

A Demoness 151

Chapter 151: Taking in A Disciple?

Jiang Hao sat by the table and listened attentively, somewhat surprised by what he heard.

At first glance, the situation seemed complicated, but when summarized. However, everything was quite simple. The maid had exceptional talent but didn't want to be separated from her young master.

"By the way, we already arranged everything for the other children. They have been returned to their parents. If they are willing, the Chen family can take them in as well. After all, they are all talented individuals. It's not easy to find seven disciples at once," Fang Jin said.

Jiang Hao nodded and looked at Chu Chuan, sitting in the corner. "That young boy also has some talent. Can't you take him back together with the girl? Is his talent not sufficient to enter the sect?"

"He... can't enter."

Fang Jin sighed. "I checked him. Chu Chuan has average talent, but it barely reaches the third section of the jade. It's not that we can't take him along, but... he would be the lowest-ranking individual in the entire sect. It would come as a blow to him. He would also only have access to ordinary cultivation techniques. It would be better for me to teach him a better technique now and let him cultivate it in a different place. Although I don't have much prestige, my words still hold some weight in our small sect. This way, he can cultivate better and receive better treatment. Unfortunately, Chu Jie is unwilling. Even if we place him in the outer sect, it wouldn't be good for him."

Jiang Hao understood that where there was competition, there would naturally be winners and losers. Weak people were harassed everywhere, especially if they had low talent. This was even more prevalent in the demonic sects.

Therefore, the boy had to demonstrate good talent while cultivating quietly. Only then would he be able to avoid harassment from others.

Jiang Hao couldn't help but sigh as he looked at the two children. These two kids who had relied on each other for so long would eventually have to take different paths in life.

At this moment, Lan Jin was still trying to persuade the children.

Chu Jie refused to compromise at all, but Chu Chuan seemed to understand the situation.

"Go with them," he said earnestly to the girl beside him. "When I make a name for myself here, I will come to your sect to find you. By then, I will definitely be able to protect you."

To Bai Qiong and the others, these were words of comfort. The little boy was trying hard to console the little girl. In the future, she would surpass the boy in every aspect.

Even Jiang Hao thought the same. The gap between them was just too great.

Unless the young boy encountered something extraordinary, he couldn't match up to his maid in talent.

The young boy seemed somewhat out of place in Jiang Hao's eyes.

Jiang Hao activated his Daily Appraisal ability.

[Chu Chuan: A destitute young master. His immortal heart still carries an unyielding spirit. Despite his frail body, he holds an undefeated faith. No matter what difficulties he faces, he keeps becoming stronger and braver. He will soar to the heavens like a dragon.]

Jiang Hao was somewhat surprised. This little boy was similar to Zhou Chan.

If this kind of person really joined the Bright Moon Sect, there was a high possibility that he would rise up in the ranks. He would undoubtedly face harassment from those stronger than him, but his faith and willpower were indomitable.

“Perhaps you can consider taking him back with you,” Jiang Hao suggested to Fang Jin.

“If there’s no other way, we’ll have to do that. Our senior uncles might arrive within a day or two. They will have to decide,” said Fang Jin, shaking his head.

Jiang Hao didn’t say much. He felt that the Bright Moon Sect would be at a loss if they didn’t accept the boy.

Chu Jie shook her head. “Without me, how will you take care of yourself, Young Master?”

“Look at it this way... if you join the sect and learn to cultivate, wouldn’t you be better able to take care of me?”

“Yeah. In a few years, our sect will have a Dao Discussion event. Your young master can come and see how you’ve grown,” said Lan Jin. “When you become stronger, you can protect your young master better than you can now.” The words stirred some interest in Chu Jie.

Jiang Hao smiled, then bid farewell to Fang Jin. He didn’t want to get involved and decided to wander around the city.

This time, Jiang Hao had no specific goal. He was just hoping to find some bubbles.

On the way, he thought about Chu Chuan. With his hidden immortal heart, he was like a spirit beast with a dormant bloodline. It was a pity that no one had a way of tapping into that and helping the boy. At least with spirit beasts, it could be done by spending some spirit stones. If there was a way like that, Jiang Hao would have taken the boy with him. He knew that humans couldn’t drop bubbles.

After a stroll, Jiang Hao bought some food and headed back to his room. He continued studying the nameless manual. The more he studied it, the better he felt about controlling the power within his body.

The next morning, Jiang Hao was startled awake. He felt a powerful aura approaching from afar. In the end, it descended in front of the inn.

“So formidable... even Zuo Lan seems as insignificant as a grain of rice before that aura. Whoever it belongs to might even have surpassed the Primordial Spirit Realm..

Jiang Hao’s first thought was that Fang Jin’s senior uncles must have arrived. It was best to keep a low profile in front of such a powerful individual. He decided not to go out and focus on his cultivation instead.

The next day, someone knocked on Jiang Hao’s door.

This was the third day since Hong Yuye had gone into seclusion. Today was the

last day of Jiang Hao’s freedom.

“Fellow Disciple Jiang, are you in there?” asked Fang Jin.

Jiang Hao didn’t understand why Fang Jin had come to look for him. Maybe to bid him farewell.

He noticed Fang Jin’s awkward smile as he opened the door. “Fellow Disciple Jiang, are you free right now? Can we go downstairs for a while? My senior uncle wishes to see you. It’s just a request, so please don’t misunderstand.” ‘A request?’ Jiang Hao was surprised.

Nevertheless, he nodded and accepted. He had sensed the formidable strength of Fang Jin’s senior uncle. He couldn’t refuse. Hong Yuye might have been able to handle him, but Jiang Hao wasn’t at that level yet.

Jiang Hao went downstairs with Fang Jin and saw three other people there.

One middle-aged man and two young men.

There was nothing noteworthy about the two young men. Their cultivation was merely at the Golden Core Realm.

The person of concern was the middle-aged man sitting in the chair. He appeared calm, and a powerful aura emanated from him. It made his presence known.

“I am Jiang Hao Tian. Please accept my humble greeting,” said Jiang Hao.

“Please have a seat,” said Han Xiao and motioned toward a chair calmly. “I am

Han Xiao. I have a small question for you, Junior.”

“Please go ahead,” said Jiang Hao humbly and sat across from him.

Han Xiao looked at Jiang Hao with a smile. “I heard that your strength is remarkable.. I wonder if you have any intentions of taking on disciples?”

Chapter 152: The Bright Moon Sect Give Too Much

Only Jiang Hao and the guests were in the living room, besides Fang Jin. Fang Jin, Jiang Hao, and Han Xiao sat at a table.

The two young men stood behind Han Xiao, while Jiang Hao sat across from him.

Fang Jin sat beside them and watched everything quietly.

