have no power to fight back."

Then Tan raised his hands and burst out brown life energy. With a sudden and loud shout, he put the brown life energy into the ground of the battle ring.



"Sacred Wood Thrust!"

"Peng, Peng!"

When Zen saw this, his brows shot up in surprise. Tan's life energy seemed to have a strong affinity for the metal element. He was able to put his life energy into the battle ring made of gold and iron.

Then, a shining brown light appeared at Wurth's feet. Two brown wood stakes started to come out from where he stood.

Tan was only a half-step into the nature level. The Sacred Wood created by his life energy was half virtual and half real, as it had not yet congealed into a physical form. If he had reached the nature level, the stakes rising from the battle ring would be pieces of real Sacred Wood.



Even so, the attack power of these pieces of Sacred Wood should not be underestimated. If the Sacred Wood hit Wurch, he would be severely wounded and would lose half of his life. Zen was getting nervous at this scene.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Julie; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 119 Braving A Challenge

A large person is supposed to move awkwardly and react slowly as compared to leaner people.

But Wurth was an exception.

Wurth, though exceptionally fat, moved dexterously and lightly in the battle ring to dodge Tan's signature martial art, the Sacred Wood Thrust.

Wurth was able to steer clear of each fatal blow.

Tan's violent and intensive session proved depressingly futile.



directly. "Learn my name after you beat me!"

"Since it is so, let me witness your martial prowess!" Wurth said as he prepared for the new attacks.

His life energy helped him move and react quickly. He seemed to be as nimble as a swallow!

Zen had noticed that Wurth had fought Tan with ease. While battling the short man, Wurth's speed reached its pinnacle. In fact, Wurth was so quick that it looked like his shadow was falling behind.

"You think you can move faster than me? How ridiculous this is!" The short man was enraged. Then he began to move at full speed, which was faster than

Wurth's!



was flushed with pain.

"Wurth, are you okay?" Zen helped Wurth lie down and then inquired about Wurth's condition.

Wurth moaned and touched his chest. Zen gently felt Wurth's chest and realized that he had broken ribs. Despite his injuries, Wurth was happy to see Zen after his long absence.

Zen nodded and handed an elixir from his space ring to Wurth and said, "Wurth, please consume this elixir. It will help heal you. We'll talk later."

Meanwhile, the short man was challenging the other disciples at Drizzle Peak truculently. "Who is your final candidate? Come out and fight with me," he said arrogantly.

According to the rules and regulations, five contestants from each peak were eligible for the



battle ring.

Four contestants from Drizzle Peak had lost. Now, only one contestant would be permitted to fight.

"I think Gury who ranks fourth in our peak is a good choice for the next battle."

"No, Terry is better than Gury!"

"I think Henry has a greater chance of winning the last battle!"

"Although Henry stands a good chance against the short man, he is currently refining his martial arts at a retreat. Our rivals are taking advantage of this to challenge us. Our masters, who know this, should have refused the challenge!"

Henry Hao ranked first among the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak and beyond.



It was said that Henry was refining his martial arts to enter the nature level, and was thus unable to participate in the challenge.

"I think every member of Drizzle Peak is a coward. Now your failure is sealed!" The short man challenged Drizzle Peak in a humiliating manner as he was delighted at his invincibility.

At that moment, Zen rose to undertake the challenge. The cold expression glimmering on his face revealed his feelings of being taunted in such a manner.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Zoe Lin; Editor: Arathi



of Drizzle Peak?"

"No, he can't. He did beat Leo, but Leo was only ranked 30th from among Drizzle Peak's outer disciples. What makes Zen think that he's qualified to fight disciples from Vulture Peak?"

"God, We are done for. We are about to lose this challenge. I will not get the elixir next month. How will I cultivate then?"

The outer disciples of Drizzle Peak bemoaned their situation.

The short man in the battle ring stared at Zen. When he heard the comments from the crowd, the jeering expression on his face intensified. "You? A guy at the marrow refining level? Haha... Well, I'll take on your challenge. But don't expect me to show any mercy!"

Challenges between peaks were common. To ensure that each peak had a fair chance to win,



Then he stared at the short man standing opposite him.

Zen had witnessed the man's fight with Wurth. His best feature was his incredible speed. Zen figured that he might not be able to compete with this man in terms of speed, but when it came to strength...

With a confident smile on his face, Zen made a slight bow to his opponent and said, "You just told Wurth that we could only learn your name when we beat you."

The short man let out a shrill laugh and cried wildly, "I'm afraid you'll never know my name!"

Zen shook his head and replied, "You never know until we fight."

"Hum, Drizzle Peak is strange! How dare a boy at the marrow refining level talk to me like that?"



Maybe... You and I are no match for him."

"We're no match for him?" echoed the other black-robed disciple. His expression conveyed the bewilderment he was feeling. "We are nature creatures now. We can take advantage of our vitality to manipulate our energy into weapons. Our means of attack far exceed those of a man at the marrow refining level. How come he... "

"I don't know," Glenn interrupted with a shake of his head. "I just feel that way."

"Wow... "

After a while, all the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak recovered from the shock and began to cheer.

Zen had demonstrated more power than they imagined he had.



However, these outer disciples were aware that this victory did not mean that Zen would win the whole challenge.

After all, Zen had to battle with three other strong disciples from Vulture Peak later, and presumably, each would be more powerful than the previous contestant.

It didn't matter. Zen had saved Drizzle Peak's reputation! Although Drizzle Peak ranked last from among the 33 peaks, everybody who was its disciple, valued the collective honor of the peak.

It took a lot of courage for Zen to stand up for Drizzle Peak at such times.

The faces of the twenty or so disciples who had come from Vulture Peak, darkened.

They sent four men through the crowd to drag



His question was like a hard slap to his enemies' faces.

"Humph, you, a guy at the marrow refining level, how dare you be so arrogant? I'll challenge you!"

A man stepped out from the disciples of Vulture Peak. He was big and burly, and his white robe bulged with his taut muscles.

The strong man sprang to his feet and fell on the ring like an iron tower. When his feet touched the ring, he deliberately launched his life energy, which resulted in a depression in the ring. This was quite shocking to see as the ring was made of refined iron. All of a sudden, the entire battle ring shook and thundered with tremendous momentum. It was clear that he was trying to show off.

"I'm Keith Hu, ranked ninth at Vulture Peak!"



expanding muscles. Standing in the ring, he looked like a giant, and his horrifying explosive power could be seen from his size.

Seeing this scene, the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak felt anxious for Zen.

Vulture Peak was indeed much stronger than Drizzle Peak.

Zen had just beaten one guy, and here stood another who looked more powerful than the last. Keith Hu was only ranked ninth at Vulture Peak. The disciples from Drizzle Peak wondered how formidable their top-ranked outer disciple would be.

"I have no other merit but great strength. If I lose control of my force, your body might be smashed to a pulp. You'd better think again. I will accept if you surrender now!" said Keith Hu with a serious look.



Zen observed his face and realized that Keith Hu was sincere. It was for Zen's sake that he asked Zen to surrender.

"No, thank you anyway," Zen refused with a laugh.

"Then, be careful!" Keith Hu took a deep breath and charged at Zen, like a wild, ancient beast.

Power off

"Thump, thump, thump..."

a deafening sound accompanied each step taken by Keith Hu.

As the saying goes, **Restart** of great strength can defeat ten men of martial arts. Keith Hu's attacks did not involve tricks or false moves, because he wanted to surpass Zen based on his power alone.



retreat more than a dozen steps.

Keith wanted to stop his body from backtracking but found himself unable to do so. He stumbled back several more steps before falling outside the arena.

Again, Zen won the fight with a punch.

Just a punch.

Zen had proven himself to be more powerful!

The disciples of Drizzle Peak felt as though their hearts were jumping out of their mouths.

Zen's performance today had completely subverted some of their understanding of the world.

It was hard to find a fitting word to describe Zen's performance today. The closest one that any disciple could come up with to explain how



they felt upon seeing Zen defeat the two disciples from Vulture Peak was 'enchanting'.

Who would have expected that Keith, who was famous for his strength, would also be beaten by Zen with just one punch? What surprised everyone even more was that Zen didn't have a special knack for fighting. The only special skill Zen possessed was overwhelming strength.

Zen continued to flex his arms as he asked the disciples of Vulture Peak with an indifferent look, "Who's next?"

Although Keith had been beaten with a punch, he was not injured. The stubborn expression on his face showed that he refused to accept his failure. "Wait a minute! I was not ready. I didn't expect you to be so powerful! I want to battle once again!"

"According to the rules of the challenge, a contestant loses when he falls outside the battle



ring. Who's next?" said Zen as he shook his head. He had just returned to Drizzle Peak today. He wanted a quick victory to end the fight. So, it was natural that he wouldn't want to give Keith another chance.

Soon afterward, another person from Vulture Peak was dispatched to fight with Zen.

For the past two consecutive rounds, Zen had defeated each opponent with only one punch.

Undoubtedly, this put a great deal of pressure on the outer disciples of Vulture Peak.

Although Zen was at the marrow refining level, his display of strength had earned him some caution and respect from the contestants of Vulture Peak. none of them would despise him.

Zen hadn't defeated Keith by tricks or luck. Instead, he had used his actual strength, which proved that Zen was far more powerful than



those at the same level as him.

Soon, the fourth person sent by Vulture Peak walked into the battle ring. He stared at Zen's every movement prudently.

Unfortunately, Zen did not give him any chance to attack.

Still using only one punch, Zen dispatched the fourth challenger from Vulture Peak by sending him flying out of the arena...

Jubilant, this was what the disciples from Drizzle Peak felt. No words could accurately describe their feelings. All they could do was cheer as if only this reaction could express their excitement.

Hundreds of feet away, two women stood on a small building. They had been watching every fight.



Both of them were elegant, poised, and startlingly beautiful.

"Master Su, you tricked me! You suggested that we should arrange a competition to motivate the outer disciples of your peak, to which I readily agreed. Then, I came over with the most talented outer disciples of Vulture Peak. But what I didn't know was that there is such a genius here..." The woman who had spoken was Mia Mu. She was one of the masters of Vulture Peak.

Actually, the two masters had cleverly arranged this challenge.

To motivate the disciples in their respective peaks and to encourage them to work harder, masters would apply almost all methods they could think of.

A challenge between peaks was a very effective



Chapter 123 Jesse Liu (Part Two)

If Drizzle Peak was defeated, it might affect the mood of its outer disciples for a short time. However, it would also help them to understand that they must work harder to catch up.

To achieve this, the disciples needed to understand, through personal experience, that only the weak could be beaten. That was why Master Su accepted the challenge.

Master Su's mouth crumpled as she looked at Zen. "This outer disciple accepted the task of killing blade locusts in the south and then left Drizzle Peak. I didn't expect that he would return in half a month. Besides, his strength



has grown incredibly quickly. I am surprised..."

"What? A disciple at the marrow refining level went to kill blade locusts? Did I hear it correctly? However, the strength of this kid is indeed enough for that kind of task," Mia Mu looked helplessly at the battle ring. "Such a ruthless kid. Every time he defeats his opponent with just a punch! It looks like he is humiliating them."

Hearing what Mia Mu said, Aura Su's lips lifted in a smug smile. Then she said, "That's because the disciples from your peak are too weak!"

"You are naughty. I am helping you to motivate your disciples. But you are laughing at me! Although Zen is powerful, Vulture Peak is not short of talent. The last one to battle should be Jesse. He is ranked number one at Vulture Peak, and he's already a nature creature. As long as Jesse joins the battle, there is no way



that Zen can win," said Mia Mu.

"A nature creature? Then why is he still an outer disciple?" wondered Master Su with surprise. Generally speaking, many outer disciples were promoted to the status of inner disciples every year. Many of these disciples were half-step into the nature level. It was thus, surprising that a disciple at the nature level had not been promoted.

Mia Mu smiled. "Is it possible that only Drizzle Peak has a genius? Vulture Peak also has talents. Why are you so surprised? Actually, Jesse broke through to the nature level about half a year after he entered Vulture Peak. Before we transfer him to an inner disciple, he is an outer disciple."

A nature creature? Master Su wasn't sure how she felt about this revelation. On the one hand, she really wanted to see if Zen could defeat a nature creature; while on the other hand, she



didn't want Zen to win.

'Alas! Let me see what will happen first.' Aura sighed.

On the other side of the battle ring stood another disciple. This was the fifth disciple sent by Vulture Peak. He should be the strongest outer disciple at Vulture Peak.

And he was Jesse Liu, a nature creature, who was now going to battle Zen.

Jesse didn't have an imposing manner. In fact, his features and his body structure were ordinary. If he walked on the street, people would barely remember what he looked like.

After Jesse Liu entered the battle ring, disciples from Drizzle Peak thought that they were going to win the challenge. Jesse, who was standing in front of them, seemed utterly inferior to the previous disciples sent by Vulture Peak.



Chapter 124 Sky-rending Hoop (Part One)

This was not the first time that Zen encountered a nature creature.

Several days ago, he confronted and killed White Fiend and Black Fiend with his old, dilapidated flying knife.

His successful assassination of White Fiend and Black Fiend could be mainly ascribed to this old and broken flying knife.

But now Zen was fighting inside a battle ring.

Although Cloud Sect had no strict rules



As before, both rings flew back upon impact with Zen's fist.

Very soon, Zen understood what Jesse intended to do.

However, by the time Zen came to this realization, it was a little too late. He saw that Jesse still stood where he had been, unceasingly waving his hands in the air. Then, one after another, more and more golden rings appeared around his hands.

A few moments later, seven golden rings were hovering over the battle ring.

Zen made a tenacious effort to hit these rings to prevent them from trapping him. However, Zen struggled to withstand the attacks of several rings.

At last, a golden ring flew through a flaw in



Zen's counter attack and trapped Zen. The golden ring tightened around Zen's torso, securing both his arms.

"Do you think that you can trap me with only a ring?"

Zen struggled in an attempt to loosen the golden ring and throw it off him.

He had assumed that based on his current strength, he could confront a nature creature. Zen was also confident that he could use his power to break the golden ring.

As he had expected, the golden ring didn't hold up against his aggressive struggle. Soon, it began to show faint cracks. But at this moment, other rings flew toward Zen and encircled him, one after another.

One or two golden rings couldn't withstand Zen's mighty power.



But when seven rings confined him, Zen felt challenged to free himself.

Just like a chopstick was easy to break, but it was extremely difficult to break a bunch of chopsticks.

As the rings imprisoned him, Zen took a deep breath and grumbled in a low voice.

Immediately, dark green light sparkled over seven dragon scales in his mind, and a great surge of strength was produced in him. A physical change could be seen in Zen as veins popped out all over his body.

Although Zen made every effort to break away, the rings didn't budge.

Seeing this, Jesse strolled over to Zen. With a light chuckle, he said, "It is impossible for you to shake off the rings. Even nature creatures



Zen had attempted to struggle and escape twice but failed. In view of his futile efforts, he gave up. At the same time, he forced a bitter smile across his face and snapped back, "You've just trapped me. But does this mean that I've been defeated?"

Zen's question left Jesse shocked, and he responded, "You can't move your hands or legs. And so, it is beyond doubt that you have been defeated."

"But as you can see, I am still standing inside the battle ring, right?" Zen retorted.

For a battle ring challenge, whether a person won or not was dependent upon two cases. The first way to ensure victory was to knock the opponent out so that he couldn't stand up anymore. The other way was to throw the opponent out of the battle ring.



The scene inside the battle ring confused the spectators.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Arathi

Chapter 125 Sky-rending Hoop (Part Two)

The disciples from Drizzle Peak had accepted the fact that Zen had been defeated when they saw that he couldn't break free from the rings.

They had known that Zen's failure was inevitable since Jesse was a nature creature.

Despite his defeat, they deemed that Zen was a credit to Drizzle Peak. He had defeated three opponents from Vulture Peak. That he had used a fist each time was even more astounding. Perhaps, this success would never be achieved by any outer disciple of Cloud Sect, now and forever.



Since Zen had tried his best, most disciples from Drizzle Peak thought they could do nothing but accept the truth of Zen's imminent failure.

But when Zen was dragged to the battle ring's boundary, something unexpected happened.

Jesse was holding his head and screaming as though he was in tremendous pain.

"Did he fall ill unexpectedly during the fight?"

"Hahaha. It would be so great if he is gravely ill. But, Jesse is a nature creature with a supernatural body. How is it possible for him to suffer from a serious illness?"

"Both of Zen's hands are fastened by the rings. It is impossible for Zen to do anything to hurt Jesse. How can Jesse be in such pain if he is not ill?"



Jesse's weird response provoked heated discussions among the disciples of Drizzle Peak. None could figure out the mystery!

The inner disciples dressed in black robes, however, had noticed some clues.

Glenn, one of the inner disciples, murmured to others around him, "Look. As I've mentioned before, this guy is exceptionally powerful for someone at the marrow refining level. My guess is that he doesn't merely fight based on his strength. He must have mastered other extraordinary skills."

The inner disciples around Glenn were stunned by his words, and one of them responded, "I haven't noticed this yet. What skills on earth could he have used to make Jesse shriek with such great pain?"

"If my memory serves, Zen has attacked Jesse



with his soul," said Glenn with a thoughtful expression.

"Attacked with his soul? Skills like this can be only used by a cultivator with a pretty strong soul. This guy's physical body is astonishingly strong. He has a strong soul too?" The inner disciple beside Glenn was flabbergasted.

Discerning the disciple's doubt, Glenn sighed, patted his shoulder, and said, "In such a big world, all sorts of strange things are possible. When I left my hometown, I was the highest ranked from among the young generation of T County. At that time, I was very proud of myself. I had all the favor, love, and mercy from God. But after I joined Cloud Sect, I have understood why it is said that there is always someone better than you no matter how good you think you are..."

At that moment, Zen focused all his attention on Jesse. Naturally, he didn't hear what Glenn



armed adult and thought of Zen to be naive.

In his opinion, he could easily defeat Zen by only using his life vitality.

Jesse had planned not to use any of his unique skills, as he had thought it sufficient to trap Zen with his sky-binding hoop and then throw him out of the battle ring.

Just as Jesse thought that he had won this fight against Zen, his opponent attacked him spiritually.

The pain from Zen's soul attack would be unforgettable for all of Jesse's life.

As a consequence, Jesse rapidly flinched after he recovered his senses.

As Jesse drew back, an old and dilapidated flying knife hovered over Zen's hand. It swirled around the rings around Zen's body. In the



Chapter 126 Fantastic Scene (Part One)

"Ah, Jesse went too far. It is only a challenge between two peaks. Why did he use that fierce strike? Does he want to kill Zen?"

"The battle ring is made of pure iron, which is very hard. But it was easily cut by the sky-rending hoops as if the ring was as soft as mud. If the sky-rending hoops touch a human, his body will be split in two!" ⓘ

"It's too dangerous. How will Zen deal with this attack?"

Now, everyone was worried about Zen. They watched him with bated breath.



When the sky-rending hoops neared Zen, he twisted his body at a strange angle and slid through the space among the hoops.

At the same time, leveraging his momentum, Zen dodged another four sky-rending hoops that had been flying above and below him. After his successful dodges, he ran toward Jesse at full speed.

The previous round of fighting between the two contestants had only been a prelude. And now formal combat, with fist to fist strikes, would begin between the two.

Jesse's face was calm as he watched Zen rushing toward him. He didn't seem to be flustered. Instead, his expression reflected the seriousness he felt. He waved his hand, and the seven sky-rending hoops left behind by Zen adjusted their directions and turned toward Zen again.



These seven sky-rending hoops were produced by Jesse's life vitality. Their weights were as light as air, and they could fly at a fantastically high speed.

Even though Zen was also very fast, he still needed to consider whether to boost his speed or to keep away from the hoops chasing him. If he did not dodge, he would be cut into pieces by these hoops before he could get close to Jesse.

This was also the reason why Jesse stood still and regarded Zen with his steady gaze. He had used the sky-rending hoops many times to defeat dozens of rivals. He understood how powerful the hoops were and what would be the result if someone met the sky-rending hoops directly. It could not be different this time, and he was sure that Zen would not dare use his body to fend off the attack from the sky-rending hoops.



However, Jesse was wrong this time.

If Zen's body had still been at the level of mysterious weapon, he would have been terrified of the cutting power of these sky-rending hoops. ①

However, his physical body had improved in strength after being cultivated by the fire of the Earth's core. His physical strength and body hardness were different from what he was at the level of mysterious weapon. So, Zen intended to use his body to counter the attack of the sky-rending hoops.

'Oh, my god! Why doesn't he run away? Is he crazy? Or does he want to die?'

Jesse was very confused when he saw that Zen did not have the slightest intention to dodge the attack. Such actions by Zen, in his eyes, were equal to suicide. How could a person face



the sharp hoops without any hesitance?

"Zen, run away! Be quick!"

"Oh, no! If he doesn't get out of the way, he will be cut into pieces by the sky-rending hoops!"

"Is Zen crazy? Let's stop here. Stop the sky-rending hoops. Come down from the arena, Zen. Please! Be quick!"

Seeing that Zen was not avoiding the attack, all the disciples of Drizzle Peak voiced their concerns. They shouted to get Zen's attention, hoping that he would listen to them and dodge the hoops or even give up the fight.

Although disciples within the peak were known to hold grudges and fight among themselves, when it came to challenges between peaks, the disciples of each peak stood united. They shared the same worry about Zen's safety.



his death. That was a good result for them.

Zen, as a representative of Drizzle Peak, had defeated three of Vulture Peak's top 20 disciples. And he only used one punch to win each fight. That was a big shame for every disciple of Vulture Peak!

This failure had never happened in the history of Vulture Peak, and it could not be forgotten or recovered by any means.

Besides, Zen was only at the marrow refining level. If he did not die today, he would grow quickly and become a significant threat to Vulture Peak. They were afraid that he would challenge all the disciples of their peak in the future.

Though it was too early to foresee what would happen in the coming years, their concerns were not unfounded.



Just two years before, a genius from Lady Peak, Yan, had defeated all disciples of Day Peak. And as a result, the ranking of Day Peak dropped from sixth to somewhere in the mid-twenties. What a horrifying experience for the disciples of Day Peak and the onlookers of other peaks.

Therefore, at this moment, the disciples of Vulture Peak did not feel uncomfortable about the scene in the arena even though it meant that Zen might die. In their minds, it would be prudent to kill Zen, a genius, at this time before he refined himself further and became a more significant threat to them.

However, Zen was not a normal refiner as they had thought. What happened next was entirely out of their expectation and dumbfounded everyone watching the fight.

"Bang!"



bounced away.

"Bang!" The third hoop was also deflected after touching Zen's body.

"Bang!" The fourth hoop ricocheted off Zen.

Each of these sky-rending hoops struck Zen's back, made a loud sound, and then bounced away. None were able to do Zen any harm.