Jiang Hao was puzzled. “As a junior with limited qualification and insufficient strength, I am unable to be a teacher to any disciple.”

“Young friend, don’t be in a hurry to refuse. Why not listen to our opinions first?” Han Xiao said politely.

“Fellow Disciple Jiang, you already know about our young junior sister’s situation. We tried to persuade her in the past few days, and she finally agreed to join our sect. However, she has a condition. She agrees to join us only if we find a suitable master for Chu Chuan. She also said that she wants her young master to be able to participate in the Bright Moon Sect’s social gathering. The latter is easy, but the former is difficult. Your strength is apparent to us all. We hope you’ll consider taking in Chu Chuan as your disciple.”

“I have no intention of taking in disciples at the moment,” said Jiang Hao.

Although Chu Chuan was special, taking in disciples was very troublesome. Jiang Hao found it hard to protect himself. How could he even think of taking up responsibility for another person?

Furthermore, being a teacher was not an easy task. He just didn’t want to mislead a young person. If he could become stronger and have fewer enemies in the future, he might consider it. It was impossible for now.

Han Xiao took out a jade pendant and an invitation card. He gently placed them on the table.

“The jade pendant is a token of honor for distinguished guests of the Bright Moon Sect. If you face any problems in the future, you can ask us for help. The invitation card can be used for joining conferences and explorations of the Bright Moon Sect.”

This was a great gift. It wasn’t given to just anyone. If he needed to flee in the future, the Bright Moon Sect would help him. He could even seek shelter there temporarily.

“I also heard that you like tea. I have some good quality tea here that I would like to give you as a gift,” said Han Xiao and took out an exquisite box.

Jiang Hao looked at the box.

“Open it and take a look,” Han Xiao said with a smile.

Jiang Hao moved the box closer and opened it. Emerald green tea leaves with a touch of fiery red on the edges. He could recognize that tea anywhere! It was the Red Azure tea.

Jiang Hao was shocked.

“Our request is simple. Please accept Chu Chuan and teach him cultivation,” said Han Xiao. “In a few years, the Bright Moon Sect will hold a Dao

Conference. If he wants to attend, you can send him to us. If he doesn’t want to, that’s fine too.’

“Do you think Chu Chuan has no potential?” asked Jiang Hao.

“His willpower is fine, but... his talent is just average. He could join the outer sect, but it might affect the young girl’s progress. We are willing to accept her conditions because they will understand as they grow. By then, it won’t affect the girl’s cultivation,” said Han Xiao.

Jiang Hao understood him. In a few years, Chu Jie, with her extraordinary cultivation, would be in the Foundation Establishment Realm. However, Chu Chuan might only be in the Lifeblood Refinement Realm at that time. It would be a world of difference.

Jiang Hao felt that the people of the Bright Moon Sect were actually very decent. They weren’t forcing Chu Jie in any way and were accommodating of her conditions.

If it was a demonic sect like the Heavenly Note Sect, they would have taken who they wanted without considering what the person might feel. “Don’t you want to know which sect I’m from?” asked Jiang Hao.

Han Xiao shook his head. “That doesn’t matter.”

Jiang Hao realized that knowing about it might create trouble for both sides, so they didn’t ask. They just wanted to solve the problem at hand at all costs. All other things were secondary.

“You’ve done enough already,” said Fang Jin. “But we would be very grateful if you could do this for us. We know it’s a lot to ask.”

“Do Chu Chuan and the others know about my cultivation realm?” Jiang Hao asked.

“They don’t,” Fang Jin said. “In their eyes, you are at the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.”

Jiang Hao looked at Fang Jin. “Do they know who killed Zuo Lan?”

Fang Jin shook his head. “They don’t know that exactly, but they know that you were involved somehow.”

Jiang Hao always kept his cultivation level fixed at the mid-stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. He speculated that the other side wanted to hide their cultivation realm too.

Jiang Hao gave it some thought. He accepted the jade pendant. The Red Azure tea was a bonus.

He had a mission, and he was taking someone back to the sect. If the Law Enforcement Hall accepted that as a fulfillment of the mission, all would be well. Even if they didn’t, he would just need to pay the fine. There was no harm in this.

Moreover, the Bright Moon Sect was trying to fulfill Chu Jie’s request. They didn’t really care for Chu Chuan. Even if he ended up dead in the process, that wouldn’t matter to them.

“I cannot accept disciples,” said Jiang Hao.

Han Xiao frowned.

“However, I’ll take Chu Chuan back with me to my sect and leave him in the care of my master. That way, I will be able to help him as best as I can. When the time comes, I will help him if he wants to head to the Bright Moon Sect. That’s the only thing I can do.”

Jiang Hao waited for Han Xiao and Fang Jin’s decision. The difference between a disciple and an apprentice was like heaven and earth. Fang Jin was a little puzzled. “Why won’t you accept disciples?”

Jiang Hao smiled. “Would you accept disciples if it were you?”

“I don’t have enough seniority in the sect...” Fang Jin was surprised by the question. He finally understood that even he wouldn’t be able to do the thing he asked Jiang Hao to do.

Han Xiao lowered his head and thought for a moment. At last, he nodded. “Alright. I agree with your proposal.”

Han Xiao took out a storage treasure and put it on the table. “I prepared these for him. There are some cultivation pills, techniques, and treasures. Please give this to him when it’s the right time.”

“Can I take a look?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Of course.” Han Xiao nodded. He turned to Fang Jin. “The rest is up to you now. I have to leave the city for a while to deal with some people.”

After saying that, he left with his companions.

Jiang Hao speculated that they were probably on their way to deal with the people from the Heavenly Saint Sect. That worried him. If the people from the Heavenly Saint Sect found out that he was here, the consequences would be grave.

“Friend, please put away these things. Please keep the jade pendant well,” said Fang Jin. “I believe you understand that this jade pendant represents a favor from the Bright Moon Sect. The Bright Moon Sect will agree to any favor that you need, whether it’s something small or big. For example, joining the sect or helping with a task. However, once the favor is used, the jade pendant will be reclaimed. If unused,

you will always be regarded as an esteemed guest of the Bright Moon Sect. Having this status within the boundaries of the sect will be very convenient for you in the future.”

“It would be best if you refine it to prevent it from being stolen,” said Fang Jin. Jiang Hao picked up the jade pendant, which had the words “Bright Moon Sect” engraved on it. It was a treasure.

He refined it right away..

Chapter 153: Do I Have to Be Next to the Demoness While She Bathes?

Jiang Hao felt that once the imprint was erased, the jade pendant would self-destruct. The pendant emitted a gentle aura that calmed one’s heart and settled one’s spirit.