In all previous fights where Jesse had used his sky-rending hoops, his opponents had been shredded. But now, none of the hoops could injure Zen beyond a small gash on his skin. Aside from the depth and shape of the injuries, the outcome of all the hoops was the same. None could cut Zen into pieces.

On seeing this fantastic scene, same as the crowd present, or maybe more surprised than the public, Jesse's eyes widened. Fear and trepidation rose in his heart. ⓘ



But now he was the top-ranked outer disciple of Vulture Peak!

Becoming the top-ranked outer disciple in any of the thirty-three peaks in Cloud Sect required many skills. Becoming a top-ranked disciple only through hard work was impossible.

Jesse was an absolute genius at Vulture Peak. He was ranked the highest among the outer disciples, and he had the potential to become the best of the inner disciples in the future because of his hard work and talents.

Even though Zen's blow pushed him out of the arena, his feet did not touch the ground. Jesse stayed suspended in the air. According to the rules, he did not fail the battle.

Jesse did not give up and grasped any means available to him to return to the battle ring. He soon threw his thick earth hoops out before he could land on the ground.



be able to do this!"

When the disciples of Vulture peak saw that Jesse was out of the battle ring, their hearts sank, and they thought that this challenge was over. But at the critical moment when Jesse used his skillful calculations and actions to get back inside the arena, their hearts raised again. They burst out in cheer.

However, they had celebrated too quickly. Back in the battle ring, Zen was in an advantageous position in this fight. He would not let Jesse back into the arena so easily. Jesse was not weak, and Zen was not a fool either.

He ran to the edge of the arena before Jesse could land on the ground. Then he raised his hands and aimed a punch at Jesse just as he sailed past.

At this moment, Jesse did not have anything to help him to dodge Zen's attack. He felt



arena.

The disciples of both peaks watched this strange scene.

On the one side, Jesse struggled to get back inside the battle ring, while on the other hand, Zen was trying to stop him from touching the ground of the arena.

Regardless of which side of the arena Jesse was bouncing toward, Zen would rush forward and punch Jesse.

Just like a grasshopper that couldn't get to the ground, Jesse was jumping all over the arena, from left to right and then from right to left.

For the first few times, the onlookers present felt nervous and held their breath. Their hearts bounced up and down with Jesse's flying route.

However, after seeing the similar scene three,



Although he could rely on the thick earth hoops to combat with Zen and ensure that he would not fall to the ground, he also knew that if he kept consuming his life vitality to support the thick earth hoops like this, he would eventually use up his life vitality and be defeated by Zen in the end.

Such failure in a challenge between peaks was not a result that Jesse could accept.

So, when Zen deflected him for the ninth time, Jesse used the same strategy to sail toward the arena. However, this time, he summoned almost all his life vitality for one final try.

He needed to exert all his strength for this last action!

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: huangxiahan; Editor: Arathi



A person who was able to reach the nature level was said to have surpassed the limits of human life. Usually, such people had not only profound wisdom but a trump card as well.

Destruction Hoop was Jesse's trump card.

However, this move cost him a large amount of life vitality.

After the exhausting battle with Zen, Jesse still had more than fifty percent of his life vitality. The moment he summoned the Destruction Hoop, the remaining life vitality was depleted. Standing by the edge of Destruction Hoop, Jesse turned pale and almost fell to the ground.

Jesse had been reluctant to use the Destruction Hoop.

He had cultivated this method with the hopes of using it to clinch a win during a Sect contest.



He could not accept defeat!

"Since you want to die, I'll fulfill your wish!"

Jesse roared. When the challenge began, Jesse had intended to incapacitate Zen so that he would be unable to retaliate. He had not planned on killing Zen. However, as the battle wore on and Jesse felt humiliated, he became eager to terminate Zen.

Of course, Jesse was quite confident of the power of the Destruction Hoop. Even nature creatures trapped within the circle would be seriously injured. Since Zen was only at the marrow refining level, Jesse was sure that he wouldn't be able to survive the destructive powers of the circle. ❶

The Destruction Hoop began to emit a brilliantly colored light. People could feel the fluctuations of life vitality starting to gather in the battle



ring.

Since the cultivation method used the word Destruction in its name, people sensed that it might have the strength to destroy everything encircled by it.

However, Jesse was only at the first stage of the nature level, so the Destruction Hoop would only draw a relatively small range to eliminate the lives within it.

If Jesse broke through the nature level and reached a higher level, his Destruction Hoop would be powerful enough to destroy all the creatures on a mountain.

When the energy of the Destruction Hoop gathered to its limit, it flashed a magnificent golden light that shot toward the sky followed by the sound of a loud explosion.

The Destruction Hoop was so peculiar that it



Peak did not have a clear view of what was happening inside the enclosed area. Helpless, they closed their eyes and prayed that Zen would survive.

After a short while, the energy of the Destruction Hoop dissipated, and the golden light began to fade.

As the light receded, the edge of the arena could be seen.

The battle ring was badly damaged. Whereas earlier it had been smooth, now it was covered in potholes.

As for Zen, people didn't see him. They thought that Zen had been killed.

They all felt sorry for Zen.

However, just after the golden light faded, a figure suddenly rushed out.



This person was devoid of all clothing. But his body was covered in wounds. He darted to the edge of the battle ring and aimed a punch at Jesse.

Since Jesse's life vitality had been used up, he couldn't stand steadily. Focused on maintaining his balance and staying upright, Jesse didn't see this person headed toward him. The surprise blow caught him off-guard, and Jesse was thrown out of the battle ring. Upon impacting on the ground, Jesse passed out.

Zen stood at the edge of the arena. His chest heaved with the effort to breathe.

With his spiritual-weapon-like body, he had survived the Destruction Hoop.

Zen was still a bit afraid of Jesse's final attack.

Although he was well aware of the terrible



power of nature creatures, he had to fight harder than when he faced White and Black Fiends at Dragon Fort.

With careful thought and precision, Zen had taken advantage of the flying knife to kill White and Black Fiends. They didn't get the opportunity to use their weapons before their death.

In retrospect, Zen was relieved that he had killed the two Fiends before they used their weapons. Seeing how destructive nature creatures could be, Zen was no longer confident that he would have won against the two Fiends had they used their weapons.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 129 Cheers (Part Two)

Finally, Jesse, the top-ranking outer disciple of Vulture Peak had failed.

So far, Zen had bested four disciples of Vulture Peak and helped Drizzle Peak obtain an advantage.

Despite the fact that Zen had just secured a huge win for Drizzle Peak, its outer disciples stood still like statues. None had thought that Zen would survive the Hoop. And yet, he stood at the edge of the battle ring, victorious. The situation was so astounding that it was beyond everyone's expectation. The shock was so great that they were rendered speechless.



Quickly he removed his outer robe and threw it to Zen.

Zen covered his body with the white robe and then walked out of the battle ring. Accompanied by Nory and Sean, he made his way toward Wurth.

Although injured, Wurth had not left. He had stayed to watch the battle between Zen and Jesse.

"Wurth, how do you feel now?" asked Zen.

The fat on Wurth's face wobbled as the big man chuckled. His small eyes glinted with excitement.

Soon after their acquaintance, Wurth had thought highly of Zen's potential, which was one of the reasons why he had taken the initiative to be friends with Zen. Wurth had a keen sense of judging others' talents.



However, Wurth didn't expect that Zen's strength could rise so fast, just like a flying rocket!

Zen was only at the marrow refining level, but he had defeated Jesse!

What was more, Zen won the battle by surpassing Jesse's secret weapon. It was amazing!

If Wurth's guess was right, Zen also had a secret weapon that he had not yet used. Because of this, Wurth was more awed by Zen.

"You worry about my wounds? Haha. I am not even thinking about my injuries. I'm just happy with your performance!" Wurth laughed out loud. But then he gasped and clutched his chest when he felt the pain from his broken ribs.

Other outer disciples of Drizzle Peak flocked



Mia agreed with Aura. The core of martial arts cultivation was to promote determination. Otherwise, if a refiner never suffered any challenges, the first obstacle would result in complete demotivation and the inability to work toward a higher level.

On the contrary, those who suffered failures but still desperately forged ahead were more likely to attain success.

However, Aura's remark sounded like she was showing off.

Seeing that Mia was still unhappy, Aura comforted her with a smile, "Well, Mia. I will compensate you in the future!"

Mia pouted. Considering Master Su's background, she had no choice but to accept Aura's offer. On the other hand, Mia thought that letting Aura owe her a favor was good



compensation.

That night, all outer disciples of Drizzle Peak were very excited.

Everyone talked with great relish about Zen's performance in the battle ring.

However, Zen was not that excited. In contrast, he concerned himself with another matter.

After returning to his residence, Zen took out a pile of crystal cores from his space ring. He intended to visit Master Su in the morning to ask her to change the crystal cores into points so that he could go to Hell Mountain.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 130 None Of Your Business

When morning came, Zen got out of bed and bathed.

Though he had a really strong body, he still took a lot of blows from Jesse's persistent attacks.

But, to say that he had to worry about the inflicted wounds was an overstatement—they really weren't that deep.

Moreover, Zen gained more than he had lost from the fight he had with Jesse. He had learned how to defend himself from his opponent and he had gone over the strategies he could harness the next time another



opponent chose to battle him.

In addition, Zen's body absorbed the strong forces within the Destruction Hoop which further refined his marrow in the grand scheme of things.

In the process, the fight had taken away almost every impurity that resided in Zen's marrow; he kept this up and soon he would be reaching the peak of the marrow refining level.

Zen wasn't particularly celebrating anything just yet, as he was not impressed with whatever milestone he had taken.

If he were in a backwoods county, he would have stirred something else entirely with the abilities he currently honed.

But things were different in the Cloud Sect; it was normal for people to peak at their marrow refining level. Besides, there were so many



After everything, Zen did not get into the charts; nothing proved his worth on paper, but everyone had it plastered in their minds that the man Zen should have ranked first in the outer disciples of Drizzle Peak.

This was what he impressed in people. Zen left their presence to find Aura, who was waiting for him.

Zen returned from the south unscathed; Aura was sure that he must have been loaded up with trophies of his trip.

She had seen Zen's fight with Jesse only to realize that she had been underestimating the man.

Zen had been so persistent to go to the south. Because of this, Aura had thought Zen was being impatient—if he went to hunt blade locusts, it would be a risk.



Now that she thought about this, she assumed that Zen had been confident in himself.

She remained perplexed as to why Zen was so anxious to earn points.

She thought, how many points could one gather just from one trip to the south?

How many locust blades he could kill? One thousand? Or maybe two thousand blade locusts?

Zen could probably get one, if not two, hundred points just from doing this, but what good would he gain from doing that?

At Zen's state, she thought, did a number of points like that really matter?

It was in this moment that Zen arrived, knocking on the door. "Master Su, I am here to



But, acquiring a crystal core from a queen blade locust shed an entirely new light on who Zen really was and what he could really achieve.

In front of a queen blade locust, a man's options were limited; Zen could do nothing more than run from the queen as fast as he could to save himself

Was it a gift from someone who had actually killed a queen blade locust? Aura wondered.

But that was rather unlikely. The crystal core of the queen blade locust was worth a thousand points, which meant two thousand cubic crystals; this was a fortune to anyone.

If it was a gift, this man must be mad to give it away to a powerless and helpless guy like Zen.

"Crystal core of the queen blade locust. Who gave it to you?" Aura asked with an incomprehensible expression on her face.



"No one. I found it." Zen replied with a smile.

Aura believed not a word of that. She snorted at his smiling face and extended her hand to ask for the man's disciple card and task token. "Hand them over," Aura commanded.

Zen meekly handed the cards to her.

Aura marked his task card. After this, her slender white fingers skimmed over his disciple card, where Zen saw a light flash. Then she held it out to him. "Done," Aura said, "I've written one thousand five hundred points in your card."

Zen's face brightened in excitement as he reached out his hand for it.

His fingers almost touched the card before Aura withdrew her hand and smiled. "You can have this, but you can only have it under one



Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: miko; Editor: Sericka



And at this very moment with Zen in front of her, it was easy to tell that she was about to snap.

Several masters of Drizzle Peak came over when they heard the rage of Master Su, trying to find out what was going on that the dragon within had to come out. The expression on her face resembled the sky before a storm, and when they saw that this was the case, they all came crawling back to their respective lives, not wanting to get involved.

However, Zen was different—unlike everyone else, he was not afraid of Master Su. He was even fearless enough to ask for his card back, gravely repeating his request, "Master Su, give me my card back."

Usually, Master Su would burst out in flames, but this time she chose to clench her teeth in desperate attempt to become as level-headed as



possible. With an imperceptible grievance plastered on her face, she pouted and hummed quietly to herself before tossing the card back to Zen.

When Zen finally got a hold of his card, he thanked the master and left immediately, as if he did not brew a storm.

Although Zen knew that the master was mad at him, he knew for sure that Master Su would never harm him; that her questions were only meant to relieve her of her own worries as she was concerned with Zen.

As much as it would be the right choice to stay and settle things with Master Su, he did not want to waste a second delaying his venture to Hell Mountain so the feelings of the woman were the least of his concerns.

Zen walked down the path at Drizzle Peak and headed toward his destination.



The same amount of apathy Zen felt for Master Su was the same amount of worry Master Su had for Zen. She paid him mind from the moment that he left to the seconds that followed after his departure. She could not help but wonder about the mysterious guy. 'What could be so important to him that he was so anxious to leave? What was he hurrying about?' the master thought, 'I have no idea now, but I'll be sure to find out what exactly that man is up to.'

She walked out of the room to take care of her self-assigned business. The master approached the pavilion by the mountain ridge for a Picture Slab located at the center of the canopy.

The master congratulated herself silently for having such a swift plan at monitoring Zen from afar by attaching something on his disciple's card before she handed it back to him. The slab that she was now operating was



something she could use to monitor Zen

Through the picture, she saw that Zen went down Drizzle Peak and headed to the northwest of the Cloud Sect.

Master Su frowned and wondered, 'In Cloud Sect, all thirty three peaks are distributed in the south while the Heavenly Library is up at east. The northwest corner of the Cloud Sect is surrounded by wild life and mountains, so why is this man going in that direction? It makes no sense.'

The master was trying to reconcile and piece the puzzle together and thought, 'What is in the northwest?'

And it was then that she realized what Zen was planning. 'Hell Mountain, ' she successfully resolved, 'He's going to Hell Mountain.'

The only thing left for the master to find out



was what Zen wanted from the mountain.

The so-called mountain was located at the very edge of Cloud Sect, so it was not a very ideal place for a man to visit. As Zen was about to finally arrive at his destination, a dark mountain emerged in front of him, blocking his shot.

There weren't any trees or vegetation growing around that mountain. If you looked at it from a distance, the mountain almost seemed as if it was completely pitch black. It made perfect sense why people referred to it as Hell Mountain.

A dense gray smoke was constantly being released at the top of the crater that resembled the steams of hell.

The smell coming from the cloud had the smell of strong sulfur. This smell quickly filled the air.



Zen had lost his peace of mind when he thought about his sister, Yan, possibly inhabiting the cruel place.

The closer he got to the mountain, the more he got suffocated by the smoke surrounding him. But, he thrived. He thought of his sister, like he always did in his trivial times because every time he did this he would be an inch closer to his goal. He finally made it to notice a very distinct demarcation line.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Sarah; Editor: Vic



Chapter 132 The Guards Of The Hell Mountain (Part Two)

Outside the defining line was where Zen stood, with a scenery that was full of vigorous plants and life but inside was covered with black gravels; the two opposing sides could be compared to heaven and hell.

In his fascination, he did not second guess to approach the other side. However, unexpectedly, two people appeared right in front of Zen.

They appeared to look like beggars who wore clothes that were torn and ragged.

When the two men looked at him, Zen began to



condition."

That brought Zen up short. "What is it?" he asked, mildly irritated and let down.

"Tell me what you're going to do with all these points," Aura demanded.

It was not the first time that she had asked Zen this question. In fact, she had already asked this when Zen took on the hunting task.

Last time she had this question for him, Zen danced around it, careful not to spill anything that he shouldn't.

He was still not willing to give the woman any answers. He shook his head as a notion of not wavering to the will of Aura, only saying, "I've got something important that I have to do."

Consumed by her eagerness and curiosity, Aura kept asking. 'What is it? Tell me. Maybe I could



of the palace, trying to forget how royalty ran in her blood, she had inherited the stubborn character of the king and queen. This was something she could never outgrow—whatever she wanted, she had to have her way. Being born in sovereignty, obstinacy was a trait that she could never grow out of.

This was why the other masters at the Cloud Sect who knew of her identity would argue with her only if they absolutely had to.

Once they noticed the slightest hint of irritation from Master Su, they would immediately set aside their opinions and ideas if it meant they did not have to argue with the woman. Master Su, possessing the beauty of a thousand splendid women, also possessed a fiery dragon inside of her that would awaken every time someone got on her nerves. That being said, anyone would hate to become the man Master Su would spite.



both sides of the path, there would be red embers glowing at intervals as if the rocks were coals that burnt relentlessly.

Without much thought, Zen began to climb.

The Hell Mountain was an active volcano that spit fire and emitted smoke. Whatever they told about the mountain was not tale.

There were several scattered valleys that could be seen from the mountainside.

Some of those valleys were covered in ash while the other valleys were magma-infested.

Zen had already encountered many people from the Cloud Sect who were exiled for punishment in Hell Mountain.

The people who he crossed paths with were not mere weaklings. In fact, these people were powerful and strong.



Some of them had already become the nature creatures.

Judging by their imposing manner and their respective structures, some of the people were even stronger than Randall.

Most of them could care less and had nothing to say about Zen passing by.

However, there were still people whose eyes lingered unkindly at Zen's presence. Some of them would even follow Zen, threatening his survival.

Observing that not a lot of people in Hell Mountain were very accommodating, he took his broken flying knife out of his space ring and kept it in his hand the whole time he wandered around the mountain, with hope to find his sister with both of them alive.



"Did you meet with Yan yet, Vale?" asked Billy as he approached Vale, curious about how Yan was faring. Following close to Billy was Perrin.

Passing Billy, Vale walked up to Perrin and patted him on the shoulder as he said, "Oh, Perrin! It was such a pleasure seeing Yan smile!"

Perrin nodded appreciatively and replied, "Yan must be pining for her family. Your frequent visits will lift her spirits!"

"Of course, I'll keep visiting her for short periods. Now, let's go! We're celebrating tonight!" Vale was evidently happy and then left with the rest.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Zoe Lin; Editor: Donna Frank



part of the mountain, but to no avail. He couldn't find a single trace of Yan.

He paused momentarily. 'Where on earth is she?' he thought.

Zen looked up at the summit over him, his eyebrows tightly knitted in confusion.

It couldn't be that Yan was trapped in a higher place, was she?

After thinking more about Yan's whereabouts, Zen resumed climbing up.

While Zen ascended up the mountain's rocky slopes, several people were walking down along the path leading to the summit.

The handsome, noble looking man walking at the helm of the group wore deep purple robes. Although it was quite dark, a faint light seemed to emanate from his being.



"Oh?" Now that he knew they were siblings, Vale forced a polite and gentle smile on his face. Prior to this meeting, Yan had briefly mentioned that she had a biological brother, and she cared a great deal about him. After thinking about this, he asked Perrin, "Is Yan's brother an outer disciple of Cloud Sect? You've never told me about this before."

The beads of sweat on Perrin's forehead multiplied even though Vale asked him in a calm voice.

The Wang Family was powerful and certainly had great influence. Perrin couldn't have been even connected with the clan if it hadn't been for Yan.

Yan's generosity towards Perrin paved the way for him to get acquainted with the Wang family. Afterwards, he had not only easily become an inner disciple of the Cloud Sect, but



-law if I have the chance to marry her."

Zen was quite infuriated upon hearing these words. Only just now he had realized why Vale bothered to be so polite to him. His eyebrows shot up to his forehead when Vale rashly mentioned marrying his little sister. He snorted, "You? Marrying Yan? That's crazy! You are just dreaming! You are not good enough for my little sister whatever your Wang family is."

In Zen's heart, Yan was his only family member in the world. It angered him to hear Vale say those words in such a rash and frivolous manner especially that it was the first time that they met. Zen really could not tolerate a man with that kind of imprudent behavior. ❶

People are reluctant to hit one who is very polite in spite of great anger, as the saying goes. However, Zen made one exception. In spite of Vale treating him so politely, Zen fired back coldly without hesitation.



Chapter 135 An Unavoidable Encounter (Part Two)

Zen's response irritated Vale but he tried his best to keep calm. Still, it didn't prevent his smiling face from turning a little gloomy upon feeling humiliated by Zen's harsh words. Before he could even answer back, Billy interrupted him with an angry look on his face, "Damn it!" Zen was thrown off by Billy's sudden outburst, and this did not escape Perrin's eyes. He also retorted back loudly in a stern voice, "You can't tell the good from the bad! You even dared to humiliate Vale!" In spite of the anger in his voice, Perrin actually felt a little more relieved. He had been expecting to kill Zen but the brat had overestimated himself and offended Vale, a disciple who directly acquired skills from his



family's tremendous support. He originally practiced the Purple Light Fist. However, at this moment, the life vitality radiating from his body looked like a light plasma. This refinement skill was actually obtained by learning from a tier 3 refinement method of the Wang family.

Perrin was quite confident that he could defeat Zen by only one move, because he thought that Zen was only at the marrow refining level.

"Really?" Zen fired back mischievously. Zen clenched his fists as he stared at Perrin with shrewd, calculating eyes that seemed to send daggers. "Since you are so confident, I'd like to take a look for myself!" he added snidely.

At that exact moment, the tangy, pungent scent of blood emanated from Perrin's body. Perrin had many reasons for killing Zen aside from him being an outcast of the family and offending Vale. He had waited a long time for this moment, and when he got it, he rushed



was so hard to defeat since the guy was only at the marrow refining level. 'Why can't I defeat him with my Blood Burst Fist?' thought Perrin. Zen's mocking words also provoked Perrin and made him even more furious, clouding his mind with an uncontrollable rage.

As purple life energy flashed all over his body, Zen detected Perrin's weakness. Upon realizing this, he immediately attacked Perrin with a crushing fist to take advantage of his weakness. As he flung himself forward in the attack, Zen threateningly said, "You are a nature creature, but just like a jerk. Now, let me see how you will kill me."

Perrin swiftly winced back several steps as his weakness was exploited, and the great pain he suffered from the attack made him positively livid. Despite the obvious discomfort, Perrin swallowed his pain and rushed forth toward Zen once again.



kill you. But tell you what, I will absolutely kill Bryson and Ken when I go back to Luo family. Then, I will turn their figures into sculptures to lie flat in front of my father's tomb and worship him for ten thousand years on bended knees!"

As soon as Zen finished his words, seven loud dull sounds were suddenly produced from inside Perrin's body. Blood had suddenly burst out from Perrin's middle, hands, and feet. All of Perrin's critical meridian channels had been ruptured by Zen's Purple Fist Strength. By now, Perrin was just like a disabled person, as Zen had made it impossible for him to use any of his refinement methods.

Meanwhile, Vale, who stood on one side, just remained silent when he saw that. It seemed that he was deep in thought about something.

However, Billy, on the other hand, could no longer just stand there without doing anything.



help Yan escape from Hell Mountain. And I, Vale, am one of those people. I would like to know why you said that I am not good enough for Yan," said Vale.

At the same time, the homicidal intent of lotus emanating from Vale's body pressed toward Zen. Had Zen's soul not been strong, it would have been difficult for him to withstand the attack.

"You are great, but what can you do to me?" asked Zen fearlessly. Then, with a shake of his head, Zen continued, "Yan is my sister. Of course, I will rescue her. I don't want to bother others with our problems."

Hearing what Zen said, Vale chuckled and replied, "You're only at the marrow refining level. Perrin is at the first grade of the nature level. It is fantastic that you were able to defeat him. However, you are as weak as an ant in front of me. Be humble, okay? If you were not



Yan's brother, I wouldn't even be talking to you," said Vale scornfully.

As he spoke, a delicate flower bud appeared on Vale's shoulder. Within moments, it blossomed into a beautiful pink lotus.

After the lotus bloomed, an intense white light shone from Vale's body.

By now, the sun had set, and darkness descended over the mountain. The light beam from Vale illuminated one side of Hell Mountain.

Everyone was attracted to the light.

Even the dedicated cultivators on Hell Mountain cast an astonishing look toward this light.

"Who is burning his life vitality? It seems like he is powerful!" claimed a man.



Chapter 137 The Illuminating Soul Realm (Part Two)

The onlookers couldn't figure out why the man at the Illuminating Soul Realm needed to display such power when dealing with a weaker opponent.

Generally speaking, a cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm could kill an outer disciple with only one finger.

"That poor outer disciple must be frightened to death," stated one of the bystanders.

After Zen had left, Master Su secluded herself in a pavilion at Drizzle Peak and watched his every move on the picture slab.



energy emitted by the array didn't diminish. It seemed as though the array could repeat this cycle endlessly. This situation baffled Yan as she had no way to free herself and aid Zen.

All this while, Zen stood rooted in his spot. He calmly faced the enormous pressure from Vale. Even though an ordinary disciple would have been crushed, Zen stood erect with no sign of yielding.

Zen realized this kind of pressure had gone beyond the scope of life energy. It was even stronger than the life vitality of a nature creature.

'Vale is only releasing a small amount of pressure. And yet, I am having trouble enduring this pressure. He may have surpassed the level of nature creatures,' Zen thought. ❶

Zen didn't know that Vale was a strong cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm until



Upon entry into the level of forgetting himself, Zen could leave his physical body at the mercy of his rival without feeling any pain.

Thus, Zen's body turned invulnerable to Vale's devastating assault.

At that moment, Zen regained his composure and smiled at Vale, unperturbed.

He felt as though Vale's attacks were harmless.

Vale had thought that the flow of his life vitality would give Zen a fatal blow.

What he had not expected was that Zen would be able to put up such strong resistance with much ease.

If one were to compare, Vale would be like a colossal elephant fighting an ant-like Zen but achieving no result.



Earlier, Vale had praised Zen and showed some awe for his abilities. Once Vale's pride had been hurt, he had unleashed his power on Zen. Although Zen had been focusing on withstanding the attacks, he hadn't as yet thought of retaliating. Upon hearing the contempt in Vale's voice, Zen's intention changed.

Overpowered by Vale, Zen would have to kneel before his opponent, unless he acted quickly.

"Zen, you have no choice but to kneel in front of me!" Vale said sarcastically.

Determined to fight back, Zen roared, and straightened his stance.

The seven cyan dragon scales in his mind lit up simultaneously as if summoned by a mystic energy.



Meanwhile, Zen tightened every muscle

as preparation to break free of the lotuses.

"Twang!"

The broken flying knife, one of his secret weapons, darted toward Vale.

"Spiritual Thorn Strike!"

The spiritual thorn shot toward Vale faster than the broken flying knife.

Zen was handling the two secret weapons highly skillful

due to his constant and devoted practice earlier.

Vale was caught off guard by the soul thorn strike.



The broken flying knife flew toward Vale's head. By the time Vale regained his composure after the spiritual thorn strike, the knife had neared its mark.

A lotus bloomed to counter the broken flying knife. However, the broken flying knife penetrated it.

Another lotus shot up in its place to block the broken flying knife's course, only to prove futile.

The power of the broken flying knife was diminished only upon impact with the third lotus. Since it carried the weight of ten thousand pounds, the lotus proved to be more effective in deflecting the broken flying knife.

Despite the deviation, the broken flying knife marred Vale and blood spurted from the spot where the knife had embedded itself.



been naive to consider Zen to be a weak opponent.

"Well, I have to admit that I made a big mistake. You are a dangerous killer disguised as a weak opponent. If it weren't for my family-awarded soul protector and my strong soul, your flying knife would have killed me," said Vale calmly as he raised his hand to rub off the blood that was still oozing from his wound. "This injury is the price I have paid for underestimating you. You've done your best to hurt me. You should be proud. However, you still have to pay for your actions, even though you are Yan's brother!"

As soon as Vale finished speaking, several lotus flowers blazing with pink light floated from his hands. However, these enchanting lotus flowers were powerful, dangerous killing weapons.

"I will pulverize you into powder!"



The lotus flowers shot toward Zen so quickly that he didn't get the chance to escape. In an instant, his body was covered by the lotus flowers.

Every lotus flower carried the weight of ten thousand pounds.

And over a hundred lotus flowers blanketed Zen's body.

Zen's body was desperately absorbing the pressure and producing warm currents to refine itself.

However, the pressure was too terrible. Even though Zen had a body similar to a spiritual weapon, he was unable to endure the pressure!

"Crack!"

The sound of flesh splitting open was heard as



a gash appeared on Zen's body. Before Zen could register what was happening, blood sprayed from the wound. Weakness coursed through Zen and he felt as though his body was on the verge of collapsing. It seemed as if he would be crushed by the combined weight of these lotus flowers.

"Brother!"

cried Yan. Tears poured from her eyes like a broken string of pearls.

She looked at the six-pointed star array around her feet in anger. A thought flashed through her mind, and she suddenly stopped crying.

Full of despair and with no other alternative, she decided to use her powers!

A tuft of life vitality condensed in Yan's right hand. With a deep breath, she let it float into the air and watched as it formed six small



master, Jone. Aside from him, no one could unravel it.

Yan bit her lower lip, looked at Zen's figure that was covered by the lotus flowers, and implored, "Okay, I will not destroy the array, but you must save my brother!"

The old man smiled and said, "I don't need to save him. It seems that someone has come to his aid."

"Who is it?" asked Yan anxiously.

The old man pointed at a flying chariot that was nearing Hell Mountain.

"Her? Princess Aura?" asked Yan. Her expression conveyed the doubt she felt. Why would Aura come to save her brother?

"Zen is Master Su's disciple," explained the old man. "Now that Princess Aura has come to save



Chapter 140

Devouring (Part Two)

If Zen had been an ordinary disciple at the marrow refining level, he would have been crushed into muddy flesh under the total pressure of one hundred thousand pounds.

Even nature creatures could not endure this level of pressure.

Though determinedly resisting the pressure, Zen was on the verge of being destroyed.

Zen felt as though he was carrying a mountain. Even breathing felt like an impossible act.

"It's unbelievable that a cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm is so strong. I have no



By now, under the pressure of the lotuses, Zen's spine had bent into a horseshoe shape. Coincidentally, this was the starting posture for the Heavenly Ogre Fist cultivation. ●

In accordance with this action, Zen began to direct his life energy to flow throughout his body.

'Force comes out from the heart, and then circulates via body energy lines — mysterious tubes for cultivation. Similar to blood vessels, body energy lines help carry life energy, life vitality, and so on throughout body; the energy runs into all the organs and cells, with endless circling...'

Zen was familiar with the force operating method as he had already practiced it many times.

However, he had never succeeded.



Fist, carefully, until he could recite it fluently.

As Zen thrust his fist, it brought the demonic life energy out with the Ogres Shaking the World punch, and at the same time, he had an epiphany. In that instance, Zen understood all of the subtleties found in the tome of the Heavenly Ogre Fist without any questions.

Streams of demonic life energy gathered on Zen's hand frenziedly, and then Zen took a step which shook the earth and shattered the black gravels circled around him into fine powders in an instant.

Zen drew his fist back, and with his other hand still steadying his arm from possible recoil, struck the air.

Zen thrust the fist towards Vale.

A dark purple shadowy fist appeared just ahead of Zen, hovering in the air. As it formed, it



grew larger until it was the size of a man and lunged at Vale.

Vale's eyes widened, never before had he seen such a huge fist of shadow. He realized he had underestimated Zen before.

Even though Zen employed the soul attack method to disorder Vale's mind firstly and then shot the broken flying knife at Vale's head, which almost killed Vale, Vale hadn't taken Zen seriously, but now, Vale did.

After all, before this, as quick and deadly as Zen's attack style was, it hadn't been one that would cause Vale deadly harm, so, he hadn't bothered to be concerned.

But now, seeing the dark purple shadowy fist, Vale realized that this young man could reach high levels through inner strength.

Zen could swallow the lotuses, manifesting



All of Hell Mountain shook slightly, and boulders rolled down from the mountainside splashing into the stream.

Hell Mountain's cultivators were horrified at sight.

Some houses built alongside the wall were shattered by the stones, leaving rubble. Fortunately, those who practiced hard mastered extraordinary feats and weren't injured even though their houses were destroyed.

What confused the cultivators though was how a young man at the level of marrow refining could fight a master at the Illuminating Soul Realm.

The match was unexpected.

On the mountaintop stood Yan, and her eyes were filled with surprise as she said, "The



power my brother wields in his fist should be so astonishing that Vale has to fight back!"

The old man at her side nodded and replied, "But Zen may have spent all his energy blocking Vale's, leaving Zen too weak to throw a second punch....But!? Vale has no chance now! Here comes Aura Su!"

Not far away was Aura's flying chariot, speeding up the mountainside and getting closer to Zen.

"Your punch is good," complimented Vale smiling as he said, "Such a punch proves you are a worthy foe for me, however... A punch like that consumes almost all your life energy, and you have no strength to throw the second one. Still, it's a great honor for you to be regarded as a competitor, by me, and to die by my fist."

The human body was just like a cup.



Vale.

The Wang Clan was a noble clan, and well off, so, it would be undeserving to be wiped over such a little thing.

Inches from Zen's face, Vale's fist stopped, his serious face completely relaxed, and meanwhile, he casually said to Aura, "Your Royal Highness, I was joking around with Zen, and we were having a friendly competition, so why would my whole family be killed?"

Aura's tone was cold as she replied, "I think you'd better stop or your family won't be safe and sound!"

Mockingly, Vale said to Zen, "You're terrific, but I have to say, now, you are not even fit to see Yan, not to mention to fight me!"

"Three years," said Zen holding up three fingers.



"What does that mean?" asked Vale frowning slightly.

"In three years, I'll return, defeat you and take Yan from Hell Mountain!" stated Zen.

Vale guffawed boisterously as if he had never heard anything funnier, "Ha-ha-ha! Three years... Great! Okay, that's really courageous. I will give you three years. If you cannot defeat me then, you won't take Yan from Hell Mountain, and I'll kill you!"

announced Vale as he pointed at Zen, before flying away. As Vale retreated, pink lotuses dissolved into scattered life vitality, disappearing under the sky.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Happyju; Editor: Donna Frank



Chapter 142 I'm Your Creditor

Vale left quickly because Aura had arrived.

In terms of strength, Vale was not scared of Aura, but he had hesitated because of her identity and background.

The others lifted Perrin from the ground and hurriedly followed Vale.

"Why did you make such a promise to him?" asked Aura as she leaped from the flying chariot and walked toward Zen.

Zen was obstinate when it came to matters pertaining to Yan. Hearing Aura's question, he thought for a moment before replying, "I don't



The effort to stand and seek out his sister had used up all his strength.

'What a tough guy!' Aura thought. She curled her lips and said, "You're badly hurt."

"It's not enough to kill me," said Zen as he stared blankly at the star-filled sky. The sky was cloudless and surprisingly bright. Scattered stars formed a delicate Milky Way.

"Fa-thud!"

A blood-red pill fell on Zen's side and rolled down the deck to Zen's ear.

Zen reached over and picked up the pill. Then he took a deep breath when he realized what kind of pill it was. "Red all over, with five cloud stripes. If I'm reading this right, it's a five-grade pill, the Red Cloud Pill."



Chapter 143 Half-step Into The Nature Level (Part One)

Zen positioned himself as per the illustration in the Heavenly Ogre Fist book.

Since this was a refinement method for Ogres, it would take human beings a lot of time, energy, and effort to master if they cultivated diligently.

Luckily, Zen was physically stronger than ordinary people. For anyone else, it would be impossible to complete the first step of the Heavenly Ogre Fist during the refinement.

After the force coursed through his body, Zen's eyebrows furrowed a bit, as he didn't feel the



demonic life energy inside his body.

Zen wondered why.

Yesterday, only a small amount of demonic life energy had been produced inside Zen's body after his refinement of the Heavenly Ogre Fist. Afterward, the demonic life energy engulfed Zen's Purple Light Fist life energy as though it were a beast. In the end, all the life energy from Zen's Purple Light Fist had turned into demonic life energy.

But as soon as he made the first move of the Heavenly Ogre Fist, which was known as Ogres Shaking the World, the demonic life energy inside his body had been completely consumed...

In general, one's cultivation would be smooth for a period as long as he found the key to the refinement method. Once a level was overcome, it was like a door was opened to the next stage.



After further thought, an idea came to Zen.

Since demonic life energy could engulf other types of life energy, Zen thought he might not have to condense it.

When fighting Vale, Zen's body had been full of life energy from the Purple Light Fist. But after a trace of demonic life energy had condensed, it absorbed all life energy from the Purple Light Fist. In addition, the demonic life energy engulfed Vale's life vitality by consuming the lotuses.

Since the demonic life energy was so mystical, Zen decided to take advantage of the energy.

At this thought, Zen brought his knees together and started practicing the mind method of Purple Light Fist that had been passed down to him from the Luo Clan.



Zen remembered this because he had seen his uncle Bryson pour his life energy into his long sword. Then, he manipulated the life energy inside and killed his enemies with the sword. This was only possible for cultivators who were half-step into the nature level.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Arathi



of the marrow refining level.

On the previous day when he battled Vale on Hell Mountain, Zen's body had been severely battered by Vale's lotuses. Under their assault, Zen found that it was almost impossible to bear the heavy pressure. At that time, he had been fighting for his life, and so, Zen hadn't paid much attention to changes in his body. However, in retrospect, Zen remembered feeling a great surge of warm currents inside his body. As in all other situations, the currents refreshed his physical form.

Had impurities been completely cleared away from his marrow at that moment?

Since Zen had been focusing on defending against Vale, he hadn't noticed that all the impurities in his marrow had been refined and purified. Now, as Zen felt the warm stream of currents inside his body, he concluded that it was highly likely that all impurities had been



"What's the hurry? It's not an emergency to get the elixir. Do you have something important to do?" asked Sean in curiosity.

"Yes, I am leaving the Cloud Sect for a while. There will be a big move at Blessed Auction House today. My brother asked me to watch it," answered Wurth.

"The Blessed Auction House?" The eyes of Nory and Sean widened as though something occurred to them. "Wurth, you aren't from the Blessed Zhang family, are you?" they asked almost simultaneously.

Zen was confused at their reaction.

Nodding his head readily, Wurth admitted that he was.

The Blessed Zhang family was legendary in the Burning Sky Empire. ①



The family had no great talent, and it was not even a noble clan!

What the Zhang family had was a hidden power far beyond that of an ordinary noble clan! That secret power made this family almost as mighty as the top seven noble clans!

All of this Zhang family's descendants were business geniuses which gave them an advantage.

The Zhang clan controlled most of the economic lifeline in the Burning Sky Empire and oversaw many of the exchanges in the empire's largest exchange shops and auction houses.

Even cubic crystals negotiations were set up by the Zhang family.

So, the Zhang family had a unique position in the economy of the whole empire.



Considering it was useless to him, he naturally wanted to sell it as soon as possible.

Thinking about it, Zen nodded and replied, "Since you're all going, I'll join too, it sounds like fun!"

"Good, wait here. We'll leave after I get my elixirs!" declared Wurth. After he received his elixirs from the administrator, Wurth and the three men headed down Drizzle Peak.

At the bottom of the peak, they entered a Cloud Sect pavilion and Wurth rented a flying chariot at the cost a cubic crystal.

Wurth's generosity left his three companions speechless.

Zen had plenty of cubic crystals and over a thousand points, but, he was reluctant to spend them. A single cubic crystal to hire the chariot



auction house, and asked, "Can I look at the Fire Scorpion Lion's crystal core?"

The careful manner that Wurth was taking made Zen feel both funny and awkward.

Zen knew the crystal core was highly prized and valuable in the empire, but Wurth's performance was overly cautious.

Zen put his finger on his space ring, and a moment later the crystal core appeared in his hand, glowing with a fiery sheen.

This was a complete, fist-sized crystal core, and obviously from an adult Fire Scorpion Lion.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Donna Frank



much higher than now.

"How about today? I don't mind if we sell it today." Zen decided without hesitation. He was not tempted by the potential of getting a higher price.

Wurth did not insist when he saw Zen's determination. Instead, he nodded and said, "That's fine. In this auction, we plan to sell some precious refining materials and alchemy materials. And these have already appealed to many old, powerful refiners in the Imperial Capital. I believe that the crystal core of fire scorpion lion could also fetch a very good price."

After reaching this agreement with Zen, Wurth led Zen to the back hall of the auction house.

Once they had entered the back hall of the auction house, Zen felt a burst of dazzling energy.



Unlike Zen's calm demeanor, when Nestor saw the crystal core of fire scorpion lion, his eyes widened. Next second, he narrowed his eyes and started to scrutinize the crystal core.

Compared to Wurth's reaction, Nestor's reaction was much stronger.

After all, Wurth was an heir of the family and was not a professional auctioneer. He only had superficial knowledge when it came to evaluating treasures.

But Nestor was different. He became the chief auctioneer of the Blessed Auction House after having been in this industry for a lifetime. During this time, he had identified countless treasures of genius, magic weapons, and magical medicines.

Hence, he only needed one glance to know the value of the crystal core of fire scorpion lion. It



This lack of understanding of how the market worked showed how little experience Zen had.

After all, the blade locust was known for its rapid reproduction rate. Every year, dozens or hundreds of queen blade locusts were killed at Dragon Fort. And this productivity, of course, lowered the price of the crystal core of a queen blade locust.

A fire scorpion lion, however, was not the same. They had been hunted to the verge of extinction throughout the whole Eastern Region. It was rare to see a fire scorpion lion, not to mention an adult one. And its crystal core had special effects in the refining of weapons or medicines. Thus, the value of these two kinds of crystal cores was very different, and the gap was huge.

Hearing that Zen did not reject their proposed basic price, Nestor continued to say, "But if we



crystal core's auction, Wurth walked back to the auction room with Zen. As it was a busy time for the auction, he managed to exchange simple greetings with Sean and other friends, and then went out.

By this time the auction room was full of people and refiners.

The participants present were very different. Some of them were individual refiners who had journeyed here alone. Some were from noble clans and had been accompanied by their acquaintances in hopes of sharing information and advice.

However, most of them were nature creatures.

Judging from their breaths, Zen estimated that the people in the VIP rooms had greater strength. Although those people could cover or suppress their level, Zen still could feel their strength. It was not hard to figure out that



with Ogres and other monsters. This weapon is called the Heaven-shaking Dagger-axe. Though it has a rough shape, it is made of purple jade. The Heaven-shaking Dagger-axe is ranked as a low-level spiritual weapon, but its power is similar to that of a middle-level spiritual weapon. The base price is 2000 cubic crystals. You can start to bid now."

'Two thousand cubic crystals? That is not so expensive!' Zen thought. He was a little interested in this spiritual weapon.

This Heaven-shaking Dagger-axe was a low-level spiritual weapon. Zen did not care much about its power. Instead, he wondered about the iron essence he could obtain from such a weapon after refining it.

He knew that a top-grade mysterious weapon usually generated five or ten drops of iron essence. Since a spiritual weapon was a level higher than a mysterious weapon, maybe it



would generate 50 drops of iron essence, or, perhaps even 100 drops.

On thinking of this possibility, Zen became excited. He wanted to bid.

As long as he could light up one dragon scale, his strength would grow. If ten dragon scales were lit at the same time, his strength would be doubled in a short period. Such an increase was definitely a significant improvement for him.

If possible, Zen planned to participate in the auction for this spiritual weapon.

But the bid price increased so much that he abandoned his plan.

"Two thousand and five hundred cubic crystals," one refiner shouted excitedly.

"Two thousand and seven hundred," said



Chapter 148 The Weapon Refining Principle

In the end, the Heaven-shaking Dagger-axe sold for as much as five thousand cubic crystals.

Zen curled his lips but did not regret that it had fallen into someone else's hands.

He knew that he could buy another inferior spiritual weapon from the market at a much lower price. Anyway, what he cared about was the iron essence contained in spiritual weapons, not their power.

Nestor soon auctioned off several more items.



Suddenly, Nestor's tone changed. "The next item to be auctioned is the halftime grand finale of today's auction. As you all know, two years ago, Chase, our weapon refining guru in the Imperial Capital, passed away. This is a significant loss for our whole empire. Fortunately, Chase had many disciples, and some of them have taken over his mantle," Nestor said grimly. "Next up for auction is Chase's Weapon Refining Principle. It is said that Chase kept it a secret. If someone wants to make an impact in weapon refining, with this book in hand, you can get Chase's knowledge and achieve great progress!"

As soon as Nestor finished speaking, the crowd simmered with excitement.

There were three weapon refining gurus in the Burning Sky Empire, but none of them could compare with Chase.

Chase kept the Weapon Refining Principle a



secret presumably recording his experience and skills in weapon refining.

Every noble clan dreamed of owning a top weapon refiner.

But weapon refiners were not easy to hire.

The noble Wang family had employed one of the three weapon refining gurus, another had been employed by Cloud Sect and the third by the Burning Sky Palace. It was hard to hire them, no matter how much the clans offered.

Therefore, if a family produced a weapon refining guru, it would benefit the whole family.

Everybody knew that even if they got the Weapon Refining Principle, they would not necessarily become a weapon refining guru. After all, Chase had taught many disciples, and so did his disciples, but they all failed to produce a guru. Yet, none of the noble clans



were willing to give up this rare chance.