Fang Jin pointed at the invitation card. “This invitation card should be signed by you and Chu Chuan. If someone impersonates you, it may not be immediately noticeable. If you have this, we will know it’s really you. Please don’t lose it.”

Jiang Hao didn’t think much about it. This card would only be useful for major events like the Dao Conference. He didn’t really need it. It was mainly for Chu

Chuan.

He also put away the Red Azure tea, which was of even better quality than the one he had recently bought.

He earned over ten thousand spirit stones and no longer needed to worry about Hong Yuye asking for more tea.

“As for the contents of this storage treasure, you should keep them well. How you distribute them to Chu Chuan is up to you,” Fang Jin said.

After a brief look at the storage treasure, Jiang Hao found a cultivation technique called the Star-Moon Lifeblood Refining Art. He also found some spirit-regenerating pills, and some talismans. A Foundation Establishment Realm treasure, and five hundred spirit stones. This was quite generous.

At the Lifeblood Refinement Realm, Chu Chuan wouldn't have been able to accumulate so many spirit stones. Having so much money in his hands would affect how he conducted himself in the sect. It might lead to arrogance and early death.

"I will give him a little bit at each stage," Jiang Hao said. Since he had gained many benefits from the Bright Moon Sect, he would do his best to reciprocate.

Fang Jin nodded.

Jiang Hao glanced at the Star-Moon Lifeblood Refining Art technique. Although it only recorded up to the Foundation Establishment Realm, it was a powerful technique. It even surpassed the Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note. It utilized starlight as a guide to draw in the lifeblood and integrate it into one's body. It was most suitable for newcomers to cultivate at night, as their cultivation speed would greatly increase because the star-moon lifeblood was abundant at night. This was suitable for spells. The Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note focused on blood and energy resonance for the better temperament of the physique.

The Heavenly Note Sect didn't have any specific requirements regarding the kind of technique one followed.

In the afternoon, Fang Jin and the others prepared to leave.

"Young Master, you must come and find me when you can," Chu Jie said in a tiny voice.

Chu Chuan readily agreed. "Of course. Please take care of yourself."

"Friend, if you have the opportunity, please visit the Bright Moon Sect. Let me repay your hospitality," said Fang Jin.

“Definitely,” said Jiang Hao and bowed.

“Thank you, Disciple Jiang, for saving my life before.” Bai Qiong bowed to him gratefully.

“You’re too kind. You have nothing to thank me for,” Jiang Hao said politely.

“I... I may have offended you before. Please forgive me,” said Lan Jin, feeling a little embarrassed.

“No need for that. I didn’t take it to heart.”

Jiang Hao was surprised at Lan Jin’s apology.

After a while, Fang Jin and the others turned around and left. They flew away with Chu Jie. He could vaguely hear their conversations as they flew away.

“Junior Sister Lan, you’ve grown a lot.”

“I’m not an ungrateful person. That’s all.”

“Learn more about how to interact with others, and you’ll be able to accompany other juniors out of the sect someday.”

Jiang Hao watched them leave. He felt a little envious that he didn’t have seniors like that who guided him. He had so many trust issues that whenever someone treated him well, he only felt suspicious of them. He felt that sometimes the immortal sects were much better than demonic sects.

“Will I ever see Chu Jie again?” asked Chu Chuan. Jiang Hao looked at the little bot. “What do you think?”

“I’ll work hard. I must go and see her someday!”

“It’s good to have such confidence.” Jiang Hao looked up at the sky. “Sometimes people might have very high ambitions, but their life may be as fragile as a glass that might shatter at any minute. Do you think such a person can achieve greatness?”

“I... I don’t know how to answer that,” said Chu Chuan.

“Remember... you need to survive first, ” said Jiang Hao. “That is the most important thing. As long as you’re alive, you can do anything.”

“Do I have to endure it when people harass me?” Chu Chuan suddenly asked.

“Only you can answer that. If you think you have no other way than to endure it, then do it. However, if you think you can fight back, then do so. No matter what you do, you have to be prepared for the consequences.”

Jiang Hao walked toward the backyard of the inn. Chu Chuan followed him.

“My sect is not an easy place to survive. With your average talent, you will naturally have to endure more than others,” said Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao sat down in the pavilion in the backyard. Chu Chuan stood by his side. He felt nervous.

“Have you made up your mind? My sect is not a good place, ” Jiang Hao said.

“I have made up my mind,” said Chu Chuan. “I might not be able to become as strong as Chu Jie. But I still want to try, so that I might be able to see her one day.”

“Alright,” said Jiang Hao. “You have two options for cultivation techniques. One is the Heavenly Note Sect’s Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note technique. The other is the Star-Moon Lifeblood Refinement Art.” “Which one is more powerful?” Chu Chuan asked.

Jiang Hao poured himself a cup of tea. “In my opinion, the Star-Moon

Lifeblood Refining Art surpasses the Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note in many aspects.”

“What do you think I should cultivate, Master?” Chu Chuan tentatively asked.

“Call me Senior Brother,” said Jiang Hao. “The Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note.”

‘Why?’ Chu Chuan was puzzled.

“Granted, it isn’t as strong as the other one, but it’ll be easier for me to guide you in that technique because I already practice that.”

Chu Chuan nodded. “Then it shall follow the Hundred Revolutions of the

Heavenly Note.”

Jiang Hao looked at the little boy. His future had been determined by others so easily till now. He didn’t know whether it was absurd.

Jiang Hao did feel that the Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note suited Chu Chuan. Whether it would do him good was left to be found out.

Jiang Hao taught Chu Chuan the static and dynamic exercises of the Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note.

“Once you’ve made some progress, I will give you the things that the Bright Moon Sect left for you. After you join the sect, I will have someone test your progress every week. It might be tough for you. You can choose not to be tested if you feel like that. If, at any point, you feel like you don’t want to be in the heavenly Note Sect anymore, you can come and tell me. I’ll find someone to send you out of the sect. However, after you reach the Foundation Establishment Realm, I’ll no longer be responsible for you. Every choice you make will be your own.”

After that, Jiang Hao arranged a place for him to stay and allowed him to cultivate on his own. He then greeted Chen Quan and the others.

The next day, Jiang Hao went to Hong Yuye’s room. As soon as he entered, a stone tablet was thrown at him. Before he could carefully examine the stone tablet, Hong Yuye turned to him.

“Prepare some hot water for me. I want to take a bath.”

Jiang Hao wasn’t surprised. She hadn’t been out of her room in days! However, he was rooted to the spot.

“You cannot leave my room while I’m bathing. If you dare to peek, you know the consequences.”

Jiang Hao looked at the wooden tub behind the folding screen. He was shocked and worried. If it was any other woman, he would have felt nothing. He had no desire to peek.