"The Weapon Refining Principle belonged to our teacher. Please return it to us!"

"It's our teacher's relic. You can't auction it at will!" eight people objected.

They were dressed similarly in long red robes with a small furnace embroidered on their chests.

Most people in the auction house recognized the furnace on their clothes and knew where they had come from.

It turned out that Chase had set up a school, Magical Refining School, which recruited disciples and nurtured them into weapon refiners. The furnace was the emblem of the Magical Refining School.

Over the years, although the Magical Refining



late teacher, and now we are going to get it back!" The leader of the group of disciples pointed to Nestor and snarled, "You, Blessed Auction House, give us back the Weapon Refining Principle!"

At the moment, Nestor, who was always smiling, simmered in anger. "Since our Blessed Auction House was established, we have made it a rule not to ask about the provenance of items for sale. We will auction this book for whoever gave it to us. It is impossible for you to reclaim it!" he snarled.

The disciples of the Magical Refining School were incensed at what he said, and their leader threatened, "In that case, we shall have to offend your auction house!" Then they tried to rush onto the platform and snatch the book.

"Offend our auction house? Humph, you're not strong enough to offend our Blessed Auction House!" Nestor retorted haughtily. When he



In the twinkling of an eye, the sound of flesh meeting flesh filled the salesroom. The guards had knocked out the disciples with the power of their slap. When the eight disciples lay on the ground, motionless, many servants entered and carried them out. Soon the site was cleaned up, and order was restored in the salesroom.

After that, Nestor placed a casket on the table and solemnly said, "I'm sorry that the auction was rudely interrupted. Now we will proceed with the auctioning of the Weapon Refining Principle. Starting price is 5, 000 cubic crystals. Now, bid freely!"

As soon as he had finished speaking, someone raised the price. "6, 000 cubic crystals," said a bored voice.

The price went up a thousand at a time. The crowd looked curiously at the bidder.



Mountain, Zen would have been reluctant to spend thousands of cubic crystals buying the Weapon Refining Principle. On the contrary, he would have saved these cubic crystals to exchange for points at Cloud Sect.

However, after the battle on Hell Mountain, Zen had realized how large the skill gap was between him and Vale.

If he wanted to narrow this difference, Zen had to improve in every aspect.

Not just his strength!

If Zen could learn how to refine weapons, or even become a master of weapon refining, his request to visit or save Yan might not be denied!

Admittedly, there were no guarantees that buying and reading the Weapon Refining Principle would help Zen become a weapon



refiner. However, Zen did not have many choices. He had to persist with his plan.

Since learning from the Weapon Refining Principle would give him an advantage, Zen was determined to buy it.

"Rest assured, Nory and Sean. I have enough cubic crystals," said Zen with a smile.

Nory's and Sean's foreheads creased as they wondered how Zen had accumulated tens of thousands of cubic crystals. But when they thought of Zen's cautious personality, they relaxed slightly.

Many people darted a curious glance in Zen's direction when they heard him bid against Fren.

Astonishment reflected on their faces when they saw that Zen was just a teenager. What surprised them, even more, was that he was only an outer disciple at Cloud Sect.



In fact, from Fren's point of view, spending more than twenty thousand cubic crystals on a weapon refining handbook was unreasonable, but he had to obey the order.

Though he had a calm look, he was furious at Zen for increasing the price.

Since Fren had an ulterior motive to buy the book, he could not express his anger at Zen's actions. Otherwise, his true purpose for securing the book would be revealed to all the bidding opponents and they would be spurred to compete with him to the end. It would not be cost-effective, even though he would buy it, regardless of the price. After all, the auction was, in essence, a psychological game.

It seemed that Fren's bid had been random, but it had been his strategy.

"Twenty-one thousand and one hundred cubic



crystals!" shouted Nestor. "Is there a higher bid?"

"Twenty-two thousand," Fren called out again, stroking the face of the young woman beside him. "Vivan, get that kid to shut up!"

Vivan stood and nodded in understanding. Her slim waist swayed seductively as she made her way toward Zen's room.

"Twenty-two thousand and one hundred!"

Zen raised the bid by a hundred cubic crystals just as a beautiful woman appeared at the door of his room.

The beauty smiled as she leaned against the door. Once she had Zen's attention, she said, "Hey boy, could I talk with you?"

Nory and Sean were hot-blooded youths. Thus, their hearts beat faster when they saw the



Chapter 150 Heavenly Essence (Part Two)

"Oh! Fren Zhuge!" Zen nodded and repeated, "Is he the one who is usually called the Loony Fren?"

Vivan grinned, "It seems that you have heard of my master's nickname..."

"Just tell him to die," replied Zen as he sneered at Vivan in disgust.

At the moment, Vivan stood on the spot stiffly with a fixed grin. She had thought that Zen would comply with her request after learning of her master's identity. She hadn't expected Zen to refuse so firmly.



Zen dared to speak so haughtily, implying that he was not afraid of Fren at all.

A hint of life vitality scattered out from Vivan's hair...

Vivan's straight hair curled and surged like the waves of the sea. Then they rose in spirals to form five cones. In the next instant, they pointed at Zen, like five spinning drilling bits. She threatened, "Anyone who has dared to offend my master has died. Do you want to die as well?"

Zen smiled, pointed to the auction hall, and cautioned, "Huh, do you want to fight me now? You'd better take a look around and see where you are."

The dispute in the room immediately drew the attention of the people in the auction house.

Noticing the strange situation, a few guards of



the Zhang Clan approached Zen's room. Blessed Auction House was obliged to keep its customers safe, and fighting was absolutely prohibited in the auction house.

Vivan glanced at the guards and recalled her life vitality. She snorted and turned to leave the room.

Gazing at her receding figure, Zen smirked and shouted, "Twenty-four thousand and one hundred!"

Hearing Zen's bid and seeing Vivan's livid face, Fren knew that Zen had not taken his threat seriously.

"What did the boy say?" asked Fren with a smile.

Depressed, Vivan said, "He said you should go die!"



sold it at a good price. We still have two treasures to auction. Initially, they were supposed to be the finales of the auction, but now, we have decided to sell them in advance! The floor price of these two objects is far higher than that of the Weapon Refining Principle. But I believe you will be very interested in them!"

After Nestor finished speaking, he took out a small jade bottle.

He shook the bottle with his right hand, and at the same time, a thread of life vitality came out from his left hand and floated to the mouth of the bottle.

Then, a few small particles spread out from the mouth of the jade bottle, one drop after another, just like tiny droplets of water, but with a metallic luster.

"Here are fifty drops of heavenly essence! The base price is twenty thousand cubic crystals.



men, one's surname is Huang, and the other is Yu. so one must come from the Huang Clan, and the other must be from the Yu Clan. Both clans enjoy a high reputation in Imperial Capital as they are listed among the seven prestigious noble clans. Since they are both determined to buy the heavenly essence, you can expect the final price to be unrealistically high."

Money wasn't a problem for any member of the top seven noble clans.

The two old men seemed to be venerable with high prestige in the noble clans. Thus, they could scramble for the heavenly essence at any cost if they really wanted to do so.

However, although the Huang Clan and the Yu Clan were prominent, other more powerful clans were also present at the auction.

Apart from these two old men, many people were unwilling to give up the opportunity to



acquire the heavenly essence.

At that time, Zen gaped at the auction block.

"What is the heavenly essence? Why is it so valuable? Why do so many people want to get it?" Zen asked.

Nory laughed and said, "I have often considered that you were knowledgeable enough to know everything. But now, you seem somewhat ignorant as you don't know what heavenly essence is!"

Zen shook his head. Although he had read some books on weapon refining, he had never come across any mention of heavenly essence. The first time that he saw it was when the black fire in his head refined the weapon.

To show off his knowledge, Nory cleared his throat and said, "Several years ago, some people discovered heavenly essence. But do you



As Zen learned more about heavenly essence from Nory, the price of the heavenly essence at the auction soared!

The basic price had been 20, 000 cubic crystals. However, it had now risen to 80, 000!

More than 100, 000 cubic crystals was a significant spend even for a big noble clan.

However, the two old men showed no intention of stopping. Instead, they became more determined to bid for the heavenly essence. Furthermore, other people tried to bid with them now and then.

Finally, the 50 droplets of heavenly essence were taken by Mr. Huang from the Huang Clan at a price of 120, 000 cubic crystals.

120, 000 cubic crystals could buy 50 droplets of heavenly essence.....



the person who had angered him was an outer disciple who was only a half-step into the nature level!

"Forget it, Vivan!" shouted Fren as he turned and glared at Vivan.

"But Fren..." Vivan tried to crucify Zen. She was not reconciled.

"Let's go!" said Fren in a low but harsh voice as he interrupted Vivan. Then he turned and walked away. He was too embarrassed to stay.

Vivan didn't dare to contradict Fren. She glared at Zen as if she would devour him. Then she followed Fren out of the auction house.

It was not until Fren and Vivan had left the Blessed Auction House that Wurth, Nory, Sean, and other people came around.

"Zen, you are the boss! That was awesome!"



polite to him. He bowed to Wick.

"You are the first one to embarrass Fren!" Wick said with a smile, "Wurth, you've got a great friend!"

"Thank you, Wick. I appreciate it! If there were another way, I would not mess with Fren," said Zen as he shook his head.

"You are welcome. I am only a few years older than you, so I am not that old. No need to bow to me," Wick said with a smile. "Zen, the item you bought has not been delivered yet. Please follow me. I will hand over the cubic crystals and the Weapon Refining Principle."

Wick looked honest and straightforward. But he was physically strong and seemed highly intelligent. Although he admired Zen for what he did to Fren today, he did not speak much about it. Zen was Wurth's friend. However, it was unrealistic to support Zen against Fren. He



Seeing the embarrassed expression on Zen's face, Wurth Zhang smiled and said, "Don't worry Zen. There is no need to take these cubic crystals with you. You can have a look first, and then we'll deposit them in the Blessed Draft Bank for you."

With that, Wurth Zhang handed Zen a thin token that was mounted in a layer of shiny gold foil. Zen saw the words, Blessed Draft Bank, written on it in ancient Chinese characters.

"If you need money, you can withdraw it from the Blessed Draft Bank. We would be happy to open a draft for you should you need to make a large transaction. The credit of our bank's draft is the best in the entire empire. Besides, you could use our draft as conveniently as cubic crystals," explained Wurth Zhang.

Zen knew that the Blessed Draft Bank was the most creditworthy bank in the empire and that



feel an indescribable pain; the kind of pain that made Zen feel like he was being punctured by needles.

Zen had a feeling that the two were very strong. In fact, he thought that they might be stronger than Randall and that they could be compared with the people like Floyd, the Flying Dragon General.

"Are you going to the Hell Mountain, boy?" The two men stood on the demarcation line as they asked Zen.

"Yes, I am. Who are you?" asked Zen

"We are the guards of the Hell Mountain. You said you were going to Hell Mountain. Since this is the case, we would like to know if you know the rules," the mountain keeper wondered. The guards looked like they meant Zen no harm, but it was difficult not to feel uncomfortable around them. They curiously



The Hell Mountain was as the guards said it was; a chaotic place wherein no life was spared. No man who entered the domain was safe, let alone protected.

There was a reason why people referred to it as The Hell Mountain.

Many people feared being imprisoned in the wicked mountain. A lot of people would prefer to be punished than to be exiled and entrusted to the people that resided Hell Mountain.

That was because the people who were in Hell Mountain were notorious criminals who were sent to the mountain by the Cloud Sect to be punished for their heinous deeds.

There were no rules in the Hell Mountain. The world within it was an absolute jungle that left every man for himself.



"Thank you for your precautions. I understand well and clear what I am getting myself into. However, I really do wish to cross this line," Zen said firmly and confidently. His eyes wandered around the mountain as if he were looking for a place to stay in, but little did the guards know that he was trying to determine where his sister could be.

The guards, realizing that Zen would not back down, stopped trying to talk the man out of it. They returned his card and made way for Zen to step in.

Zen appreciated the notion done by the guards and stepped in. There was no turning back anymore.

After walking what seemed like a mile, Zen finally arrived at the foot of the mountain.

In front of him was a very steep path and on



while he was calm and collected, ready to land a fatal blow on the man, who was supposedly at the nature level. ❶

The man's voice dripped with cynicism as he said, "You are at my mercy! If it suits my wishes, you will lose your life right now at my command, in Hell Mountain."

As their leader dealt with Zen, the man's companions stopped to watch.

"Last warning, move aside or die where you stand!" threatened Zen.

Feeling superior to Zen, the man dismissed the warning.

Extending his large, black hands, the man attempted to grasp Zen.

If he fell victim to this man, Zen would suffer greatly!



On second thought, they turned tail and ran.

Smirking at their cowardice, Zen resumed his climb until he reached the mountain, where the buildings were constructed of black rock, most of which were shabby, and neglected, giving them an oppressive sense.

Inside the buildings, Zen found many people sitting, reclining, meditating and some were mumbling respectively.

Despite being exiled to Hell Mountain, they applied themselves to refining their martial arts skills and paid no attention to Zen's arrival.

Sauntering, Zen glanced carefully and deliberately at each person...

High up on the zenith of Hell Mountain, the waves of the lava flowing bubbled, and there was an overwhelming heat that rose from the



Vale and asked, "and messages? Are there any from Perrin? I am especially interested in any recent news about Zen...."

Eagerly asking questions, and looking for details, Yan went from icy, short, clipped responses to chatty and nearly gushing ones, as Vale volleyed each one happily responding to her.

"Perrin relayed that your family is doing well, and Zen is doing well. But as he lives at the Cloud Sect, he can only contact the family with letters at times," responded Vale Wang smiling.

Continuing to focus her attention on the slingshot, Yan said, "For the time being, since Perrin isn't entitled to visit Hell Mountain's summit, you are kindly requested to deliver messages for us."

"There's no need even to mention it! I'm ready to take on the job because of our friendship!" Any chance to be near to Yan was a stroke of



Chapter 134 An Unavoidable Encounter (Part One)

The thin, misty wisps of clouds swirled around the light blue sky like steam from a hot spring as a little pebble crashed down about a thousand feet to the earth.

As the forces of gravity sucked it in, the pebble first hit the rocky mountainsides before finally landing with a loud "crack" on the ground.

Zen was deep in thought about Yan's whereabouts as he stood outdoors when the crack of the pebble landing stunned him.

He had been walking around the mountainside before in circles and had almost searched every



Zen further observed that the man was shrouded by a band of lotus-shaped light behind him. The "homicidal intent of lotus" that clouded his body was quite mild like a tangle of soft, worn-out thorns that no longer scared and hurt people.

This "homicidal intent of lotus" was also known as certain temperament or nature.

However, Zen still perceived some sort of threat in that seemingly mild and tame "homicidal intent of lotus." It was said that the power of this intent would be extremely hard to resist once it was brought into play. A strong temptation, one might say.

When the group was nearly approaching him, Zen prepared to move out of their sight.

However, when he moved sideways, Zen noticed two men out of the corner of his eye



However, Vale wasn't interested in the Luo family's disputes at all. He only knew that Yan cared a lot about her biological brother. In that case, he civilly bowed to Zen and properly introduced himself, "I am Vale Wang, directly apprenticed to a presbyter of Cloud Sect."

To see Vale bow in front of him, Perrin and Billy were amazed and stood still in astonishment at the scene in front of them.

Not only them, but Zen likewise was a bit shocked that someone like Vale even bowed to him, when he himself was only an outer disciple. This was really beyond his wildest imaginations that Zen thought what the hell was Vale thinking or even plotting. In any case, he politely responded back, "I am Zen Luo, an outer disciple of Drizzle Peak."

"Zen, I have heard your name many times. Yan often mentions you in front of me. She misses



fist, they also had to avoid being attacked by the blood-colored life vitality that sprang up from Perrin's body, or else their skin and flesh would be instantly corroded upon exposure to the fiery heat that could burn one off limb by limb.

However, this was nothing for Zen.

Although the blood-colored life vitality was fairly corrosive, it didn't scare Zen at all because his body had been turned into a spiritual weapon.

Occasionally, the blood-colored life vitality rested on certain parts of Zen's body and created some little holes on his robes because of its corrosive properties. However, when his skin was exposed to the life vitality, only some faint black marks could be seen even though one could swear there was a sizzling sound that strongly resembled burning.



Vale was so smart.

A while ago when Perrin had stammered as Vale asked him the question, he had figured out what Perrin was plotting.

Vale knew that Perrin had never mentioned Zen in front of him only for the sake of his own private interests. To be specific, Perrin wanted to gain more benefits from the Wang family by taking advantage of Yan.

Zen wouldn't have that deep aversion and hatred towards the Wang family if Perrin had told him the truth earlier.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Sericka



muttered to himself. He stared at Zen with vacant eyes.

"All your achievements are useless. The only reason you have reached this far is because of the power of pills," replied Zen. A cold smile danced on his face for a brief moment. Then, sadness reflected in his eyes.

Among the noble clans, many people like Perrin had reached high refining levels by taking pills, but they lacked practical experience. They would lose when confronted by cultivators like Zen who had been in actual combat.

After saying that, Zen turned his head and rapidly blinked his eyes. He didn't want the others to see his emotions.

If his father hadn't been killed, Zen would never have hurt Perrin. After all, Perrin was his cousin. They were both children of the Luo Clan.



But, Zen's uncles, blinded by power and greed, had led the revolt within the Luo Clan and in the process, murdered Zen's father. Ever since Zen had sworn to avenge his father's death.

"Billy, I have defeated Perrin. Are you going to avenge him?" Zen turned to Billy and asked. On the day of the initial exam, Billy had helped Perrin by instigating four men to kill Zen. From that day on, Zen disliked Billy.

Billy was ready to charge at Zen, but Vale stopped him. Surprised, Billy pouted and said, "Brother, this bloke is so arrogant. He not only defeated Perrin, but he has also dared to challenge us. Are we just letting him go?"

Vale shook his head before walking toward Zen. "Though you are only at the marrow refining level, you have shown commendable courage. Very good! You are truly Yan's brother! Both of you are equally gifted," Vale praised Zen. Billy's



mouth gaped open when he heard Vale.

Vale had just bowed to Zen three times. And now, he was praising Zen. Billy knew that Vale was enduring Zen's hostility for Yan's sake.

Zen had scolded Vale, but Vale had pretended as though he hadn't been offended. In view of Vale's reaction, Zen believed him to be a very calculating person.

"But," Vale's soft tone rose, and his gentle eyes sharpened at once.

At this time, Vale began to release his homicidal intent of lotus. The soft rays of light on Vale's body became sharp and stiff, like a hedgehog's quills. Then Zen felt a prickling sensation.

"As Yan's brother, you can't go to the top of Hell Mountain, let alone rescue her. There are only a handful of people in Cloud Sect who can



Soul Realm. As Zen was just an outer disciple, the pressure of Vale's life vitality would kill him soon.

Thinking about this, Yan became anxious and couldn't sit still.

"No, no! Don't hurt my brother!" cried Yan.

Without hesitating, she jumped down.

The moment Yan jumped off the cliff, an energy junction connected by several hexagons appeared under her.

The energy junction quickly formed a semi-circular wall that blocked Yan.

"Oh, no! The six-pointed star array!"

Yan shouted in disappointment.

Yan knew that a six-pointed star array



constrained her on Hell Mountain.

Since Yan had never thought of escaping she had never actively triggered the six-pointed star array before. At a time of crisis, she did not expect to be stopped by the array.

Yan glanced at Vale and Zen again nervously. Since he was just an outer disciple, Zen couldn't hold on for long. She had no choice but to rescue her brother.

"I'm gonna tear it apart," said Yan with a determined look.

After a deep breath, Yan focused her energy on her fingertips. Then she stretched her long, slender fingers and poked the hexagonal energy junction.

Although it seemed as though her action was gentle, she had actually used a tremendous amount of power.



'Vale's intent is not as strong as the vengeful beast's intent. Nevertheless, it is challenging for me to resist his intent !' Zen marveled at his rival's power, which almost overwhelmed him despite his determination to withstand the assault.

Many people would be overpowered under this circumstance. Zen was no exception.

He felt as though he was being shattered and battered.....

'No. I must not surrender!' Zen swore.

One may achieve wonders with superior willpower.

But the overwhelming disparity between them in terms of martial arts overshadowed Zen's tenacity.

Zen was enduring the unbearable when



injure Zen severely.

But Vale's assaults gave Zen a sense of oppression.

'I must maintain my soul strength and peace of mind to fight Vale!

Why not leverage the method of forgetting myself?'

Zen was suddenly inspired.

The refining method of forgetting oneself was actually an esoterica on soul refining.

Few leading masters at the Illuminating Soul Realm could master this method because refining the soul proved to be more difficult than refining the body.

Beyond self, beyond desire.



In the ensuing battle, lotuses showered upon Zen.

Those lotuses were so heavy that once they fell to the ground, the gravel was crushed.

Each lotus was as heavy as ten thousand pounds!

It was an astounding sight to see the lotuses falling over Zen began to multiply.

In a twinkling, dozens of extraordinarily beautiful lotuses rained down over Zen's head, back, and torso.

Each was more massive than the last. When faced with over a hundred thousand pounds, Zen lost his balance.

'Such weight is too horrible to bear!'



Zen had no opportunity to win, especially when confronted by a cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm like Vale.

However, Zen had great courage and determination. He would try his best to fight, even when he only had a small chance of survival!

"Hiss..."

Just as Zen drove the demonic life energy to flow in his body, something strange happened.

Threads of demonic life energy gradually emerged on Zen's skin, and upon contact with the lotus flowers, the demonic life energy began to devour them.

Author's note




Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi

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hard to earn points to save Yan from Hell Mountain.

Zen's idea was naive, but Aura still sighed. It was rare to see such love and devotion between siblings in a family. In her opinion, Zen was too innocent and trustworthy when it came to matters about Yan.

"Master Su, I'm going up the mountain top to see Yan," Zen said as he turned toward the path that would take him to the top.

Aura quickly shook her head and said, "You can't see her."

"Why?" Zen's eyebrows bristled like sharp swords. He had been told that he needed points to see someone imprisoned on Hell Mountain. And yet, Vale had said that Zen was not eligible to visit Yan. And now, Master Su was stopping him.



She stretched her hand, and three streaks of life vitality rolled over Zen. Magically, he was transported onto the flying chariot. Then, Aura jumped into the chariot. Before Zen could protest, the flying chariot began its ascension toward the top of Hell Mountain.

About a thousand feet from the mountaintop, a bright blue light suddenly lit up and enveloped the whole summit.

"This is the six-pointed star array. We can't get past it," stated Aura.

Zen struggled to his feet and began searching the summit with the hopes of catching a glimpse of his sister.

Zen's hearing had become much sharper and his vision much wider since he entered the marrow refining level. However, the distance was too far to find Yan.



As Zen was absorbed in searching for Yan, a brilliant light suddenly appeared on the right side of his line of sight.

Zen then fixed his eyes upon it.

He saw a girl standing gracefully on the edge of a stone platform in the distance. She was burning her life vitality. The extremely dazzling light rose from her and formed a purple light column, which was even brighter than Vale's.

Zen narrowed his eyes as he tried to focus his vision on the young girl. From this considerable distance, he could make out her silhouette, but he couldn't see her features. Once his sight focused, even though the girl looked blurry, Zen recognized her!

She was Yan. His sister.

They looked at each other for a long while.



The girl, who had been delicate and fragile in the past, didn't need Zen's protection any longer.

However, the gesture still filled her heart with warmth as it had done before. Now she felt safe...

"We can go back now..." said Zen. He seemed more relaxed than when Aura had met him.

"Don't you want to stay a little longer?" Aura whispered.

Zen shook his head. "No," he said.

With a smile, Aura turned the direction of the flying chariot and flew down Hell Mountain.

It wasn't until they had left Hell Mountain and Yan couldn't see him that Zen collapsed on the chariot.



Quick as lightning, she grabbed the Red Cloud Pill from Zen's hand and poked Zen's jaw with her finger. As Zen opened his mouth reflexively, Aura pushed the pill into his mouth.

"Don't worry. My investment in you will pay off sooner or later. It will come back to me with a price more than the points for the pill. So, as your creditor, you had better listen to me!" stated Aura in a severe tone of voice. A slight smile danced on her face, however. After that, she turned and continued to drive the flying chariot.

Having consumed the Red Cloud Pill, Zen felt as if there were a raging fire burning inside his stomach. Then a pleasant tingling sensation seeped from the gashes on his body.

The five-grade pill was indeed exceedingly magical. Zen's severe injuries were now recovering at a remarkable rate.



knew that he was fighting a losing battle, but he repeatedly tried to use the Heavenly Ogre Fist, still hoping to survive in spite of the slim chance. After several attempts of this refinement method, a little demonic life energy had finally condensed.

Today, Zen tried to make use of the Heavenly Ogre Fist on Drizzle Peak, where he was safe.

As Zen thought about this, it dawned on him that Heavenly Ogre Fist might only work when one was on the verge of giving up hope.

On the previous day, when he was thrown into absolute adversity, Zen felt himself behaving under an unbelievable state that he could hardly comprehend or describe in words. When faced with such a crisis, he had repeated and thought about each move very slowly.

Now, Zen was in his room, racking his brain to recall what and how he felt the previous day.



Zen paced back and forth in his room. He was so lost in thought that it seemed as though he was enchanted. He had been so consumed with his thoughts that Zen didn't notice that he had spent over half an hour just pacing.

All of a sudden, his eyes gleamed as an idea flashed through his mind. Quickly, he jumped to his feet. As his feet touched the floor, Zen made the first pose for Heavenly Ogre Fist.

"Maintain forces on the upper and lower body. Repel ogres' intent with heart if any..."

Zen lightly swung his arms along a direction. After rotating his arms, all his forces were concentrated near his belly. It was not until this moment that a trace of dark purple demonic life energy appeared between his hands.

Excitement lit up Zen's face when he saw the slight trace of demonic life energy.



Chapter 144 Half-step Into The Nature Level (Part Two)

However, Zen was still at the marrow refining level. Although he was also capable of pouring life energy into a weapon, the energy would dissipate and lose its effects once the weapon left his hand.

But now, the purple-black nature-level life energy hadn't disappeared after it was separated from Zen's body.

'Have I reached a level higher than the marrow refining level?' wondered Zen.

Before entering Hell Mountain, Zen had been able to estimate that he had reached the peak



were distributed to them every month. The type and quantity of such supplies were dependent on the level and status of disciples.

Zen nodded. As a member of Cloud Sect, he thought he deserved the supplies reserved for disciples. And so, he walked toward one side of Drizzle Peak with Nory and Sean.

As usual, Nory began to share some of the gossips he had heard while they were walking.

"Zen, you have been engrossed in your cultivation and haven't stepped out of your room. Have you ever heard what happened on Hell Mountain?" Although Nory joined Cloud Sect later than Sean, he was now more informative than Sean.

Zen pretended as if he didn't know and responded in feigned surprise, "Huh? What occurred on Hell Mountain?"



Zen wanted to turn Wurth down because he had just managed to reach half-step into nature level and he had to work hard to master his technique. He never seemed to have enough time.

He was about to refuse when something occurred to him, and he asked, "Wurth, can anything be sold at this auction?"

"No, not really," stated Wurth, chuckling. "Common items can't be auctioned at the Blessed Auction House. It has to be valuable," he explained.

In short, the items sold through the Blessed Auction House were of high value.

Wurth had piqued Zen's curiosity, and he wanted to have a look. Zen had a crystal core from the Fire Scorpion Lion that he'd gotten in the south.



was too luxurious for him.

After boarding the flying chariot, it took off, heading away from the Cloud Sect.

Although Zen had been in the Imperial Capital for some time, he hadn't enjoyed the scenery there. Now as the chariot flew over it, he could see the whole landscape.

At full speed, it took nearly an hour to reach the edge of the Imperial Capital because of how large it was. ⓘ

"Look! It's the Burning Sky Palace!" shouted Nory suddenly, as he pointed to the left.

Turning his head to where Nory pointed, Zen saw tremendous city walls.

Within the walls was a formidable array of various magnificent, massive buildings. Colorful rays of lights covered the walls and exuded a



vague overbearing power.

This was the center of the Burning Sky Empire!

Shortly after they passed the Burning Sky Palace, Wurth maneuvered the chariot down and docked in front of a large building.

On the front of the building were large gold leaf letters.

The letters announced The Blessed Auction House.

In addition to Zen and his companions, other flying chariots were continually flying in, stopping nearby.

Anyone who could bid at the Blessed Auction House was either rich, honorable, or was nobly born.

Naturally, Wurth was familiar with his family's



Wurth calmly stepped forward, took out a token and showed it to the man.

At the sight of the token, the man's expression changed and in a nervous manner, he hastened to explain, "I didn't realize you were our young master. I-I..."

Acknowledging the man's apology, Wurth shook his head, but his voice was cold as he said, "Well since you did not know, I won't blame you. My friends and I will be going in."

"Yes! Please, right this way!" said the man as he politely ushered the four of them in.

The Zhang family was known as the wealthiest family. The man was undoubtedly a servant of the family, but, he was at the nature level, which shocked Zen, Nory, and Sean.

"Wurth, you're always so good-natured at



them a token, and said, "If you'll excuse me, I have something I need to attend to. You guys sit here and watch."

With that Wurth walked away. He came today to help his family, so he certainly couldn't remain just sitting there with his friends.

Jumping up, Zen followed Wurth out.

"Hey, Wurth, wait up. I have a question. How do I consign an item to your auction house?" asked Zen in a hushed tone.

With a look of surprise, Wurth asked, "Do you really have something to auction?"

It wasn't that Wurth scorned Zen. On the contrary, Zen was powerful, his potential was unlimited. Plus he was a man the Zhang family would like to win over and even invest in. But, as an outer disciple, what could he possibly have that was valuable?



Fire Scorpion Lion, Wurth almost doubted that he'd heard him correctly.

The crystal core from a Fire Scorpion Lion had extraordinary uses and was precious to pill and weapon refiners. Apart from that, the most important thing was that the Fire Scorpion Lion was at the brink of extinction. Wurth searched his memory, and he recalled the last auction with a crystal core of Fire Scorpion Lion occurred three years ago.

That crystal core sold for nearly twenty thousand cubic crystals, and Wurth recalled, it was from a young Fire Scorpion Lion.

If Zen really had a crystal core from a Fire Scorpion Lion to auction off, then Wurth would inadvertently bring great business for the family.

"Zen, follow me!" Zen didn't seem to be joking, so, Wurth took Zen to a secret room in the



was definitely a priceless and rare treasure!

"Nestor, what do you think of this crystal core?" Wurth asked. Even though he knew the value of the object, he wanted to confirm with Nestor, the most experienced auctioneer in the Blessed Auction House.

"This is the crystal core of an adult fire scorpion lion. This fire scorpion lion would be around 30 feet high and 60 feet long. Such a big fire scorpion lion hasn't appeared for many years. So, this crystal core is valuable enough to be used as the final and best treasure during the auction!" Unlike his indifference at the beginning, Nestor was now very excited. His shrewd, little eyes were full of astonishment and happiness.

On hearing Nestor's description, Zen admired the man. Nestor had indeed been correct. The height of that Fire Scorpion Lion was exactly like what Nestor had said, about 30 feet. The



Chapter 147 Too Expensive (Part Two)

Zen did not think the price was low. Instead, it was much higher than his expectation.

Although he knew that the crystal core of fire scorpion lion was very precious, he had never presumed that the price would be this high.

The crystal core of a queen blade locust was exchanged for only 1000 points, which was equal to two thousand cubic crystals. And he had thought that the crystal core of fire scorpion lion would be valued at a similar price.

But the basic price, as he heard, was 15 times higher than that of the queen blade locust! That was totally beyond his calculations.



add this to the lot today, we will have two outstanding treasures at this auction. So, I think it would be better to present the crystal core of fire scorpion lion in the next auction, where it will fetch a higher price... " Nestor had the same idea as Wurth. It would be worthwhile to conduct an auction for this crystal core only.

"No need to wait for the next auction. My friend thinks that it is okay to combine it in today's auction. Nestor, please put away this crystal core of fire scorpion lion and prepare for the auction later," Wurth calmly instructed.

"Okay, young master, I will do that," Nestor now knew that the timing for the auction of the crystal core was nonnegotiable. With a quick shake of his head, Nestor asked an assistant to bring a luxurious box. He then carefully put the crystal core in it and sealed the box.

After completing all the arrangements for the



hundred. Then it was bought by a noble clan member.

Zen, Sean, and Nory had accompanied Wurch to the auction house with the purpose of broadening their vision and seeing what an auction was for. Of course, they did not have any interest in luxurious flowers that had no benefits in refining.

They did not have the money to buy these flowers either. Even if they could afford it, they would not spend their money on something which could only be used as an ornament.

After the deal of the purple epiphyllum had been completed, Nestor started to introduce the next lot.

"The second item is a spiritual weapon. Now, the Shura Battlefield is about to reopen. If you are armed with a spiritual weapon on the battlefield, you would feel it is easier to fight



another.

"Three thousand cubic crystals!"

Even though the Heaven-shaking Dagger-axe had a powerful name and it was indeed a spiritual weapon, its shape was rough and heavy. Zen had thought that the bid would not be competitive. However, to his surprise, many refiners were interested in this weapon, and the price shot up in a short time.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: huangxiahan; Editor: Arathi



Casual bidding was not allowed at an auction. If a bidder won something in a bid, but could not afford it... The result was no joke!

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Arathi



Twenty thousand cubic crystals was a significant amount of wealth anywhere.

The average family could not put up so much money. The boy with a white robe was a half-step into the noble level. Did he belong to a noble clan?

Some people whispered and speculated about Zen's identity.

Fren shot Zen a sideways glance and called out, "Twenty-one thousand!"

Several leaders within the Zhuge Clan had asked Fren to buy the book at any cost as it contained detailed knowledge of Chase's work. The Weapon Refining Principle also contained Chase's secrets, especially those related to weapon refining. Thus, attaining the Weapon Refining Principle was of utmost importance to the Zhuge Clan.



enchanting Vivan.

However, Zen turned his head and asked Vivan calmly, "What do you want?"

"My master asked me to tell you to give up the bidding," said Vivan, staring straight at Zen.

Zen returned her smile as he asked, "Why should I give up?"

"Because my master wants you to," said Vivan. Malicious intent twinkled in her brown eyes.

What arrogance!

Zen's forehead wrinkled when he heard what Vivan said. Since entering Cloud Sect, Zen had met many arrogant people. He sneered at Vivan, "Your master? Who is he?"

"My master's surname is Zhuge," replied Vivan proudly. The Zhuge Clan was renowned in the



"Ugh!" Fren didn't seem angry when he heard Vivan. He reached out with one hand, touched Vivan's face, and said, "How dare he speak like that? I haven't been in such a situation for a long time! In that case, I'll quit the bidding!"

Vivan's eyes widened when she heard Fren. She asked, "Why do you quit, master? Are you afraid of that kid?"

Fren shrugged and explained, "If I continue to bid, the older members from other noble clans might not keep out of the affair. If they own the Weapon Refining Principle, I will not be able to get it back. It's better to give up now. If the boy obtains the book, all I need to do is to grab it from him."

A smile appeared on Vivan's face as she understood Fren's scheme.

Indeed, it would be impossible to take the



Weapon Refining Principle from Zen when he was in the Blessed Auction House. But Zen would leave the auction house eventually and then, Fren would get his chance. Since Zen was wearing the outer disciple robe of Cloud Sect, it would not be difficult to learn his identity either. It would be easier to snatch the book from Zen at Cloud Sect.

Since Fren stopped bidding, no one competed with Zen for the Weapon Refining Principle, and Zen won it eventually.

However, according to the rules, Zen must offer enough cubic crystals to take ownership of the Weapon Refining Principle. Since Zen's crystal core of the fire scorpion lion had not been auctioned, he didn't have the crystals needed to complete the purchase.

From the platform, Nestor announced, "Well, just now we had a little trouble with the Weapon Refining Principle. Anyway, we have



know how weapon refiners can make mysterious weapons, spiritual weapons, and even fairy weapons? That is because when they are refining, they put some heavenly essence into the weapons. In other words, the more powerful the weapon is, the more heavenly essence it contains!"

So that was it.....?

Zen seemed to understand.

The iron essence Zen had swallowed could be related to heavenly essence.

The scales of the cyan dragon mold in his head could be brightened as soon as he swallowed the heavenly essence.

There were 5 to 6 droplets of heavenly essence in a good quality mysterious weapon. So to some extent, heavenly essence shouldn't be so valuable. Why did such a little bottle of



Chapter 152 So Insane (Part One)

"Zen Luo? So it is him."

Fren was very impressed with this name.

As per his memory, this guy knocked his brother, Chad out of the Blooded Test.

After being eliminated from the Blooded Test, Chad begged him to get rid of Zen Luo.

Since Fren wouldn't deal with a weak opponent who was at the organ refining level personally, he commanded Thomas, a loyal servant, to be in charge of that.

It was beyond Fren's expectation that Thomas



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Since Fren wouldn't deal with a weak opponent who was at the organ refining level personally, he commanded Thomas, a loyal servant, to be in charge of that.

It was beyond Fren's expectation that Thomas would fail. Instead, he was taught a lesson by Zen, and he complained tearfully upon his return.

By that time, to Fren, Zen was just like a clown who was beneath his notice. He wouldn't bother spending more time dealing with Zen. It wasn't until Liam from Drizzle Peak came to him that Fren sent White Fiend and Black Fiend



Zen stayed on guard. His demonic life energy started to surge inside him slowly. Then it began spreading along the muscles and vessels in his body. Soon it gained momentum and Zen felt ready to fight.

"You are Zen Luo?" asked Fren with a smile as he stopped in front of Zen.

Zen nodded calmly, and his expression was serene as he answered, "Yes. What do you want?"

"I heard that you hurt my servant and killed White Fiend and Black Fiend," said Fren.

"Your servant offended me. I just taught him an unforgettable lesson. And White Fiend and Black Fiend were trying to take my life. I simply returned the favor. They deserved that," replied Zen.



Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: NicoleX; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 153 So Insane (Part Two)

Fren never thought that Zen could be so strong-willed.

In other words, did he not have the courage of a lion? He was completely supercilious!

The Zhuge Clan was one of the top seven noble clans of the Burning Sky Empire. The family had remained in power from the beginning of the Burning Sky Empire!

He didn't even blink his eyes upon hearing about the Zhuge Clan. If Fren's family's reputation could not cause him the slightest apprehension, then what else could?



Fren had always boasted of his demented nature. However, his attitude was based on the powerful background of his family.

Compared with Zen, the difference was not just a little bit.

Zen was such a man of hubris!

Embarrassment was what Fren felt right now.

Deep in Fren's heart, he desired to tear Zen to pieces!

He could have done that.

But if he killed someone in the Blessed Auction House, it might anger the Zhang Clan. His family could, however, bear the consequences.

As was known to all, there was never a dead enemy between two noble clans. And if a dispute occurred between the Zhuge Clan and



"Fren walked away speechless. I'm afraid that Fren was really angry this time," said Wurth. "Zen, you made him that angry. Aren't you afraid that he..."

Zen, however, said with a smile, "Wurth, if I feigned to be weak and humble, would he spare me?"

Wurth froze and thought for a while before he said, "You are right. Even if you had been nice to him, he would not let it pass easily."

"Now that the consequence is the same, why should I be afraid of him?" said Zen as he raised his eyebrow gently. Cruel intent reflected in his eyes.

He knew that dealing with such an enemy was just like dealing with a cunning wolf. A person had to be more ruthless and crazy than his opponent to seize the chance of victory. If a



"Oh my god! I've never seen so many cubic crystals in my life," Sean also murmured. Since all three young men were of civilian origin, they didn't have much money.

Although they were outer disciples of Drizzle Peak at Cloud Sect, the gaps among them were tremendous. It was surprising that Zen had been able to earn so many points not long after joining Cloud Sect.

However, Zen didn't know what to do with so many cubic crystals. Although he had a space ring, yet its space was not much. It would be impossible to put all the cubic crystals in the space ring.

He couldn't carry them. Even if he asked Sean and Nory to help, they wouldn't be able to take that many cubic crystals. That was just not realistic. Zen had never considered that carrying or storing the crystals would be a problem.



It was not long until Zen took out a larger crystal core from his space ring.

This purple crystal core was from the queen blade locust he had killed and now was glowing softly in the palm of his hand.

It was then that Aura's face drastically took another expression.

She knew full well that the queen blade locust was not any man's battle; she had killed such twice herself and she knew that it was not an easy task.

At Zen's level, he could easily kill those ordinary blade locusts. Now he had killed thousands of ordinary blade locusts and more than two hundred blade locusts leaders, but it didn't mean anything except that Zen was diligent.



help." She twirled the card in her hands with a blank expression on her face, showing her expectancy for an answer right then and there.

"This is something I need to do on my own, Master Su. Not to be disrespectful, but it is none of your business. It has nothing to do with you and I do not wish to involve you."

He did all of the things that he did to reunite with his sister, Yan. Zen had no desire to involve anyone else in this.

"You!" Aura finally lost her grip and puffed her cheeks with her eyebrows arching.

Zen didn't relent. Reaching out, he said in a stiff voice, "Give my disciple card back, Master Su."



Chapter 131 The Guards Of The Hell Mountain (Part One)

The room was filled with an uneasy atmosphere as Master Su and Zen stood face to face.

From the nuances of both very strong figures, it was quite evident how strong yet irking the personality of the master was. Her hostility was the product of having to grow up isolated in the Burning Sky Palace. She surely must have been distanced from most of the civilization. With a childhood such as the master's, who would not have walls built around themselves? Nevertheless, she was a Royal Family member, and no one would dare disobey her.

Although she had long surpassed the seclusion



In a flash, Zen used his soul to form a thorn as his opponent bore down on him.

"Spiritual thorn strike!"

As the weapon struck the man, he cried out in excruciating pain.

As his scream rang out, Zen hurled the broken flying knife at the man.

"Zing!"

"Slli-shh!"

Like a dart, the sharp weapon shot through the air, and struck the target. The knife punctured his chest, exiting his back and stuck in the rock behind him.

Then Zen pulled, bringing his lethal weapon swinging back.



abyss.

A platform loomed out over the ravine

and sitting on the precarious edge was a young girl dressed in pink, fearlessly swinging her slim legs, despite the dizzying height.

Her brows arched elegantly, her beauty was unsurpassed, and her increasing loneliness mirrored the look in her haunted gaze.

From behind her, a figure raced in her direction from the entrance.

As he sprinted, plumes resembling exquisite, pink lotuses sprang from the ground.

The person was vaulting over the lotuses.

Such a sight would have onlookers thinking of magic and power if there had been any.



slingshot was her treasured possession.

"Perrin hoped this would make you smile, so, when he hears about the pure joy lighting your features it'll thrill him!" commented the young man, a pleased smile touching his face at the sight of her lifted spirits.

This lithe, spirited girl of unearthly beauty was none other than Zen's younger sister, Yan, imprisoned in the confines of Hell Mountain.

The youth's name was Vale, Billy's brother, who was a descent of the noble Wang Clan as well as a major disciple at the Cloud Sect.

Because of his honorable position, Vale wore purple robes and was able to visit Hell Mountain.

"When I was a child, my older brother made this slingshot for me," stated Yan as she stared at the slingshot in her hands. She looked at



good luck to Vale Wang.

Appreciative of Vale's willingness, Yan nodded, and then picked up a stone off the platform, fixing it to the string and shooting it out over the crescent.

As though it was a dart, Yan shot the stone, sending it soaring in the direction of the target. Unfortunately, it collapsed halfway over the chasm in a downward curve.

Despite her shot missing its mark, Yan looked happier than ever - a sharp contrast to her earlier quiet mood.

Taking advantage of Yan's rare bright spirit, Vale sat and chatted more before he departed, satisfied that everything had gone well.

Two men were waiting eagerly for Vale to return from within Hell Mountain.



also reached a higher level with the help of the Wang family's "refinement chamber" and several grade-4 enhancement pills. All of these made his skills improve so much over only a short period of time.

Therefore, Perrin could not tell Vale that Yan's biological brother had joined Cloud Sect too, or else all the golden opportunities to acquire more refinement skills, learn courtesy of the Wang family and gain support from the family members would be lost.

If everything would work out in his favor, Perrin would've even planned to execute Zen first before anyone could question him, but his plan failed terribly.

"Zen is an unfilial member of our clan and because of that, all of us expect to kill him, so I never mentioned him in front of you," explained Perrin.



you very much," after saying this, Vale even made another bow to Zen.

Everyone knew that Vale was one of the most outstanding members of Cloud Sect. Only a very select few people could win such great respect from him, much less a bow. However just now, he had bowed to Zen two times already.

The scene in front of them made the sweat on Perrin's forehead intensified. His back started feeling the same as well.

Seeing how Vale was so polite to him, Zen got more curious and so he asked, "It is the first time that we meet. Why do you treat me so politely?"

Once again, Vale shocked everyone with another unexpected bow before he answered back with a polite smile, "I am so lucky to have gotten acquainted with Yan. You will be my brother-in



Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Sericka



master. 'Zen, Zen, you are such an idiot. You dare displease Vale, and now there's no choice for you but death. You brought this upon yourself, ' Perrin thought.

To this, Zen only sneered and he coldly replied, "So what? Perrin, what else are you good at apart from hooting?"