However, with Hong Yuye, it was different. She made him restless and stupid.

He had the Heaven Extinction Gu Poison to thank for that.. He couldn’t understand her at all!

Chapter 154: An Undercover Agent?

Jiang Hao prepared hot water for Hong Yuye.

After testing the water temperature and making sure it wasn't too hot, he stepped out from behind the folding screen. "Senior, the water is ready." "Is the door closed?" Hong Yuye asked as she got up from the table.

"It's closed," Jiang Hao said.

"Close the window as well." Hong Yuye walked behind the folding screen.

Jiang Hao closed the window.

"Place a chair and sit in front of the folding screen with your back facing it." Jiang Hao followed the instructions.

Once he was seated, he heard her undressing. She then hung the clothes on the folding screen.

Jiang Hao felt a bit uneasy.

Although Jiang Hao could function normally when facing her, he felt that might easily lose control.

Splash!

The water splashed as someone stepped into the tub.

"Focus on the door and window," Hong Yuye said.

Jiang Hao covered his energy trails with his Golden Core Realm ability.

Considering Hong Yuye's strength, Jiang Hao didn't think anyone could get close to her. This was deliberately making things difficult for him.

Splash, splash!

Jiang Hao guessed Hong Yuye was pouring water over her body. A floral fragrance drifted out.

Jiang Hao felt somewhat restless. He took a deep breath to calm himself.

“Senior, there’s something I want to discuss with you.”

“What is it?” Hong Yuye asked from behind the folding screen.

Jiang Hao could guess that Hong Yuye loved taking baths.

“When I left the sect with you, I received a mission for recruitment. So, when we return, we might have an extra person traveling with us to the sect.”

“Have you decided on the recruit?” Hong Yuye asked.

“Yes. It’s been decided already,” said Jiang Hao.

“Assigned by the Bright Moon Sect?”

“Yes.”

When Han Xiao arrived, there was a lot of commotion. Even Jiang Hao was able to sense his arrival, let alone Hong Yuye.

“What reward did they give you?” Hong Yuye asked.

Jiang Hao heard the water splashing again. “They gave me some Red Azure tea.”

“What else?” “An invitation card too.”

“Anything else?”

The splash of water subsided. A vast and majestic aura emerged.

However, it quickly dissipated. Soon, Hong Yuye resumed her bath and the water splashed in the tub again. “Let’s pretend for argument’s sake that that’s all you received.”

Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief.

“Have you ever considered joining the Bright Moon Sect?” asked Hong Yuye curiously. “The people of the Bright Moon Sect seemed to have favored you.” “Senior, you must be joking. I still have your flower to take care of.”

“Why not take the flower with you?” Hong Yuye asked.

‘Elder Baizhi would kill me....

“Leaving the Heavenly Note Sect will be considered a betrayal. I’ll be hunted down,” said Jiang Hao “As a disciple of a demonic sect, my style of cultivation leans toward the demonic path. It might be difficult to settle in an immortal sect.”

Although Jiang Hao has always remained true to himself, the demonic sect had done what it could to influence him. He could feel the changes in him.

Jiang Hao had realized that he was different from Fang Jin and the others. It might not be a good thing to join an immortal sect, after all. He might not be able to fit in.

A while passed and Hong Yuye didn’t say anything else. There was only the sound of water splashing in the tub.

After a while, the splashing stopped.

“Senior, have you finished bathing?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Do you want to bathe too?” Hong Yuye walked out from behind the folding screen, looking at Jiang Hao with a teasing smile.

A familiar fragrance accompanied her. She had changed her clothes.

“No, it’s alright.”

Hong Yuye had changed into a different dress. Her previous red and white dress was replaced by an orange one.

A white belt cinched her waist, and the hem reached her ankles.

“Tidy up and get ready to leave,” Hong Yuye said.

Jiang Hao packed some things and bid farewell to Chen Quan. He also requested the man to take care of Chu Chuan in his absence.

He didn’t take Chu Chuan along with him right now. Jiang Hao asked him to wait here at the inn and told him that he would pick him up when he returned to the sect.

There were formations and spirit herbs in the backyard, which would make his cultivation twice as effective.

With the Chen family around, there should be no problems. He also left some talismans for Chu Chuan, just in case.

“I will come to pick you up in a month or two,” Jiang Hao said to Chu Chuan.

After that, he left Heavenly Earth City with Hong Yuye.

On the way, Hong Yuye looked at him. “Won’t the people from the sect think that you ran away?”

“They have given me a time limit of three months,” said Jiang Hao. “If I don’t return in three months, they might think I ran away.”

Hong Yuye didn’t ask anything further.

“Did you find any more clues from the stone tablets?” Jiang Hao asked. Hong Yuye shook her head. “No. That’s where you come in. You need to figure it out.”

“What is the purpose of the new stone tablet?” Jiang Hao asked as he took out the recently acquired stone tablet.

“This stone tablet is quite interesting,” Hong Yuye said. “Inside, you can see the messages from other people, but it seems there is someone with a higher authority controlling it. We don’t know the whereabouts of other stone tablets. In theory, the people who are involved should know about it. Once my influence on the stone tablet disappears, you will infiltrate them and find out their location or the whereabouts of the person that controls everything.”

“Infiltrate?” Jiang Hao felt uneasy. He had seen many infiltrators around him. Traitors in the sect who had wanted to kill him. He had never expected to go undercover himself.

Fortunately, he wasn’t infiltrating the Heavenly Note Sect. He knew what happened to traitors there.

The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower was still in his courtyard. Elder Baizhi would definitely keep a close eye on his activities. As long as he was clean, he wouldn’t have to worry.

After considering it, Jiang Hao felt that it was dangerous. However, nothing and nobody was as dangerous as the beautiful woman he was traveling with.

“If there are no positions available, then we can only search one city at a time.” Jiang Hao frowned. “After the incident with Zuo Lan, they might stay away from Hidden Cloud Prefecture.”

Hidden Cloud Prefecture was vast. Three months wouldn't be enough to search all the places.

If worse came to worst, he would have to ask Hong Yuye to let him return. If he didn't return to the sect, he would be considered a traitor and hunted. The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower would be neglected.

That was reason enough to return to the sect on time.

They arrived at the nearest city, Waterwood City.

After staying there for three days without any new clues, Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye continued on.

They arrived at Luo Yuan City. There was a spiritual mine here.

Hong Yuye observed the place for a long time.

“Do you think this place is special, Senior?” Jiang Hao asked..

Chapter 155: Extraordinary Grace

At the edge of the mining site, a desolate area stretched out. Further away, there were lush trees. Hong Yuye stood at a high point, gazing at the mining site.