Perrin was furious. He said, "Zen, you are only an outer disciple of Cloud Sect. How dare you talk back like that to me. Tell you what, you are nothing to me. Today, I will let you see what strength is and how I will overpower you!" As soon as Perrin finished his words, streaks of blood-colored light radiated from every part of his body--it was his life vitality.

Perrin recently climbed up the levels quickly one after the other. After quite a diligent refinement at the half-step into the nature level, he had become a nature creature. Of course, he was able to achieve all this through the Wang



Through the picture slab, Master Su was able to get a better understanding of everything that was happening with Zen.

"You brat! You are a real troublemaker," Master Su murmured even though Zen was not around to hear her. Master Su looked northwest and frowned. Even from this distance, she could see the light column emitted by Vale.

"I don't care whether you survive or not. Since you think you're so good, figure out a solution to the situation in which you find yourself! He's such a pain in the neck," Master Su said to herself angrily.

Zen was a talented disciple, but he was stubborn and refused to heed her advice.

In fact, none of the masters of Cloud Sect had much control over their disciples. In general, there was no tangible mentoring relationship



between masters and disciples at Cloud Sect. Only some special disciples could be taught by masters personally.

Therefore, Zen didn't have to listen to Master Su. Her anger at Zen's disobedience was due to her temperament.

Master Su gritted her teeth as she glared at Zen's resolute face in the picture slab again. After a few seconds, she left the pavilion and took a flying chariot to Hell Mountain.

On a peak of Hell Mountain, Yan sat on a rock and played with her slingshot. She was immersed in happy memories, and a sweet smile danced on her lips.

Since her imprisonment on Hell Mountain, Yan had little else to do. Her childhood memories were her greatest treasure on such days.

All of a sudden, a white light illuminated the



mountain-side. Yan turned in the direction of the light.

'Is Vale burning his life vitality? Is he fighting with someone?' Yan focused her eyes on the light and frowned.

Although the distance was long, Yan was able to see every person on the mountain-side.

First, she glanced at Vale. Then she moved her eyes from Vale to the man standing in front of Vale.

'The man is in a white robe. Is he an outer disciple? Who dares to challenge Vale so boldly?' Yan wondered.

When Yan saw the face of the outer disciple, her eyes widened in astonishment.

To her surprise, the outer disciple was her beloved elder brother, Zen. "Brother!" Yan



now.

"Have you not realized the gap in the strength between you and me? I can kill you with just one finger. Despite my power, it's challenging for me to rescue Yan from Hell Mountain, let alone you. You can't even get to the top of the Hell Mountain. It's funny that you are so self-righteous," Vale teased Zen.

Several pink lotuses bloomed and withered at Vale's feet, as though in an endless cycle, as he spoke.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Sarah; Editor: Arathi



Zen felt overwhelmed. His entire body ached with the injuries from the falling lotuses.

He could not reckon with such crushing power.

But his legs were strong enough to withstand! ①

"Vale, I won't succumb to you!" Zen muttered through clenched teeth as he desperately resisted.

Upon realizing that his rival would not bow before him, Vale redoubled his efforts. He was determined to see Zen fall to his knees.

"Bro, now you are done for!" Vale said contemptuously.

"Cracking!"

Zen's feet were stuck, and his legs felt as though gravel had encased them.



An ordinary master would have felt an excruciating pain due to the injury to his soul.

Randall who had been at the grade-four nature level was not an exception.

But Vale countered the spiritual thorn strike by emanating a red halo from his forehead.

Since the spiritual thorn strike was a tier-four cultivation method, Zen's secret weapon passed through the red halo and lodged into Vale's head.

Fortunately for Vale, he had reached the Illuminating Soul Realm. That meant that Vale only felt a little dizzy from the spiritual attack and was able to recover quickly.

However, it was the hiatus that nearly doomed Vale.



Had it not been for Vale's timely reaction, he would have lost his life.

Vale was highly endowed and considered as a promising youth among the disciples from noble clans owing to his extraordinary martial arts.

The Wang Clan was a minor clan compared to the top seven noble clans.

Vale and his father Steven Wang were edging their way into an influential clan worthy of the top seven noble clans' equal.

Every warrior was bound to meet some difficulties on his way to the success.

And this battle nearly claimed Vale's life.

Vale narrowly escaped death when battling Zen because he had been overconfident and



Chapter 139

Devouring (Part One)

"Lub-dub, lub-dub, lub-dub..."

Vale's heart was beating violently. The blood dripping from the wound on his face was dyeing half his face red. "Unexpected! This is really surprising!" He lifted one hand and wiped the blood with his sleeve. Then Vale turned to Zen and said, "Perrin howled like a wounded animal after a blow from you. You must have used the soul attack. No wonder Perrin lost so fast. You, a guy at the marrow refining level have mastered the soul attack cultivation method. It's really unbelievable!"

Vale had experienced a lot of battles so far. Having escaped death, he realized that he had



runes that circled slowly around her right hand.

"I must break through this trap!"

The six tiny runes began to emit flashes of thin purple lightning.

Although the lightning flashes were tiny, the power emitted was terrible.

"Forbidden art — Death Lightning!"

The purple lightning spun faster and faster as it linked the small runes.

Yan's face turned pale in an instant.

Death Lightning was a forbidden art as it was a potent attacking method. Not only was the damage done by the attack method devastating, but at the same time, the user had to endure a super dreadful cost.



chance to fight back!" Zen could not move at all, but he did not give up trying to find a way out of this situation. Now that he was in the state of forgetting himself, he could keep calm even when on the brink of death.

Zen was concerned about the cracks that continued to appear on his body. Each bled profusely, and he knew that he was running out of time.

However, after entering the state, Zen could ignore the pain. It was as if his body had become someone else's body.

Zen thought, 'What other options do I have?

Broken Flying Knife...

Dragon Scales...

Spiritual Thorn...



stirring in his navel!

'That's it? Did I manage? Am I successful?' Zen was surprised.

He felt a new kind of life energy, which was completely different from the purple life energy, emerge from his navel.

This must be the demonic life energy!

At the same time, Zen felt something exceptional happening.

As soon as the thread of demonic life energy was produced, it began to devour the purple life energy in his body.

The demonic life energy must indeed be powerful if it could eat other kinds of life energy!

Zen knew that a cultivator could only have one



kind of life energy in his or her body. In general, when one practiced another cultivation method and produced a second life energy, the cultivator had to release the first life energy completely to be successful.

But Zen didn't have to do this as the demonic life energy swallowed the purple life energy.

While the purple life energy in Zen's navel reduced rapidly, the demonic life energy increased sharply. For a second, the demonic life energy filled Zen's navel.

'Heavenly Ogre Fist is a tier-five cultivation method, so the demonic life energy would probably be more powerful than the purple life energy! Let me see how powerful the demonic life energy is!' Zen clenched his fists. It was impossible for him to relax while he produced the demonic life energy.

He knew that his power was still too weak.



one while Vale was using his life vitality.

The demonic life energy was so quick that it swallowed the bloom the moment its dark purple life energy sparked. First, a crack appeared on the pure lotus, then the crack spread, multiplying until the lotus was covered with cracks, and then the lotus was consumed leaving no remains.

Within a short amount of the time, the dense layer of lotuses covering Zen's body was blended into the demonic life energy.

Once the lotuses were gone, Zen's gruesome wounds were exposed to air instantly.

Seeing cracks on Zen's body, the cultivators at the Hell Mountain recoiled.

Never before had they seen wounds like his, and they wondered what could cause the skin to break like this.



In actuality, wounds like his could be caused by the pressure of Vale's lotuses. As heavy as the lotuses were, they pulverized an ordinary person, but the unique manner of Zen's body protected him so that his skin merely cracked under the overwhelming pressure.

Too busy with what he was facing now, Zen couldn't tend his wounds. He balled his right hand into a fist, and his fingers of the other hand splayed on his right arm gently.

"Ogres Shaking the World! It's the first step of Heavenly Ogre Fist!"

Until now, Zen couldn't manage the mighty Heavenly Ogre Fist no matter how many times he practiced since he had no demonic life energy in his body.

After Zen completed his regular studies daily, he read the rare book named, Heavenly Ogre



them into his life energy, using them to retaliate when he was about to be finished, and all while exuding nothing but a calm and lucid exterior. Vale had to acknowledge, that Zen did much better than most people in the world!

What frightened Vale more was the power behind the punch.

Considering that Zen was on the level of marrow refining and could only gather life energy, it left one to wonder; what method produced a punch that powerful with only life energy? There was also the realization that once he reached the nature level and controlled life vitality, no one would be able to withstand the power from the punch.

There wasn't time for Vale to dwell on that now.

Time and again, Zen surprised Vale. As young and weak as Vale saw Zen, he felt tense and



where he learned that whatever situation a person was in, he could be satisfied if he had done his best.

To Zen, Vale was a strong opponent, but not one he could defeat, yet.

As a second punch from Vale came closer, Zen calmly closed his eyes.

"Vale! No! Stop!"

Aura was rushing to Zen's rescue, but as she just neared, she could only shout when she saw the scene.

Vale glanced at the flying chariot and Aura. Admittedly he heard her, but he had no intentions on stopping. Instead, without hesitating, he threw the punch at Zen.

"Do you want to get your entire clan killed, Vale?" Shouted Aura angrily. Now the chill in



want someone like Vale to get close to Yan."

"Vale is not only Cloud Sect's outstanding disciple, valued by the entire sect, but also the only son of the Master of the noble Wang family. Is he very bad?" asked Aura, puzzled.

"Yes, very bad!" Zen concluded without hesitating.

Aura smiled and said, "Maybe you're the only one who thinks he's bad. Vale is a desirable potential husband for all the unmarried girls in the Imperial Capital..."

"He is too good for my sister. He can marry anyone he wants, but he shouldn't come near Yan!" stated Zen coldly.

Aura's heart skipped a beat when she looked at the serious expression on Zen's face. She had misunderstood Zen. She had no idea that Zen was Yan's brother, and that Zen had worked so



'Why? Why the hell? Now that I have entered Hell Mountain, why am I not allowed to see Yan?' he roared in his heart.

"The people imprisoned on the top of Hell Mountain are not ordinary people. How can you be allowed to see her when you are only an outer disciple? A great array called the six-pointed star array has been set up on the top of the mountain to prevent the prisoners from escaping. You can't get past this great array using your strength. You need permission," Aura explained to him slowly.

Zen's face turned sour at the news shared by Aura.

Everything Zen had done, from escaping the Luo Clan to entering Cloud Sect to hunting blade locusts, had been because he was driven to visit Yan. After the effort he had made and the challenges he had overcome, Zen found it



unacceptable that he couldn't see Yan.

Determined, Zen began walking up the mountain. But he had forgotten that his body was covered in wounds. Although the terrible gashes on his body had stopped bleeding, his movements tore some of them open. The sudden pain was so unbearable that Zen turned pale and almost passed out.

He fell to the ground with a thump.

"Why do you have to do that?" Aura said helplessly. Apparently, Zen would not listen to her at all.

Zen lay on the ground and focused on his breathing before struggling to get back on his feet. He was desperate to reach the top of Hell Mountain. After his struggle, wounds that had not re-opened began to ooze blood as well.

Seeing this, Aura shook her head and sighed.



Even though they were too far apart, Zen and Yan were at peace at the moment.

Suddenly Zen leaned forward and gestured to Yan.

Aura and the elder beside Yan were puzzled by the gesture. They didn't understand its meaning.

But Yan smiled at it.

She knew the meaning of his gesture and what he was trying to say to her.

Zen had communicated that he would always protect her.

Yan had seen this gesture many times when she was a child.

She was more powerful than Zen now.



"I thought you were blind," Aura chuckled at Zen's remark. "Unexpectedly, you recognize it," teased Aura, who was steering the flying chariot.

"The five-grade Red Cloud Pill, after being swallowed, will immediately activate blood and build muscle. As long as the user is not dead, the wound, no matter how serious, will recover within an hour. It is also known as the holy potion. For a refiner, a Red Cloud Pill is equal to an extra life. It's invaluable! It costs about a thousand points in market prices. I can't afford it," Zen said.

"Take it. You can pay me for it later," Aura laughed.

Zen shook his head and said, "I'm poor, and I have to collect many points... I'm afraid I can't pay you back."

As Zen spoke, Aura suddenly turned around.



Very few men would retrogress in cultivation like Zen.

He had been able to produce and utilize the demonic life energy the previous day, but now he had failed...

Why? Did he forget a move?

After thinking it over for a while, Zen still couldn't figure it out. Since the Heavenly Ogre Fist was a tier five cultivation method, its power would be immense. However, it was so hard to practice this refinement method. It was far more difficult than Zen had expected.

How were his practice methods different from what he had done the previous day? Zen was lost in deep thought.

He had almost died when he confronted Vale on Hell Mountain. In that critical situation, Zen



Through years of cultivation, Zen had acquired a good command of the Purple Light Fist. While forces were flowing along Zen's arms to his entire body, streaks of life energy from the Purple Light Fist sprang up from his belly.

When this life energy was exuded in large quantities, the faint trace of demonic life energy in Zen's belly instantly flew toward it, swiftly engulfed it, and then converted it...

Zen had just tried cultivating the mind method of Purple Light Fist. However, the more Purple Light Fist life energy filled Zen, the more the demonic life energy he was able to consume. Soon, it began accumulating inside his body. About two hours later, his belly was finally filled with demonic life energy.

As Zen stretched out his arms, demonic life energy spiralled up and out along his arms. To Zen, it looked like a purple-black demon was fluttering around his hands.



Although Zen didn't accomplish his goal of freeing Yan from Hell Mountain, he had unexpectedly reached the half-step into the nature level, which was a great achievement for him. After this revelation, Zen spent the whole day consolidating the skills he had mastered and exploring how to exude life energy.

He didn't leave his room for almost three days!

During this period, outer disciples continued to busy themselves with cultivation as usual at Drizzle Peak.

However gifted disciples might be, people who joined Cloud Sect were required to be unyielding. They also knew that they should never get infatuated with the outside world. The practice of martial arts also taught them that God helped those who helped themselves.

However, Zen was a special and extraordinary



disciple of Cloud Sect. Other disciples' eyes gleamed with a strong sense of admiration when they met Zen. Within Cloud Sect, a considerable number of outer disciples treated Zen as their role model. Just as Zen tried to cultivate diligently, these outer disciples also made unremitting efforts to cultivate themselves.

"Zen, it is time for us to get our refining pills today. Are you going to take them?" As Zen just stepped out of his room, Nory and Sean who had been headed to his room stopped and asked.

The refining pills were being distributed today?

Zen was dazed. He had been so preoccupied with the cultivation that he had forgotten about this.

Naturally, disciples of Cloud Sect enjoyed benefits such as refining pills and elixirs, which



"Ooh, you've missed it. Several days ago, a disciple at the Illuminating Soul Realm presented his mighty power on Hell Mountain. It was a fairly sensational spectacle. In his show of power, a light column leading to the sky was visible even from Drizzle Peak!" While Nory was describing the spectacle, he was so excited that spittle flew from his mouth. Nory spoke with such enthusiasm that it seemed as if he had been present that day on Hell Mountain.

Zen was astonished to hear Nory's descriptions. He had been under the impression that cultivators in Hell Mountain couldn't mingle with other people freely. He had never expected that the whole of Cloud Sect would learn of what transpired between him and Vale. But Zen felt relieved and lucky as he could judge from Nory's tone that his friend didn't know the names of the people who had been on Hell Mountain.



"A top refiner at the Illuminating Soul Realm is really awesome!" Zen nodded approvingly. He looked as though he strongly wished to have witnessed the scene.

Only after seeing Zen's expression that Sean interrupted and said, "Top figures at the Illuminating Soul Realm are often seen during our annual large-scale challenges at Cloud Sect in spite of their usually rare presence. It is strange that the top figure at the Illuminating Soul Realm battled an outer disciple who was only at the marrow refining level..."

"Huh?" Zen questioned in feigned astonishment, "That is incredible."

"I think that is impossible!" Sean responded while shaking his head. Afterward, he added, "That was going too far. Do you know what the Illuminating Soul Realm is? A man at the Illuminating Soul Realm can kill a refiner at the marrow refining level only by the overbearing



suggest that you shouldn't take this rumor that seriously."

"Unlike you, I believe that miracles happen..."

"Do you mean that something like an ant eating an elephant would happen?"

The two of them argued with each other about the issue all the way. They didn't stop until they arrived at the other side of Drizzle Peak and got their refining pills.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Icy Wu; Editor: Arathi



Chapter 145 The Blessed Auction House

Several Cloud Sect officials were in a side-hall at Drizzle Peak, dispensing elixirs.

At that time there were not too many people getting elixirs. Zen, Nory, and Sean showed their disciple cards and were given several pills.

These grade two energy gathering pills could enhance the speed at which the human body condensed life energy, making them an ideal aid. Besides, even though they were common within the sect, outside the Cloud Sect, the pills could fetch a reasonable price.

After putting the elixirs away, they saw a man walking down from the mountain path,



approaching.

The man was fat but walked at a fast pace. There was only one such man at Drizzle Peak, and his name was Wurth. He was injured in the battle ring a few days before.

"Hello, Wurth!" greeted the three men.

Seeing them, Wurth smiled as he walked up to them.

"Wurth, have you recovered from your injuries?" asked Zen nervously. Since his return from Hell Mountain, he'd spent three days in seclusion refining privately and hadn't visited Wurth.

Wurth waved his thick arm, lightly responding, "It was nothing! It's healed!"

Zen nodded and said, "I'm glad to hear that."



The famous Blessed Auction House was one of their many properties.

A majority of the most impressive auctions were conducted through the Blessed Auction House.

"Wow! Wurth, I didn't know you were part of the Zhang family! You are so laid-back!" stated Sean shaking his head slowly as though in shock.

"It's tough for the average person to get into the Blessed Auction House, Wurth, are you able to take us so that we can see it for ourselves?" asked Nory. He didn't want to miss a chance like this because he was interested in this kind of thing.

Nodding, Wurth said, "No problem! That'd be a piece of cake to do!" Then he turned to Zen and proposed, "Zen, will you come with us?"



auction house, and he led his companions to a door at the side of the auction house.

"We're just in time! My brother said today's auction would be excellent!" stated Wurth over his shoulder as he walked ahead.

"Really? What will the grand finale be today?" asked Sean and Nory excitedly. As outer disciples, they couldn't afford to buy anything, but, it was still fun to watch.

With a mysterious smile and twinkle in his eye, Wurth said, "You'll know soon enough!"

Just as they rounded the side of the building, a snarl came from ahead, "Stop! This is the Blessed Auction House! There is no admission if you have no business here. Please leave immediately!"

It was a man who wore a red brocade robe and carried a long stick.



Nodding and smiling slyly, Zen said, "Yes, I do have an item for sale."

"Can I ask, what it is?" asked Wurth curious about what Zen had. Wurth knew Zen wasn't one to loosely talk. If his item had no value, he wouldn't bring it for auction.

"A crystal core from a Fire Scorpion Lion," replied Zen quietly.

The announcement made Wurth's chubby face twitch a few times.

Every member of the Zhang family had a flair for business, and Wurth was no exception. Since he'd been molded from childhood in the family environment, he was highly sensitive to the values that various treasures, and rare materials had.

When Zen said he had a crystal core from a



Chapter 146 Too Expensive (Part One)

Wurth could not remember how many years it had been since the crystal core of an adult fire scorpion lion had last appeared.

After all, he was less than 20 years old. And from his earliest memory of the Blessed Auction House, they had never auctioned the crystal core of an adult fire scorpion lion.

So, Wurth was very curious about where Zen got this crystal core of a fire scorpion lion. What was more surprising was that it was from an adult lion. However, he managed to keep his curiosity to himself and did not ask his questions. As a legitimate successor of the Blessed Zhang family, he was familiar with the



rules of the auction house. The first rule was not to ask about the origin of goods brought by customers. It was taboo in the auction industry. He soon calmed down and acted very professionally.

"Zen, this crystal core of an adult fire scorpion lion can be auctioned for an excellent price. It is very precious and rare. Do you want to sell it in this auction, or wait for the next? If you wait for the next auction, we, the Blessed Auction House, can help you release some information in advance to attract those who are particularly interested in the crystal core of fire scorpion lion. Then, the price will be higher than it is today," Wurth commented.

This crystal core was so precious that ordinary people might not be able to afford to buy it. If given some time, the Blessed Auction House could attract those who not only had an interest but could also afford to buy the object during the auction. Then the price would be



much higher than now.

"How about today? I don't mind if we sell it today." Zen decided without hesitation. He was not tempted by the potential of getting a higher price.

Wurth did not insist when he saw Zen's determination. Instead, he nodded and said, "That's fine. In this auction, we plan to sell some precious refining materials and alchemy materials. And these have already appealed to many old, powerful refiners in the Imperial Capital. I believe that the crystal core of fire scorpion lion could also fetch a very good price."

After reaching this agreement with Zen, Wurth led Zen to the back hall of the auction house.

Once they had entered the back hall of the auction house, Zen felt a burst of dazzling energy.



In the rooms behind each door of the back hall stood nature-level powers. And the stress of these nature creatures tingled Zen's senses. He could feel that they were dangerous. Their strengths were equal to or even stronger than Randall's.

And in the center of the back hall, Zen saw that the auction house's staff were carrying bundles of valuable medicine, articles, treasures, and weapons back and forth.

Zen glanced at these goods and found that almost all of these items were rare treasures. The value of any of these items perhaps equaled the Luo Clan's wealth, which had been accumulated for hundreds of years.

"Nestor!" Wurth shouted after he entered the back hall.

On hearing his name being called, an old man



House. He had seen and identified many valuable or rare treasures and could not believe that such a young man could have any special treasure that would need his expertise. Nestor assumed that the young man needed Wurth's help as his object could not be very rare.

Even though Nestor did not have any interest in helping Zen, he did not want to reject Wurth, his young master's orders.

As an experienced auctioneer, Nestor soon replaced the disapproval on his face with a professional expression and asked, "Yes, young master. And what does your friend want to auction? May I have a look?" Nestor turned to look at Zen.

Zen sensed Nestor's attitude. He did not say anything. Instead, he took out the crystal core of fire scorpion lion from his space ring. He handed it to Nestor as if it were an ordinary object.



fact that he could draw such a conclusion only by looking at the crystal core was enough to show that Nestor was experienced and had sharp eyes.

"What kind of basic price do you think we can set for this crystal core?" Wurth asked.

Nestor laughed loudly and said, "As with any exceptional treasure, when it appears in an auction, you never know how many people will rush and fight for it. Especially at this time when the Shura Battlefield is about to restart. The clans never feel like they have sufficient good weapons. And the crystal core of fire scorpion lion is a superior material for refining weapons. Based on this information, it is hard to estimate the final price of this crystal core. If we have to set a basic price for it, I think about thirty thousand cubic crystals is appropriate."

"Thirty thousand cubic crystals!" Zen was surprised to hear the price and could not help



crying out in astonishment.

Zen's reaction took Nestor and Wurth by surprise. They looked at each other before Wurth turned to Zen and asked, "Zen, do you think the basic price is too low? Rest assured. Once the auction starts, the final price would be much higher than this number."

Zen shook his head and explained, "No. Wurth, you have misunderstood me. The price is very appropriate!"

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: huangxiahan; Editor: Arathi



amount of life vitality and can blossom overnight! The basic price of these three pieces of purple epiphyllum is 300 cubic crystals. You can bid at any price higher than that!"

After completing his short introduction of the first lot, Nestor opened the luxurious box and showed it to the audience. Three pieces of purple epiphyllum were in the box.

At this time, some delicate ladies in the field cried in surprise. They were obviously attracted to these beautiful flowers.

"Purple epiphyllum?" Zen murmured when he heard the name of the flowers. His eyes lit up with the enthusiasm that he felt. He asked around, "This kind of flower can only be used as an ornament, isn't it?"

Sean commented, "Yes, it has only ornamental value. The purple epiphyllum is very rare. It is also known as the world's most beautiful



flower. And someone once said that if he could see the blossom of this flower just once in his lifetime, it would not be a pity."

Nory could not understand this saying and shook his head. Then he said, "The flowers can only be used as an ornament and cannot be used as medicine. Even though they are beautiful, they are still useless. I am afraid that only arrogant and wealthy people from noble clans will buy these to send to their women as presents."

Zen nodded in agreement. "A few hundred cubic crystals might be expensive for many normal families. But noble clans can afford the cost and will find it worthy to amuse their lovers."

Zen was right. Although the purple epiphyllum had no help in refining, it still attracted a lot of young people's interest. The price went up from three hundred cubic crystals to eight



School had never created a guru in weapon refining, it had trained a lot of weapon refiners. These weapon refiners had tremendous talent, and had been employed by noble clans. They were also a force to be reckoned with in the empire.

No one expected the disciples from Magical Refining School to make trouble at the auction house today.

"How can this book be yours when it is being auctioned at the auction house?"

"How funny! You guys didn't take good care of Chase's belongings. Now it has come here to be auctioned. How dare you prevent the auction?"

retorted several noblemen who had wanted to bid for the book.

"We don't care about that. We only know that the Weapon Refining Principle belonged to our



waved his hand, two men emerged from each side of the platform.

Although they were dressed as ordinary guards, no one present dared to look down upon them. They were at the ninth grade of the nature level!

With a wink at the two men, Nestor ordered curtly, "Teach them a lesson, and throw them out!"

The two guards nodded and like wolves in a flock of sheep, fought the disciples of the Magical Refining School.

The eight disciples were nature creatures, but as weapon refiners, their life vitality was a variety of weapon refining fire...

In terms of weapon refining, they were experts. But when it came to fighting, they were no match for the two guards.



some people, the Weapon Refining Principle was a must-have. They couldn't make any concession.

"7, 000!" Fren's lazy voice rose again.

"8, 000!" Another person joined in the bidding.

"9, 000!"

"12, 000!"

"14, 000!"

The Weapon Refining Principle contained only a few sheets of paper. But its price kept rising during the auction.

When its cost climbed to nearly 20, 000 cubic crystals, most people gave up.

Only the old man, who competed with Fren in the first place, and Fren were still making



"I'll pay 20, 100!" The speaker was Zen.

He joined the bidding with an astronomical figure, which shocked Sean and Nory.

"Zen, are you crazy?"

"Do you have that many cubic crystals?"

Nory and Sean whispered anxiously, their foreheads sweating.

They had asked Wurth to bring them to the auction house today just for fun.

The items auctioned were worth at least hundreds or thousands of cubic crystals, which was impossible for an ordinary outer disciple to afford.

That was why Nory and Sean were both pretty shaken up when Zen quoted 20, 100.



Chapter 149 Heavenly Essence (Part One)

Zen did not have enough cubic crystals.

However, Zen had learned from Wurth that if he desired an item, he could join in the bidding. As long as the quoted price was not higher than the cubic crystals he would earn for the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion, Zen could afford to bid.

Thus, when Zen saw the Weapon Refining Principle, he bid against Fren even though the other bidders had ceased.

20, 100 cubic crystals!

If this had happened before the incident on Hell



crystals," Zen continued to raise his bid.

Zen's voice was fairly steady, emotionless, and confident.

At present, Fren realized that he was in trouble as it seemed that Zen was going to bid to the end.

The trouble came not only from the boy but also from the other opponents.

Although Fren always behaved crazily and ridiculously, those who knew him well understood that madness was just his disguise.

If Fren continued to compete with Zen, the price of the Weapon Refining Principle would rise too high, and it would arouse the interest of other noble clans. That was not what Fren wanted.

"Twenty-one thousand and one hundred cubic



Burning Sky Empire, so Vivan thought that Zen would change his mind after learning that Fren came from the Zhuge Clan.

"Zhuge?" murmured Zen. Then his face darkened. From Bloody Mountain to the south of the empire, he had clashed with members of the Zhuge Clan many times. They were like annoying leeches that kept clinging to him!

"Yes, my master is Fren Zhuge. I believe you have heard of him. So, please do not bid again, or you will get into trouble," said Vivan, with a smirk playing at the corners of her mouth.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi



"You can start bidding now!" Nestor waved his left hand, utilizing his life vitality to disperse the drops of heavenly essence in the air so that everyone in the auction house could see them clearly.

"Wow!"

The bidders' enthusiasm was aroused, and they began talking animatedly.

When added to weapons, the heavenly essence would increase their grade by one level.

For example, if the heavenly essence were added to a mid-grade spiritual weapon, it would be elevated to the top grade.

However, heavenly essence was extremely rare, and so far, people did not know how to obtain it in larger quantities. Whenever heavenly essence appeared, the owners would add it into their weapons immediately.



It was said that heavenly essence was the key base of all the mysterious, spiritual, and even fairy weapons!

The reason why these weapons had tremendous power was that weapon refiners blended the weapons with a glimmer of Heavenly Law during the process of refining. Heavenly essence contained pure Heavenly Law in very high concentrations!

It was rumored that even a low-grade mysterious weapon could have a little bit of heavenly essence, but so far, no one had been able to extract any.

Zen was stunned when he saw the heavenly essence. As the droplets danced in the air, shimmering under the light, his jaw dropped to the ground. His heart beat faster as he stared at the silver particles floating in the air.



Chapter 151 Got Tremendous Wealth

Zen was confused about the silver particles.

Curious, Zen tried to look them up in the weapon refining methods left by Evil Lan, but he got nothing about them.

Zen assumed if Evil Lan were a better weapon refiner, he would have written about it in his weapon refining methods.

In C County, Evil Lan had been regarded as a superior weapon refiner, but compared with the refiners in Imperial Capital, he was just so-so.

So many people in the auction house desired to get the heavenly essence, which got Zen further



perplexed by what it was and its purpose.

Were these silver droplets really so valuable?

"23, 000 cubic crystals! I will take the heavenly essence!" An old man cried out. His hair was white, but his ruddy face gave him an energetic appearance.

"Aha, Huang! You cannot have sole ownership of these heavenly essence drops. I offer a price of 25, 000 cubic crystals!" A muffled voice came from an old man with a black face.

The old man with the ruddy face frowned and said, "Joah Yu, I shall get the heavenly essence. So don't compete with me today!"

The two men stood and glared at each other, which lent tension to the atmosphere in the auction house.

In the room, Nory said, "As to these two old



Zen began thinking.

It cost about 100 cubic crystals to buy a top-grade mysterious weapon. Only about 5 droplets of heavenly essence could be extracted from a top-grade mysterious weapon.

10 top-grade mysterious weapons would cost 1,000 cubic crystals. From these, 50 droplets of heavenly essence could be refined.

If the cyan dragon could consume the 50 droplets of heavenly essence, 10 dragon scales would be lit up.

But if the 50 droplets of heavenly essence were sold then 100,000 cubic crystals would be earned.

For Zen, it would be a harmless transaction, which could bring him tremendous wealth.



If everything went smoothly, Zen could possess considerable wealth in a short time, and the cubic crystals could be exchanged for enough points to save Yan.

For a moment, Zen was so excited that he was in no mood to pay attention to what was happening at the auction. It was not until Nestor took out the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion did Zen realize that it was time for his object to go under the hammer.

The crystal core of the fire scorpion lion was placed for sale after the heavenly essence. That indicated that the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion was much more valuable than the heavenly essence.

That was true.

The auction room became unusually crowded the moment the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion was brought out.



Compared with the heavenly essence, people seemed to be more interested in the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion. After all, there had been no mature crystal core of the fire scorpion lion for many years in the market.

However, the final hammer price of the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion was a little disappointing for Zen. Although it sold for 70,000 cubic crystals, which was higher than the basic price Nestor had quoted, the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion was sold at a rate much cheaper than the heavenly essence.

That was because the Huang Clan had bought the heavenly essence, and Mr. Huang had already spent a significant amount on the heavenly essence. So he didn't bid for the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion. Mr. Yu from the Yu Clan had bought the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion.



to the south to kill Zen.

He never thought that Liam, White Fiend and Black Fiend would die in the south.

A few days later, Zen was at the auction house and making trouble for Fren!

Thinking of this, the smile on Fren's face became more intense.

He followed the aisle of the auction house and sauntered toward the wing.

Many people in the auction house saw this scene. Suddenly they were filled with apprehension.

Fren was notorious in the Imperial Capital.

He was crazy, arrogant, and not afraid of anything. If he caused mischief here, the Zhang



"Crack, crack, crack..."

Fren clapped his hands. Since most people had left the auction house and the rest were silently watching the situation, Fren's claps sounded harsher, and the scene became weirder.

"You have some nerve. Did you say that you want me to die? Very well. I haven't seen such a courageous man like you for a long time!" Fren grinned. Then he continued, "But generally speaking, a man of your courage would die for his actions!"

Fren's favorite attack method was to exert pressure on his opponent in spirit so that he could mercilessly torture his opponent. According to Fren's research, Zen was a low-born commoner with no strong background. And Fren had already thought of a thousand different ways to kill him.

But compared with inflicting physical injury on



exclaimed Nory and Sean in unison.

Seeing that Vivan had come to warn Zen on Fren's behalf, they had become very nervous and were ready to fight back. But again, Zen surprised them. He was even more arrogant! Despite Fren's family background, Zen had treated Fren anyway that pleased him! He told Fren to die! And now he had embarrassed Fren. Zen was really brave.

Wurth said with a huge grin, "I have never seen Fren be humiliated before. He's the one who bullies people. Zen, you are the first one to bully him!"

Wurth never showed off. As a member of the Zhang Clan, his knowledge and information were much more profound than Nory's and Sean's. The fact that the Zhang Clan had been able to develop under the pressure of the top seven noble clans proved their incomparable strength. So Wurth saw more thoroughly.



person showed the slightest hint of retreat, the enemy would tear him to pieces.

"Very good point! Unbelievable!"

When Zen and his friends turned toward the voice, they saw a man enter through the door of the auction house. He was eight feet tall, had a stalwart figure, and walked with an air. He looked like Wurth, but he was not as fat as Wurth.

The man ambled toward them, then said to Wurth, "Wurth, is he your friend?"

"His name is Zen. He is also a disciple at Drizzle Peak," replied Wurth as he introduced his brother to Zen. "Zen, this is my elder brother, Wick Zhang."

Zen didn't feel the need to patronize Wick because of his family's reputation. But he was Wurth's brother. And so, Zen decided to be



Chapter 154 The Golden Wind Restaurant

It was no coincidence that the Zhang Clan had been able to acquire prestige equivalent to that of the top seven noble clans in the Burning Sky Empire relying on their wealth.

The Zhang's were not only good at investing in business, but they also knew how to invest in talent.

As wealthy businessmen with a civilian background, they preferred to invest in a civilian genius like Zen.

Therefore, although they wouldn't help Zen in his dispute with Fren Zhuge, they would



support Zen secretly.

"As a rule, our Blessed Auction House gets ten percent commission from the proceeds of an auction," Wick Zhang informed Zen. "But you are Wurth's friend. So we've decided not to charge any commission from the sale of your item."

"No, that's not appropriate," Zen politely rejected Wick's generosity. Ten percent of Zen's earnings from the auction was not a small amount. However, Zen didn't want to be indebted to others.

"If you refuse, that implies that you don't regard me as a friend," Wick Zhang persisted. The Zhang Clan didn't offer Zen much support during his confrontation with Fren Zhuge a few minutes ago. So Wick Zhang decided to give Zen this favor.

Now that Wick Zhang was insisting, Zen felt as



though he had no choice but to accept and express his gratitude.

"Schlik!" When Wick Zhang opened the door curtain of the back hall, a big heap of cubic crystals appeared in front of them. "Zen, the crystal core of the fire scorpion lion sold at a high price of 70, 000 cubic crystals. After deducting 25, 000 cubic crystals for the Weapon Refining Principle that you bought, you still have 45, 000 cubic crystals left," Wick explained.

Nory and Sean were dumbfounded when they saw the cubic crystals shining brilliantly under the lights.

"Z... Zen, that fire scorpion lion's crystal core was yours?" Nory stuttered in amazement. Nory and Sean now understood why Zen had the confidence to participate in the auction of the Weapon Refining Principle. Zen turned out to be a potential millionaire!



observed Zen who they deemed as a man who was at a low refining level. The mountain keepers thought to themselves, 'Very few people at such a level would come here.'

"It takes a hundred points to get in, doesn't it?" Zen asked. Before the keepers could answer, Zen already had his disciple's card out, pointing out that he was fit to enter the mountain the guards were safekeeping.

One of the guards took the card and poured his orange-red life vitality onto it. After he had deducted a hundred points, the mountain keeper told Zen, "Going to Hell Mountain is not just a simple matter of a hundred points loss. Once you go over this line right here, you will lose all protection coming from the Cloud Sect. You will be on your own, and if you are killed, the Cloud Sect will have no accountability over your grave. Judging from your current state, it is dangerous for you to cross the line."



There was no way out for the weak except being trampled on by people stronger than they were.

The politics within Hell Mountain was known for its corruption, with stronger people that had stronger influences doing whatever they wanted to, leaving those who were weak to fend for themselves if not used as slaves.

Talented disciples from Cloud Sect would wander into Hell Mountain on purpose in order to increase their strength, turning the mountain into their own training field.

The guards did not have to ask twice; in their eyes, Zen was merely at marrow refining level and was ignorant to the fact that there were cruel things in the mountain that he would not see anywhere else. They were worried that it would not take long for the man to be killed within the confines of Hell Mountain.



Chapter 133 A

Stunning Smile From Yan

Pushing himself to run faster, Zen raced uphill more alert than ever.

Several people pursued close behind, intent on capturing Zen.

Wanting to block Zen's path, one of his stalkers took a detour, at a stunning speed.

"Ha ha! Someone, like you, at the marrow refining level, from the Cloud Sect provides perfect amusement for us!" The robust man in his thirties had a sturdy looking face, his skin tone was dark, and his eyes looked menacing, "Out of my way!" warned Zen in a sharp voice,



Zen destroyed his enemy with a single clean thrust, not leaving a drop of blood on his blade.

His weapon returned to his hand, and Zen glared at the remaining pursuers before climbing uphill.

As a nature creature, the man died wondering how he'd been humbled or beaten by Zen, especially considering that Zen was only at the marrow refining level.

Actually, the man lacked any defenses which resulted in his defeat. If he had regarded Zen as a threat, he wouldn't have been defeated so miserably.

At the sight of their fallen leader, the remaining attackers were too cowardly to give chase to Zen.

They decided Zen was a formidable opponent.



The young man in purple remained in high spirits as he removed an article hidden close to his chest within his robes, "Perrin asked me to deliver this, in hopes it would please you."

Turning, the girl's eyes lit up as she stared at the article.

In an instant, her best mannerisms were presented to the youth.

The young man was entranced by her unearthly beauty, even though he was highly refined and well disciplined.

As if she was a fairy, she moved from the edge and gracefully took the offered gift.

Essentially, the item was merely an ordinary slingshot that was carved from elm.

Though worn and outdated looking, the



Zen continued to observe. As far as he knew, disciples of Cloud Sect generally wore clothes in three colors.

It was common knowledge that the outer disciples were dressed in white robes, while inner disciples wore black robes.

However, some disciples were dressed in purple robes.

In Cloud Sect, disciples who wore purple robes were guided by their masters personally and they directly acquired refinement skills from their masters. Inside this sect, still only quite a few disciples wore purple robes, which symbolized a superior position.

Zen's eyes focused on the man wearing purple robes. "This person has 'intent' as well!" Zen muttered to himself. "It's the homicidal intent of lotus!" he concluded.



that he was familiar with. He recognized them as Perrin and Billy, and they were walking behind the man dressed in the purple robes.

"Perrin, where is Yan?" Zen's eyebrows shot up as he questioned Perrin while he got down from where he was perched, and took a step forward.

Perrin was a little surprised to hear a voice echoing out loudly, calling his name. He turned around and saw Zen who was ahead. He sneered at him and said, "Zen, what a coincidence to meet you here. I have originally planned to extend your freedom for a few more days but I never expected you to even dare show up here at Hell Mountain." Perrin's life vitality was invigorated as he spoke to Zen. It was evident that he wanted to hit him directly.

"Perrin, who is he?" Vale Wang asked as he causally glanced at Zen. It was known that Vale held a prominent status and strength, so it



didn't matter to him who Zen was at all. He only asked Perrin about his identity since he mentioned Yan, a woman he loved.

Perrin was momentarily dazed by the question. He was stunned in silence as he struggled to find an answer. Beads of sweat formed near his brow and he stammered, "He...he is an unfilial member of our Luo family."

"I am asking you where Yan is! Tell me!" Zen suddenly bellowed in anger, his eyebrows furrowing even more as he walked closer to Perrin.

Vale's perfectly shaped brows furrowed as he questioned Zen back in a low voice, "Who are you? What's your relationship with Yan? Why are you looking for her?"

"Yan is my little sister. I naturally have to know where she is," replied Zen.



headlong towards Zen and flung a fist at him as soon as Zen's voice died away.

"Blood Burst!"

"Coagulate, burst, kill..."

As Perrin gave his all for this punch, life vitality burst out of his body like a bloodbath.

Bright red blood had splashed all over the floor and suddenly, a sizzling sound was heard. Apparently, the blood was extremely torrid.

Zen was prepared for a punch like this from Perrin, and so he was cautious and took everything seriously. He hurriedly flinched backwards to dodge Perrin's swift, continuous attacks.

Others felt that it was hard to confront Perrin.

In addition to having to evade Perrin's violent



Zen was dodging and moving swiftly around Perrin.

"Perrin, you are just a jerk relying on enhancement pills. Despite reaching a very high level, your strength is still so mediocre. Are you sure that you can beat me?" Zen mockingly said as he dodged Perrin's attacks.

"You are risking your neck! Blood Burst Fist!" roared Perrin as he threw another punch at Zen.

"When we were at the Luo family, you said that I was a jerk and you were much better than me! Did you remember saying that you could even kill me only by one hand?" sneered Zen coldly.

"Yes, so what?" Perrin had tried his best to bring all his strength and skills into play. However, Zen wasn't hurt at all. Perrin was getting anxious. He was confused as to why Zen



This time, Zen didn't dodge, but directly countered the attack with a grim smile on his face, as he stabbed a dusky sharp thorn into Perrin's skull.

"Spiritual Thorn!"

Perrin had planned to rush towards Zen to give a swift attack, but he was unexpectedly stabbed by the thorn of Zen's soul right on his head when he focused his energy on dashing directly at Zen. At this, his head felt muddled and haphazardly flung his body forward towards Zen.

Zen immediately gained the upper hand and grabbed Perrin's head, taking control using his hands. The purple life energy was emitting from all over Zen's body as he beat Perrin's chest with the Purple Fist Strength.

"Both of us are from Luo family, so I will not



He got along very well with Perrin. At first, Billy thought that it would be very easy for Perrin to get his hands on Zen since he had become a nature creature, but everything that happened just now was extremely contrary to his expectations. Perrin had been instantly suppressed by Zen and his meridian channels had been broken. Billy was enraged when he thought that Perrin couldn't use any of his refinement methods anymore.

"Brother, why didn't you stop that guy?" Billy, who was rather angry with Zen, turned to Vale and asked him.

However, Vale only shook his head and replied, "The conflicts between Perrin and Zen are their family businesses. It is inadvisable for us to intervene. After all, Zen is Yan's biological brother."

Of course, a disciple who had grown up in a big, noble clan, thought that way.



Chapter 136 The Illuminating Soul Realm (Part One)

Perrin lay on the black gravel with a look of despair in his eyes.

"Something must be wrong," Perrin said to himself. He was confused about what was happening.

Yet, he couldn't figure out what the issue was.

When Perrin was at the Luo Clan, he made tremendous progress as he had consumed one of the only two Magical Pills owned by the clan. After he joined Cloud Sect, Perrin became acquainted with the Wang Clan. He then used Yan to acquire benefits from Vale. In this way,



he had reached the level of nature creature in a short time.

From among the members of the Luo Clan, Zen's father, Mike, had been the only one to attain the status of a nature creature.

Once his father and uncle assumed control of the clan, Perrin had naively imagined that his future would be bright and smooth.

He had compelled the elders in the clan to allow him to consume a Magical Pill as he had envisioned using his new strength to revitalize the Luo Clan and earn the reputation of being the most influential clan in C County.

But today, Zen had defeated Perrin after only a few rounds. His dream had shattered.

"I'm a nature creature. Why am I so vulnerable? How could I be defeated by a person who is only at the marrow refining level?" Perrin



"He is a cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm! What astounding skills he has! What is he doing here on Hell Mountain?" asked the other.

"At Cloud Sect, the disciples dressed in purple are the top-notch who have special masters to teach them. And that man in the white robe is an outer disciple," replied an experienced man among them.

"It's impossible. How dare an outer disciple be so bold? It would be easy for a cultivator at the Illuminating Soul Realm to kill an outer disciple. Oddly enough, he is burning his life vitality against a weak outer disciple."

The people on Hell Mountain whispered among themselves. They were greatly concerned about what was happening.

It was rumored that a person at the



Illuminating Soul Realm

was a more powerful life-being than a nature creature!

From among the hundreds of thousands of disciples at Cloud Sect, only a small number of people could reach this realm. And each was a purple-robed disciple.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Sarah; Editor: Arathi



"Kirik!"

The three connected hexagons broke up at once after Yan's action.

However, the six-pointed star array was a very strong defensive array.

As soon as it had broken, another three hexagons formed, which blocked the gap immediately.

'Darn it! What shall I do?' Yan thought with despair.

She was absolutely frantic by now.