“The mining site itself isn’t very special. It’s the terrain that’s a bit peculiar. The spiritual energy condenses but doesn’t disperse. It’s a good place.”

“What’s the use of this terrain?” Jiang Hao asked. He looked at the terrain closely but couldn’t find anything out of place.

Glancing at Jiang Hao, Hong Yuye smiled. “Underneath the mine, there are tombs. They are not ordinary tombs. Perhaps they have never been discovered.”

‘Tombs?’ Jiang Hao was astonished.

“Should we go down to take a look?” he asked.

Hong Yuye sneered and turned away. She had looked at him with such disdain that Jiang Hao felt self-conscious.

“What’s the point of visiting a place where the dead rest?” Hong Yuye said. “It’s bad luck.”

Listening to her words, Jiang Hao felt even more impressed by Hong Yuye’s strength. Her cultivation, knowledge, and mindset were all extraordinary.

However, sometimes she made him feel strange. Not only did she claim the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower from his courtyard, but she also took away his discarded treasures.

Lost in thought, he momentarily forgot to keep up with her.

“Do you want to stay and mine?” Hong Yuye turned back and asked.

“No... It’s just... I was thinking about how I admire your boldness, Senior,” said Jiang Hao.

“Are you lying again?”

“No,” Jiang Hao said.

Hong Yuye stopped and looked at Jiang Hao. A smile appeared on her face.

Jiang Hao was a bit startled. He lowered his head.

A red light flashed, and they disappeared from the spot.

In the blink of an eye, Jiang Hao found himself in Luo Yuan City. This was the most prosperous and populous city in the vicinity. It also had a considerable number of cultivators.

Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye stayed in the city for four days. He even sold some items.

He earned about 2,500 spirit stones. He now had about 14,700 spirit stones in total.

Jiang Hao spent 3,700 spirit stones to buy a blade. The craftsmanship of the blade was average, and the quality was decent. It was suitable for the Golden Core Realm and the Foundation Establishment Realm.

The blade was light and handy but didn't have any other unique traits. Its only advantage was durability.

It was dark red, but the edge was silver. The blade didn't have a name, so Jiang Hao decided to call it Half-Moon Blade, like all the others.

After four days with no new clues, Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye moved to other cities.

They stopped for a few days in each city they passed.

Sometimes they encountered trouble, but Jiang Hao usually resolved it quickly so that it wouldn't affect Hong Yuye.

Midway, they ran out of silver coins. Jiang Hao had to “borrow” some from a wealthy family with a terrible reputation.

They then continued on with their journey. More than two months passed in a flash.

Jiang Hao realized that he now had only ten days to return to the sect.

Months of searching had yielded no results. They visited various small sects and cities. They found some clues but the people they were looking for had long fled the place.

After Zuo Lan’s death, they either fled or retreated to other places.

During this time, Jiang Hao studied the stone tablet. He discovered an area for exchanging messages. However, it couldn’t be used.

Upon examination, he found that Hong Yuye had exerted an influence to prevent the owner of the tablet from discovering their location.

They had to wait for her power to dissipate. Only then could they use the stone tablet.

‘Buy why does the tablet have an information exchange area?’ wondered Jiang

Hao.

Jiang Hao decided to study it when he returned.

“This is the last city in the vicinity. Other cities are far away from here,” Jiang Hao said as he looked at the small city ahead.

Hong Yuye was still wearing her orange and white dress. She hadn't asked him to prepare water for any more baths.

Jiang Hao guessed that the stone tablet might have consumed her energy before, so she had asked for a bath.

"Do you want to go back?" Hong Yuye asked softly as she walked ahead.

"I'm sorry. I will have to return to the sect within the time limit," said Jiang Hao apologetically.

"In that case, pray that your undercover mission yields useful information. Otherwise..."

Hong Yuye glanced at Jiang Hao. "By now, I hope you know the consequences of failure."

Jiang Hao lowered his head. "Yes."

"In three days, if we don't discover anything, I'll send you back," said Hong Yuye. "Do you know how many people have been trying to find your location during this journey?"

Jiang Hao's heart skipped a beat. He was curious, but he didn't know what Hong Yuye was implying. He didn't respond.

Hong Yuye didn't care about Jiang Hao's silence. She walked ahead, but her voice reached his ear.

"There are a total of four groups of people trying to find you. Two of them are going all out. You dislike being in the limelight so much, but it seems you have quite a talent for attracting attention. I thought you were invisible."

"Senior, you must be kidding!" Jiang Hao sighed.

Jiang Hao felt worried, especially since he didn't know who those people were. The two fanatical ones must be the Heavenly Saint Sect and the Sunset Immortal Sect.

He didn't know about the others. Perhaps they were the Blackheaven Sect and the Heavenly Joy Pavilion.

Regardless, he must avoid venturing outside alone.

After returning, he would continue cultivating. If enough time passed by, any grudge could be resolved.

However, one thing was certain. All the people searching for him were having a hard time pinning his location.

Either Hong Yuye masked his location, or some treasure was doing it for him. It would be better to make people think he had treasures that masked his location than an expert who's helping him.

"Senior, do the stone tablets have the ability to conceal my location?" Jiang Hao asked.

"Barely... However, the stone tablets are special, and few people can see through them," Hong Yuye said.

Jiang Hao felt relieved. If he were noticed by the seniors of the sect, he would just shift the blame to the stone tablets.

If they questioned him about the origin of the stone tablets, he could just make something up. This world was filled with strange things, after all.

Jiang Hao looked toward the city that lay ahead. It was their last stop.

In these two months, he had also looked for his family along with finding clues for the stone tablets.

Although he was sold at the age of five, he had lived with them as a child. Even though his family hadn't been very kind to him, he was still grateful that they had raised him. They had taught him to read and write.

After he was sold to the heavenly Note Sect, life had been tough. He had no one to rely on. His life was much more difficult than having to chop firewood at home every day.

He wished to see them one last time, but he couldn't find them anywhere. This was the last city where ordinary non-cultivators lived.

If they were still alive, they should be here.

However, he didn't find them there either.

Three days later, Jiang Hao left the city. In these three days, he had gained nothing.

He thought of the worst possible thing that might have happened to his family..

Chapter 156: Junior Brother, The Mission Has Failed

Jiang Hao visited all the nearby towns and cities, starting with Fallen City. He had even asked around in the nearby villages. Logically, his stepmother and his father should have been in one of these places. However, he found nothing.

He had thought that he could meet them and resolve everything once and for all. He just wanted a chance to say a proper goodbye. When he was sold at five, the only thing he had felt then was fear and resentment. He hadn't even bid them farewell.

It had been seventeen years since he had last seen them.