With no other alternatives, Yan repeatedly tried to break the array. However, the six-pointed star array repaired itself again and again.

No matter how many times Yan tried, the



Chapter 138 The Price Of Contempt

Though at the marrow refining level, Zen braved the debilitating assault from Vale, thus dwarfing his counterparts.

Billy who was at the grade-two nature level was too weak to circulate his life vitality against Vale's threat. Consequently, he was just an onlooker.

Zen who hadn't learned to cultivate life vitality found it exceptionally hard to concentrate on his life energy.

He relied on his body and the strength of his soul instead.



confronting his rival.

Vale marveled at Zen's unparalleled endurance in the heat of their fight.

He was aware of the immense power of his life vitality, which was why Vale had used it to attack Zen.

'Marrow refining level.....

His physical body has not yet reached its limits....

How can he counter my attacks?' Vale wondered at Zen's capacity to face his life vitality.

"Zen, I can see your strength and power fading gradually!" Vale grinned and then circulated his life vitality stronger than before. His power increased, so did the light column. It soared higher and glimmered brighter.



The homicidal intent of the lotus emanating from Vale's body had by now reached excessive levels.

But Zen's blood and soul were extraordinary enough to withstand the metaphysical menace as his body had become a spiritual weapon already.

Tenacious as he was, Zen felt his soul's strength fading gradually.

When confronted by the vengeful beast, the cyan dragon had come to Zen's rescue. It had roared at the vengeful beast, and the beast had surrendered. Now the cyan dragon was not spiritually active.

'I have to learn to be self-reliant!' he thought.

Vale's life vitality combined with the homicidal intent of the lotus was not powerful enough to



Vale flew into a rage as

someone much inferior to him was able to survive his attack.

He didn't enjoy being humiliated by a weaker refiner!

Such a battle was a spectacle that should not be missed.

At that moment, Vale, exacerbated by the lack of results, shelved his humility and decided

to fight Zen with all his might.

"Kneel!" Vale roared as he raised his hands and touched Zen.

Vale decided to crush Zen using his strength since the spiritual attack was not yielding results.



arrogant.... That was the price of his contempt!

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Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Zoe Lin; Editor: Arathi



If Yan had another alternative, she would not use it.

But at the moment, she could not watch her brother die in front of her eyes.

However powerful the six-pointed star array might be, Yan would try to break through it at any cost.

Just as Yan was about to unleash the power of the Death Lightning, an old voice stopped her.

"No, stop! Stop it! Yan, do not use the forbidden art!" An old man with white hair appeared at Yan's side. He was floating about three meters away from Yan. A worried expression deepened the wrinkles on his old face.

Yan paused, looked at the old man, pointed to the mountainside that had lit up with the white



light column, and said, "I will stop if you unravel the six-pointed star array and let me go there. Don't worry. I won't leave Hell Mountain. I just need to solve a problem!"

Upon hearing Yan's request, the old man smiled bitterly and said, "The six-pointed star array was set up by Jone. How can I open it? Besides, other than you, there are five other people jailed on the top of Hell Mountain. Even if you don't flee, I can't say the same about them."

The old man's explanation sounded perfectly reasonable.

A total of six people were trapped on the top of Hell Mountain; each more powerful than the next.

The six-pointed star array was quite complicated, and setting it up had been a challenging task for the top-ranked magic array



Zen, he will be fine."

"I hope so." After hearing his explanation, Yan calmed down slightly. Then she turned her head and quietly observed the incident on the mountainside. If anything bad happened, she was ready to break the six-pointed star array by force!

...

...

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi



Zen figured, 'I have tried all of these and none seemed to work as I had hoped.'

The only cultivation method that Zen had not used yet was Heavenly Ogre Fist.

Heavenly Ogre Fist was a tier-five cultivation method. And Zen was the only disciple at Cloud Sect who had knowledge of that method. Thus, its power could not be underestimated. However, it had proven to be challenging when Zen had tried it. He had spent a long time practicing it, hoping to produce a hint of demonic life energy.

However, even after exhausting efforts, there had been no outcome.

Zen doubted whether he could reproduce this cultivation method successfully.

Getting the tier-five cultivation method but not



being able to practice it had indeed distressed Zen.

Therefore, after many failures, Zen had to put Heavenly Ogre Fist to one side.

Now that Zen had come to the edge of life and death, and he had no other alternatives, he needed to try Heavenly Ogre Fist.

The pressure to act multiplied when Zen sensed that perhaps in a few breaths his body would be squeezed into pieces.

"I will not give in! The path of martial arts cultivation is full of obstacles. I have only recently started to climb the mountain, and I want to get to the top to look over the vast, wonderful world!" yelled Zen.

'I will try again and see if I can produce the demonic life energy!' Zen decided.



This time as well Zen failed.

Despite his disappointment, Zen did not give up. He tried again according to the method described in the book.

There was still no effect the second time he tried.

"Crack!"

Two new cracks appeared on Zen's body.

In this short period, eight cracks had surfaced on Zen's body. As the number of cracks increased, so did the pace of blood oozing from these.

However, Zen had no time to think about his wounds. He tried again.

This time, Zen felt as though something was



Chapter 141 Three Years

There were many different life energies in the world which had various functions.

Some of the energies increased strength efficiently, making a person strong enough to overpower tigers and leopards or tear stone mountains down until they were nothing but rubble.

Some energies improved speed to the point that allowed a person to run a million miles in just a few seconds.

Considering the refining method each person practiced was different, the colors, shapes, and functions of each life energy were different as



well.

But the demonic life energy found in Zen had not only swallowed Zen's purple life energy, but also unexpectedly tried to swallow Vale's life vitality, as it came up and spread over Zen's body.

When one pushed hard enough, working to reach nature level, his life energy changed into life vitality which then could be shaped.

Vale had achieved the level of the Illuminating Soul Realm, and because he practiced the cultivation method named Lotus Scriptures, his life vitality could be shaped into pink lotuses.

Although the lotuses were breathtaking to see, they were, in fact, deadly and horrible.

At the moment, it was shocking to see that the demonic life energy had come from Zen's body and now, was swallowing the lotuses one by



ridiculous, but took the attack seriously.

In a flash, the dazzling white beam became much brighter.

Although Vale didn't move, he threw a punch the same way Zen had.

Sparing no effort, Vale fabricated as powerful a punch as possible.

Such a powerful punch came from the master of Illuminating Soul Realm!

In midway, Vale's fist collided into the full force of Zen's shadowy fist.

'Crash!' 'Crack!'

Where the two fists met, a terrifying whirlwind formed, snowballing and scooping black gravel in as it spun, larger and more powerful until it slammed into the mountainside.



The higher the level one practiced at, the bigger the cup and the more life energy it held.

Only at the nature level could the human body be equipped to hold life vitality.

At the Illuminating Soul Realm, Vale's corporeal body was like a lake and could hold an immeasurable amount of life vitality.

Throwing his punch had expended all Zen's demonic life energy and left him like an empty cup. He was exhausted, his face turned pale, and he was a spent force.

"Go to hell!" Vale smiled and shook his fist which had a pink lotus shadow flowering on it.

In the face of Vale's fist, Zen stood stoic, showing no sadness or fear.

Growing up, he read a large number of books,



her voice gave her words an icy threat.

Did he want his entire clan to be killed?

Vale was mighty now at the Illuminating Soul Realm at such a young age, so it wasn't difficult to realize that he was very promising.

However, the Wang clan wasn't one of the top seven noble clans.

If Aura wanted to exterminate the Wang clan, it would be easy for her alone, and she had the Emperor's Token.

It mustn't be a lie to intimidate him.

Aura was merely a girl though and couldn't intimidate Vale at all, because, to Vale, she was nothing more than a princess who was unloved by her parents.

It was what Aura threatened that frightened



Even though they were too far apart, Zen and Yan were at peace at the moment.

Suddenly Zen leaned forward and gestured to Yan.

Aura and the elder beside Yan were puzzled by the gesture. They didn't understand its meaning.

But Yan smiled at it.

She knew the meaning of his gesture and what he was trying to say to her.

Zen had communicated that he would always protect her.

Yan had seen this gesture many times when she was a child.

She was more powerful than Zen now.



The intense effects quickly spread through Zen's entire body. Gradually, Zen became drowsy, and sleep overcame him. Finally, he passed out.

This was probably the best sleep Zen had ever had in years.

While imprisoned in the cellar of the Luo family, Zen always woke up every morning before dawn to read.

But today, when he woke up, he saw that the sun was already high in the sky.

"What a long rest!"

Zen said in surprise as he stretched and examined his body. The wounds from his battle with Vale on Hell Mountain the day before had healed now. The effect of Red Cloud Pill was truly extraordinary.



He sprang to his feet. Feeling refreshed, Zen found no reason to waste his time. He sat cross-legged and began to work his power according to the Heavenly Ogre Fist.

When Zen had first left the library with the book, he had been determined to learn this cultivation method. However, no matter how much he practiced, Zen had never succeeded. To his surprise, he practiced the cultivation method when he was forced by Vale yesterday.

When Zen opened his eyes today, all he cared about was whether he could still refine the demonic life energy as he had done the previous day.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Ying; Editor: Arathi



Zen paced back and forth in his room. He was so lost in thought that it seemed as though he was enchanted. He had been so consumed with his thoughts that Zen didn't notice that he had spent over half an hour just pacing.

All of a sudden, his eyes gleamed as an idea flashed through his mind. Quickly, he jumped to his feet. As his feet touched the floor, Zen made the first pose for Heavenly Ogre Fist.

"Maintain forces on the upper and lower body. Repel ogres' intent with heart if any..."

Zen lightly swung his arms along a direction. After rotating his arms, all his forces were concentrated near his belly. It was not until this moment that a trace of dark purple demonic life energy appeared between his hands.

Excitement lit up Zen's face when he saw the slight trace of demonic life energy.



On the previous day, he had experienced and witnessed the power of the Heavenly Ogre Fist. He had been able to confront a man at the Illuminating Soul Realm by using one move known as Ogres Shaking the World.

Zen had known that it would be impossible for him to defeat a man who had reached the Illuminating Soul Realm by using the Heavenly Ogre Fist as he was only at the marrow refining level. However, when attacked by Zen's Heavenly Ogre Fist, Vale had no choice but to counter-attack. Vale's reaction had proven the might of a tier five cultivation method.

Despite his small victory, Zen had been challenged to condense the demonic life energy. Just now, he had refined the cultivation method for a lap, but only a faint trace of demonic life energy had been condensed. If this was going to be the pace, it would take several months for Zen to fill his belly with demonic life energy...



At this sight, Zen flicked the demon with his fingers. Immediately, the little purple-black demon jumped out of his palm and into a corner. The demon continued to hop once it had reached the ground.

"Huh! The life energy can be exuded out of my body!"

This scene shocked Zen who although, practicing this refinement method, had never heard of such a thing happening.

A corporeal form had five levels. Life energy could only exist in vivo or on the surface of the body. The energy should vanish once it left Zen's body, just like plants couldn't survive without roots.

Life energy could be only separated from the body of refiners who had been a half-step into the nature level.



removed from his marrow.

At this thought, Zen examined his body carefully. Once he confirmed his theory, a smile grew on Zen's face. In the heat of the battle with Vale, his marrow had been incomparably purified, and so Zen had upgraded to a cultivator half-step into the nature level.

Five levels of body refining were the foundations for practicing and mastering martial arts.

Only when a person's physical form was free from impurities could he become a nature creature.

However, reaching the half-step into the nature level was different from entering into the nature level because of the difference between life energy and life vitality. A person couldn't become a nature creature before his life energy was converted into life vitality.



power exuded from the combustion of life vitality. The differences in the power of such refiners are like that of an ant and an elephant.

"You can't say that for sure! Zen is an exception. He defeated a nature creature even though he was only at the marrow refining level." Apparently, Nory was blindly optimistic about his belief that the weak could defeat the strong.

However, Sean, who had been at Cloud Sect for a longer period, understood how huge the gaps were between realms, and so he continued, "Nory, perhaps you don't quite understand the Illuminating Soul Realm. As far as we know, the Burning Sky Empire has a vast territory and possesses abundant resources. Its population is as large as hundreds of millions, but how many of them can reach the Illuminating Soul Realm? The gap between the Illuminating Soul Realm and nature level is far wider than you expect. I



Chapter 145 The Blessed Auction House

Several Cloud Sect officials were in a side-hall at Drizzle Peak, dispensing elixirs.

At that time there were not too many people getting elixirs. Zen, Nory, and Sean showed their disciple cards and were given several pills.

These grade two energy gathering pills could enhance the speed at which the human body condensed life energy, making them an ideal aid. Besides, even though they were common within the sect, outside the Cloud Sect, the pills could fetch a reasonable price.

After putting the elixirs away, they saw a man walking down from the mountain path,



Drizzle Peak, why are you a different person here?" said Zen teasingly as he looked at Wurth's grave expression.

They weren't used to Wurth being so severe because, at the Cloud Sect, he was always so jovial.

Looking around carefully, Wurth made sure no one was nearby before he relaxed his grim expression and smiled. He explained, "I don't have a choice since it's the family motto. The descendants of the Zhang family need to show their majesty in front of others! But, I'm not cut out for it."

They followed Wurth into the salesroom.

The room was fan-shaped, with seating that went up the terrace. Zen, Nory, and Sean sat in the wing.

Having settled his companions, Wurth gave



who stood not far away put down his work, bowed down and then came toward Wurth. When he walked closer, Zen noticed that the old man was slim, and his appearance was shrewd. The old man bowed to Wurth and said, "Young master, what can I do for you?"

"Where is my brother?" Wurth asked.

"The young master went to the front hall to welcome the guests," Nestor answered.

"That's fine. You can help me in his stead. My friend wants to auction an object. Please help him to identify the object and then add it to the auction list. We can combine it to the auction later," Wurth instructed the old man before pointing at Zen.

Nestor glanced at Zen. He revealed a rather disapproving look when he found that a teenager of 16 or 17 stood before him. Nestor was the chief auctioneer of the Blessed Auction



these refiners had already exceeded the nature level.

Zen did not have much time to look around the auction house. Within a few minutes, Nestor came to the high platform.

The people of the Imperial Capital knew Nestor as the chief auctioneer of the Blessed Auction House. Generally, Nestor only presided over some large auctions. Since Nestor was here, it meant that rare treasures would be auctioned.

After a brief introduction, Nestor clapped his hands. Then an assistant came to the stage with a luxurious box in his hands. The assistant carefully put the box on the big table on the stage and left. On seeing that the assistant had exited, Nestor walked to the table and started to introduce the first auction item with a calm tone. "Here is the first item for auction today. It is very special. There are three pieces of purple epiphyllum. They require a small



In one corner sat a young man dressed in silk. He casually leant against a young woman's lap, looking rather tired.

When they saw the Eight Diagrams embroidered on the chest of the young man's clothes, they realized that the young man was from the Zhuge family. Some people even recognized that he was Fren Zhuge, the third Young Master of the Zhuge family.

Fren was known as the loony. He was a cunning, devilish, and ill-tempered man. Everyone wondered why he was bidding for the Weapon Refining Principle.

Frankly, many people were reluctant to bid against Fren because he was utterly unreasonable. Should he be offended, it would cause considerable trouble for the other party.

"6, 100 cubic crystals," shouted an old man. For



offers.

"20, 000!" This time, Fren had raised the price by 6, 000 cubic crystals!

Hearing Fren's offer, the old man winced and shook his head. It was not that he was willing to give up the book, but that he could not afford any more cubic crystals.

Not many people in the world could afford 20, 000 cubic crystals at one time.

Glancing at the old man's dejected look, Fren gave a wry smile. The old man had followed behind Fren's offer like plaster to raise the price, until Fren raised his bid by six thousand!

"Anyone else wants to make a higher bid?" inquired Nestor from the platform. "If not, Mr. Zhuge will win the Weapon Refining Principle!"

Just then a voice came from one of the wings.



"You can start bidding now!" Nestor waved his left hand, utilizing his life vitality to disperse the drops of heavenly essence in the air so that everyone in the auction house could see them clearly.

"Wow!"

The bidders' enthusiasm was aroused, and they began talking animatedly.

When added to weapons, the heavenly essence would increase their grade by one level.

For example, if the heavenly essence were added to a mid-grade spiritual weapon, it would be elevated to the top grade.

However, heavenly essence was extremely rare, and so far, people did not know how to obtain it in larger quantities. Whenever heavenly essence appeared, the owners would add it into their weapons immediately.



Weren't these tiny substances the same as the iron essence that was produced by the black fire that melted mysterious weapons?

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Soul Reaper; Editor: Arathi



perplexed by what it was and its purpose.

Were these silver droplets really so valuable?

"23, 000 cubic crystals! I will take the heavenly essence!" An old man cried out. His hair was white, but his ruddy face gave him an energetic appearance.

"Aha, Huang! You cannot have sole ownership of these heavenly essence drops. I offer a price of 25, 000 cubic crystals!" A muffled voice came from an old man with a black face.

The old man with the ruddy face frowned and said, "Joah Yu, I shall get the heavenly essence. So don't compete with me today!"

The two men stood and glared at each other, which lent tension to the atmosphere in the auction house.

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heavenly essence cost tens of thousands of cubic crystals? What was more, the final price of the transaction seemed to be much higher!

Zen questioned.

Nory smiled and said, "Yes, it's true. Normally, all known weapons and even the low-grade ones contain heavenly essence. But no one can extract heavenly essence from any weapon. People have tried all sorts of ways including burning and breaking weapons down. And that is why, once heavenly essence appears, several people will clamor to buy it. And that's why the price goes higher and higher....."

"Since no one can extract it, how come it is here at the auction?" Zen asked, pointing at the heavenly essence in Nestor's hand.

Nory shrugged his shoulders and said, "I don't know. Perhaps some people are lucky enough to find heavenly essence by chance!"



'70, 000 cubic crystals is enough! Deducting the commission given to the Blessed Auction House and the cost of the book, Weapon Refining Principle, I can get about 40, 000 cubic crystals and more importantly, I have learned the function of the heavenly essence!'

As Zen was thinking about that, the auction at the Blessed Auction House ended

And the people there began to leave quickly.

The only people still at the auction house were the ones who stayed to change their money into the goods for which they had bid.

When Zen just stood, he saw a young man dressed in silk walking toward him with a smile. Beside the young man was the charming woman who had visited Zen in his room.

Zen understood that the man was Fren, who was always ready to trouble him and had even



tried to hire people to kill him!

Fren gestured at Zen and then grinned wickedly.

Without any fear, Zen pointed at Fren and sneered.

Tit for tat!

The people who saw this scene could only sigh silently.

If the two men were at the same level, their hostility toward each other could be regarded as tit for tat.

However, the man in the room was only a half-step into the nature level! What made him so arrogant? He dared to confront Fren! Was he crazy? Or did he have a powerful backer?

Somehow, Fren was a little confused.....



This was supposed to be his first time meeting Zen.

Even if Fren was being unreasonable, why did Zen think he could do the same? After all, Fren was more powerful than Zen! Fren couldn't figure it out.

At that moment, a servant dressed in the uniform of Fren's clan came up.

"I asked you to investigate. Did you get the result?" Fren asked.

"My young master, the boy's name is Zen Luo."

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translator: Happyju; Editor: Arathi



Clan would be in trouble.

At this moment, Wurth headed toward Zen's room with his people.

Zhang's servants had reported to him about the dispute between Zen and Fren. And Wurth knew that Zen had previously quarreled with Fren's servant and offended Fren at Drizzle Peak. That was why he gathered his people and rushed over. He took the initiative to stop in front of Fren.

"Fren!" greeted Wurth with a big smile on his face as usual.

No one would slap Wurth, as it was very hard to be angry when Wurth smiled.

Fren tapped his fingers on his head as though he was thinking. He pretended that he needed time to figure out the identity of the man in front of him. And then he pointed to Wurth



and asked, "You are... the second child of the Zhang Clan. Is Wick your elder brother?"

Wurth nodded and answered, "Yes, my brother is walking the guests out. He is not available right now."

Just as Wurth finished, Fren suddenly stepped forward and embraced Wurth's fat body tightly!

The people in the auction house were stunned for a while. Even the two guards who followed Wurth blushed with embarrassment. They didn't know how to deal with such a situation.

They were bound to protect Wurth, but they feared Fren. They didn't know if they should separate the two noble clansmen. So they consoled themselves by thinking that Fren did not want to hurt Wurth. After all, it was a sudden hug. Their master should be fine.

It was said that Fren was flaky. In fact, that



was true. Otherwise, his nickname 'Fren the loony' would be unfounded.

Fren did not do anything out of the ordinary to Wurth. He just patted Wurth on the shoulder and whispered into Wurth's ear, "Take it easy. I am not looking for a fight in your territory for the sake of your family and your brother. But there is something that I want to say to the little guy up there. Could you please step aside?"

Wurth's forehead was sweaty. He knew of Fren's reputation and power. There was a very real possibility that Wurth would die if Fren used a little strength. He became apprehensive and could do nothing except nod stiffly and step aside. After all, Fren had asked politely.

Then Fren released Wurth and patted him on the shoulder again. He bypassed Wurth and continued to walk toward the room. Soon, he reached Zen.



his opponent, Fren preferred spiritual torment. This was Fren's usual technique.

"Oh, really?" said Zen as his lips lifted into a sneer. "Although you like to threaten people in your mad and arrogant way, I have heard countless threats like yours in my life. Do you really think that you are creative enough? What a cliché!"

Hearing what Zen said, the smile on Fren's face froze.

Zen added, "If you want my life, just come up and get it. You and your family are nothing in my eyes. Please, save your threats. By the way, the Weapon Refining Principle is in my hands now. I will surely commit every single word to memory and then burn it to ashes. If you expect to take it from me, you can try to open my head and see if you can find the contents of the book!"



needed to keep his family's interests in mind first.

The Zhang Clan was running family business, not charity. It would be a significant loss if Wick also supported Zen.

But as members of the Zhang Clan, Wurth and Wick were extraordinarily wise.

They were very optimistic about Zen's future. If Zen were capable of beating Fren, his future would be bright! And they would be happy to see that.

Author's note



Kyrie Durant Author

Translated by NicoleX
Edited by Arathi



"Oh my god! I've never seen so many cubic crystals in my life," Sean also murmured. Since all three young men were of civilian origin, they didn't have much money.

Although they were outer disciples of Drizzle Peak at Cloud Sect, the gaps among them were tremendous. It was surprising that Zen had been able to earn so many points not long after joining Cloud Sect.

However, Zen didn't know what to do with so many cubic crystals. Although he had a space ring, yet its space was not much. It would be impossible to put all the cubic crystals in the space ring.

He couldn't carry them. Even if he asked Sean and Nory to help, they wouldn't be able to take that many cubic crystals. That was just not realistic. Zen had never considered that carrying or storing the crystals would be a problem.



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