Jiang Hao didn't want to think the worst.

Perhaps they had left for a city or town further away. It wasn't impossible. A lot could change in seventeen years!

That would also mean Jiang Hao might never meet them again after he returned to his sect. He couldn't venture out of the sect for a few years, or even a decade.

By then, they might pass away.

Suddenly, Hong Yuye's voice sounded in his ear.

"When you discover something as an undercover agent, you better be prepared to venture out."

Jiang Hao was a little surprised. He nodded.

"If you slack off, there will be consequences." Hong Yuye looked at Jiang Hao coldly.

"I understand," Jiang Hao said.

"Let's go." Hong Yuye took a step forward. One step covered several miles in an instant.

Jiang Hao turned back and glanced at the city that was about to disappear from his sight. He brushed his thoughts away.

'Let's go back...'

In Heavenly Earth City, Chu Chuan practiced his cultivation in the backyard.

His talent was average, so he needed to spend more time cultivating. It had been over two months, and he still hadn't made any significant progress.

During that time, he had learned some new things, such as the hundred-day allowance.

As long as one had a talent, they could join a sect after a hundred days of

cultivation because that was time enough to establish one's foundation.

However, it had been two months already, and he was still trying to gather spiritual energy into his body. It seemed that it would take a long time for him to be able to circulate the spiritual energy for cultivation.

Eve Chen Quan shook his head in defeat.

Chu Chuan was worried. What if the Heavenly Note Sect didn't accept him?

He had heard that the Heavenly Note Sect was one of the most powerful sects nearby. It was also a demonic sect.

He had heard it from Senior Chen Quan. He was afraid, but he didn't show it.

Chu Chuan had even prepared a fake name in case of emergencies. He didn't know whether they knew his real name or not. He didn't care anymore.

"You're still cultivating, young friend?" Chen Quan walked in.

"Senior Chen," Chu Chuan greeted him respectfully.

"Hasn't Senior Jiang returned yet?" Chen Quan asked curiously.

Chu Chuan shook his head. Many people had asked him the same question. He understood why they were asking him that, but he didn't dare think about it. He didn't want to entertain the notion that Jiang Hao might have abandoned him.

If that were true, he would need to find a way to survive. That was one of the reasons why he had created a fake name for himself.

"Senior Jiang must have been delayed by something," Chen Quan said with a reassuring smile.

Even if Jiang Hao took a year to return, he would have to take care of the boy.

Heaven forbid if Jiang Hao arrived late and didn't see the boy where he left him...

Chen Quan shuddered just thinking about it.

Chu Chuan was about to reply, but suddenly felt dizzy and collapsed.

Chen Quan was alarmed and was about to help the boy when Jiang Hao descended from the sky. He lifted Chu Chuan in his arms and flew away.

"Thank you, Senior Chen, for taking care of him. The spirit herbs in the backyard are a gift for you."

Before Chen Quan could respond, Jiang Hao flew out of sight.

Jiang Hao returned to the Heavenly Note Sect. Hong Yuye had accompanied him till the sect and then vanished without a trace.

Looking at the familiar sect, Jiang Hao breathed a sigh of relief. After more than two months, he was finally back.

There were still a few more days left.

Chu Chuan woke up. When he saw Jiang Hao, he was startled. "Who are you?!"

Jiang Hao was puzzled for a while, but he realized what had happened. Hong Yuye's power was gone.

Jiang Hao didn't answer his question. "I'll guide you into the sect. This will be your home. Don't tell anyone about how you entered the sect. Just tell them that I brought you here. Don't tell anyone about the Bright Moon Sect and your connection to them."

Although there shouldn't be any issues with it, it was still better to keep a low profile. The risk was worth taking. A favor owed by the Bright Moon Sect would definitely come in handy in the future.

Moreover, no one outside had seen his true appearance, so he could avoid being recognized.

"You're Senior Jiang?" Chu Chuan found it hard to believe.

'How did I end up here? I was in the backyard...'

"My name is Jiang Hao. You can call me Senior Brother Jiang," said Jiang Hao. "Now, follow me. I'll take you in. Remember, observe your surroundings more and speak less. It might just keep you alive for longer."

Jiang Hao took the boy to the Law Enforcement Hall. He went there to report the fulfillment of his mission.

"Junior Brother Jiang, isn't this a big deviation?" The person on the counter looked at Jiang Hao helplessly. "The person we wanted was a little girl named Chu Jie and you brought back..'

"I couldn't get Chu Jie, but he grew up with her. They are related, more or less..." "Junior Brother Jiang, this is a failed mission," said the person at the counter.

Jiang Hao sighed inwardly.

“When do you plan to pay the spirit stones as a fine for failure?”

Jiang Hao didn't say much and handed over one thousand spirit stones. “I can pay back the rest in about three months.”

“Alright,” said the senior sister at the counter. “Here. You can keep this receipt.”

“Senior Sister, do you want me to arrange something for this junior?” Jiang Hao asked.

Although Chu Chuan didn't understand what was going on, he knew it was best to be quiet.

“I'm sure you can figure something out, Junior Brother Jiang.”

Jiang Hao nodded. “Thank you.”

Jiang Hao left the Law Enforcement Hall along with Chu Chuan and headed to the Cliff of Broken hearts. He asked someone to obtain the necessary materials for the new disciple.

He then went to find his master. He informed his master of his return and also of the situation regarding Chu Chuan.

If his master punished him by assigning him to the mines, that would just be a bonus.

However, his master only nodded briskly and didn't say anything more.

Jiang Hao was accustomed to his master's silence.

Jiang Hao turned to Chu Chuan and told him that if he needed help, he could find him at the Spirit Herb Garden. After that, Jiang Hao returned to his house..

Chapter 157: The Demoness Gave Me A Lost Pill

Jiang Hao sighed when he reached his courtyard. He hadn't been back for three months, but this place was still the same as he left it.

There were no problems with the surrounding array formations.

After walking in, he saw the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. It had also grown taller.

The fragrance filled the courtyard, and the spiritual energy became denser. The lotus flowers were also growing well.

"It seems that the spirit beast hasn't slacked off in my absence." Jiang Hao chuckled.

He walked to the Immortal Peach Tree. That tree had changed a lot. It had fruits now!

He plucked a peach and bit into it. It was juicy and delicious. However, they were just ordinary peaches.

Jiang Hao activated Daily Appraisal on the tree.

[Immortality Peach Tree: It is related to the ancient divine tree, the Immortality Peach Tree. It has a trace of the divine tree's trait, and the fruit is sweet and fragrant. If a fruit is on the tree and 4,900 spirit stones are used to set up a spirit-gathering array around it, it could activate a trace of the divine tree's characteristics and activate an incarnation. After nine incarnations, it will become a divine tree. Staying with a divine item would make it easier for one to succeed in cultivation.]

Jiang Hao was a little surprised. He needed 4,900 spirit stones and had to leave a fruit behind to achieve the first incarnation of the tree. If there were no fruits on the tree, would he have to wait till next year?

He didn't want to wait another year, so he decided to save 4,900 spirit stones as soon as possible.

"I thought I was rich, but it seems half my spirit stones will go to the spirit beast and the other half to the tree!"

Fortunately, he was not in a hurry to hand over the compensation to the Law Enforcement Hall.

It wasn't that he didn't have enough spirit stones, but he was worried that handing them all at once might attract unwanted attention.

Handing the fine little by little was safer. If others found out about it, they would only gloat.

Jiang Hao walked to a corner of the courtyard while eating the peach. He took out the cracked Half-Moon Blade and stuck it into the soil.

He hoped the demoness wouldn't steal this one like his other blades.

After that, he went into his house. There was nothing out of place.

Jiang Hao walked to his balcony and looked at the river near his house.

'What bubbles will Immortality Peach Tree spawn? Gold or purple? If it was similar to the spirit beast's bloodline, it might be gold.'

The tree was ordinary enough right now. It was best if it spawned a gold bubble. However, he would be happy with a purple bubble if gold wasn't an option.

He had experienced the benefits of having many divine abilities. It always came in handy.

"I'll try again after a while."

Jiang Hao decided to go to the library before anyone found out he was back. He wanted to find out what kind of medicinal pill Hong Yuye had given him.

If possible, he wanted to save up and buy one.

Jiang Hao spent a long time in the library that day. In the evening, he found something in one of the records.

“The Snow God Pill can nourish and repair divine abilities. There is also a chance to activate another divine ability with its help.”

There was only one sentence about it. He asked the white-haired librarian if he had any other records with information on such a pill.

The librarian wasn't a very forthcoming person, but a few spirit stones would always do the trick.

Jiang Hao handed over three spirit stones. The old man accepted them and looked at him.

“Well, ask away.”

“I want to know more about the Snow God Pill. Is this pill very rare?” Jiang Hao asked.

“You want to use this to activate your divine ability?” The old man looked at Jiang Hao and laughed. “There are many people like you in this world. They try to dream about the impossible.”

“Is the pill ineffective?” Jiang Hao asked. He was worried that the one he took before might have an adverse reaction and damage his abilities.

“It's effective,” said the old man. “The Snow God Pill can help people who don't have the talent to open their divine abilities. At least that was what people believed. There are no such pills.”

Jiang Hao was surprised.

The old man sighed. “The pills have been lost for centuries. Only a few immortal sects have it. Maybe just one or two of those exist in the world right now.”

Jiang Hao thanked him and left the library. He couldn’t help but sigh. Hong Yuye was indeed extraordinary.

Jiang Hao overheard a conversation as he passed by a group of people.

“Those people have been asking me for spirit stones again. It’s so annoying. Why should I pay back? A mere early-stage Foundation Establishment Realm cultivator dared to ask me for spirit stones!”

“Without us refining and creating the pills, they would have none. How dare they make us pay?”

“That’s right. I don’t think they have the right to provoke us. We’re alchemists, for heaven’s sake!”

“We wasted precious cultivation time to make them pills. What did we get in exchange?”

Jiang Hao heard a man and a woman arguing.

Cheng Chou had told him before that the people from the Candlelight Pill Pavilion owed him spirit stones.

‘Ah... he told me about it. I did say I would help him after returning. This is troublesome...

It was common for alchemists to buy spirit herbs and pay them back later. Alchemists weren’t someone to mess with, but they were rich.

Jiang Hao headed to the market to buy some talisman-making materials. It was expensive to raise a spirit beast, and now he had to worry about the Immortal Peach Tree too.

In addition, he had to pay two thousand spirit stones to the Law Enforcement Hall. He needed a total of 12,000 spirit stones. He only had ten thousand.

He had to earn spirit stones as soon as possible in the next two months. Otherwise, he wouldn't even be able to pay off his debt.

"Junior Brother Jiang, haven't seen you here in so long," said a voice as soon as he reached his stall.

"Senior Sister Leng Tian?" Jiang Hao was surprised to see her selling pills here,

Leng Tian was indeed an alchemist.

"Do you still sell talismans, Junior Brother Jiang?" "Of course. What talismans do you need, Senior Sister Leng?" "Do you have any Hundred Thousand Swords Talismans?"

"I only have five for now."

"I want to buy them all."

Jiang Hao felt a little strange. He was actually selling something to another seller.

When he saw the pills laid out neatly at her stall, Jiang Hao asked her why some of the alchemists weren't paying back their debt.

"Because they're poor," said Leng Tian..

Chapter 158: The Demoness Wants To Bathe In My House?

“Poor?” Jiang Hao was confused. “But being an alchemist is very profitable. Why are they poor?”

Medicinal pills were generally expensive but highly coveted.

Every cultivation realm had unique pills needed to refine cultivation. People usually saved money to buy pills because pills were effective. How could the alchemist be poor?

“How many alchemists do you think there are in the Candlelight Pill Pavilion?” Leng Tian sighed. “Over 2,300 alchemists. There are only four alchemists who can refine pills above the Foundation Establishment Realm. Now, how many talisman-makers are in the entire sect? Only a few hundred. Talisman-making is not a very profitable profession, so the future is uncertain for them. Which is exactly the reason why fewer people venture down that path. Alchemy is different. It has good prospects and higher profits, so many people opt for that path. Alchemy even benefits cultivation, which is why there are far more alchemists than talisman makers. Many people only buy simple talismans. It is fairly easy to make. Pill refining is a very difficult job.”

Jiang Hao was somewhat surprised. The Candlelight Pill Pavilion had so many alchemists. Wouldn't they make a fortune if they ventured out?

But then he remembered the situation in Heavenly Earth City. He felt that the market value was too low outside the sect. It wasn't easy to make money.

“Sister Leng, please go on,” Jiang Hao said. He wanted to know the whole situation.

Leng Tian sighed slightly. “A high threshold means a higher expenditure of spirit stones. Although the Candlelight Pill Pavilion has provided a lot of assistance, alchemy requires constant experimentation to make progress. Each experiment costs a significant amount of spirit stones. Junior Brother Jiang, you understand that making talismans also requires purchasing materials, right? And sometimes, those materials go to waste if you fail. So, just imagine how many materials alchemists need for their pill refinement. Add to that the high failure rate, and it becomes a loss with no returns. If you want to improve your alchemy skills, you have to practice continuously.”

“I understand.” Jiang Hao nodded. It was because of that same reason he had given up on becoming an alchemist. Slow progress, high investment, and a need for talent. Making talismans was easier.

“But what about those who can refine pills at the Foundation Establishment Realm and above? Don’t they earn a lot?” he asked.

“Because there are simply too many ordinary pills, the buyback is not high. When selling pills, customers bargain a little and bring the price down even more. And this is with the sect taking care of us. The Snow Lotus Pavilion rarely sells ordinary pills,” said Leng Tian. “So, Foundation Establishment Realm alchemists are quite poor. They can only break free from their predicament once they reach the Golden Core Realm. After all, out of the 2,300 alchemists, around 50% are at the Foundation Establishment Realm, and only about 20% of them reach the Golden Core Realm. The Primordial Spirit Realm accounts for about 15%. There are very few who have reached the Return to Void Realm and beyond.”

“What realms are there beyond Return to Void?” Jiang Hao was curious.

“I’m not too sure about that.” Leng Tian shook her head. “I’ve heard that, even in the entire sect, the number of alchemists at the Return to Void Realm and beyond can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Some seniors say that it’s because our foundation is too weak.”

Jiang Hao could understand that although there were many alchemists in the Candlelight Pill Pavilion, their quality was average and mostly concentrated at the Foundation Establishment Realm. However, the large number meant that there would be more people advancing in the future.

High-level alchemists would contribute to the accumulation of knowledge and skills. Forging was considered inferior, and talisman-making... was not given much attention. In comparison, the sect was more concerned with formation masters. However, even formation masters didn’t earn much money. The threshold was not much lower than that of alchemy because it was too difficult.

“Senior Sister Leng, are you from the Candlelight Pill Pavilion?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Yes.” Leng Tian nodded. She looked embarrassed. “To be honest, my talent in alchemy is... not very high. It’s a bit embarrassing to admit. But some seniors, including myself, have thought of a solution. The best way to become a Golden Core Realm alchemist is to first advance to that realm and then continue with alchemy.”

“I see.” Jiang Hao nodded. Advancing first was indeed better. With a higher cultivation level, everything else would be easier.

He bid farewell to Leng Tian and went to buy some talisman-making materials.

When he returned to his house, he saw an unconscious spirit beast hanging from a tree branch. Jiang Hao knew Hong Yuye had arrived.

He looked around but didn't see her. He raised his head to see Hong Yuye on his balcony. Their eyes met.

Then, a red mist surged around Hong Yuye, and she reappeared in front of him.

"Is there no place to bathe here?" asked Hong Yuye.

The question caught Jiang Hao off guard. "Uh... there is, but there is no wooden tub.'

"Then buy one," said Hong Yuye. She threw the spirit beast to a corner and plucked a plump peach. "If I need to take a bath, and you don't have a tub next time, you'll bear my wrath."

Although Jiang Hao didn't understand why Hong Yuye would ever come to his house to bathe, he didn't dare refute her. He just nodded. "I understand." He just hoped that she wouldn't trouble him again next time.

"Are you going to advance to the Primordial Spirit Realm?" Hong Yuye suddenly asked.

She plucked a peach from the tree and tossed it to Jiang Hao. "I remember you said the peach would be sweet. Try it now and see how it tastes."

"Senior, this peach..." Jiang Hao wanted to tell her about the Immortal Peach Tree but didn't know how.

"I'll try it now!" he said hurriedly.

He looked at the peach tree and saw that all the ripe peaches were gone. Did the spirit beast eat them?

He took a bite. It was sour.

“Is it sweet or sour?” Hong Yuye asked.

“Sweet and fragrant,” Jiang Hao said.

“Really? It’s sweet, you say...” Her smile was sinister.

Jiang Hao nodded. “It’s sweet.”

Bang!

Jiang Hao was pushed against the wall by a powerful force. His back felt a bit sore.

When he came to his senses, he realized that Hong Yuye had already disappeared from the courtyard.

Soon, a pleasant voice rang in his ear. “I won’t let you work for me for nothing. I left some things on your table. You’d better do some research before advancing to the Primordial Spirit Realm.”

There was a book on the table that wasn’t there before. Jiang Hao looked at it curiously. On the cover were four big characters: Light and Dust.

“What kind of book is this?” Jiang Hao flipped to the first page.

In his confusion, he opened the first page. There was a sentence written on it: “With its light, it is one with the dust. Moving forward, it can reach a million miles. Retreating, it can disappear into the crowd without a trace.” “Is this a body technique?” Jiang Hao muttered.

A body technique was something he currently needed. Apart from the

Thousand Miles of Demonic Sound, he didn't have any decent body techniques. Now that he had this Light and Dust technique, perhaps things would be much more convenient in the future. However, he didn't know to what extent it could

be achieved.

As he continued flipping through the pages, something wailed. The spirit beast had woken up. This time it didn't stay on the ground for long. It got up quickly. "Master, you've returned!"

The spirit beast ran over to him in excitement. "Master, did you bring me a gift?" it asked as it jumped on the table.

"No." Jiang Hao closed the book and shook his head.

"Master, my friends on the road open their shops late. How about you go now and bring me one now?" the spirit beast suggested.

"I didn't bring a gift, but I brought something else." Jiang Hao took out a coil of rope..

Chapter 159: The Spirit Beast And Dragon

Jiang Hao tied the rope around a pole in the courtyard as the spirit beast watched curiously. However, it was too early to tie the beast up. Jiang Hao decided to observe the situation for the next few days.

Once he was sure there were no major issues within the sect, he would tie up the spirit beast.

"What did you bring for me, Master?" the spirit beast asked, touching its swollen face.

“You’ll find out in a few days,” Jiang Hao said. He looked at the peaches on the tree. “Did you eat the ripe fruits?”

“It was Xiao Li who ate them.” The spirit beast threw Xiao Li under the bus.

“Did she come here by herself?” asked Jiang Hao.

Xiao Li might be mischievous, but she still had some manners.

“Master, Xiao Li mentioned my name, and the peaches flew to her.”

Jiang Hao couldn’t hold back his laughter. He told the spirit beast to leave some of the fruits on the tree.

Jiang Hao entered his house. Something caught his eye. The place where he had impaled the Half-Moon Blade was empty. His cracked sword was gone.

Jiang Hao sighed.

He then walked to his room and sat on the ground cross-legged.

He was thinking about Hong Yuye’s words. To advance to the Primordial Spirit Realm, he needed to do a bit of research. It was indeed necessary to know as much as possible to prevent any accidents. He needed to visit the library once again.

At the moment, there was still a considerable amount of time before he could advance to the next realm. He had about nine months. There was no rush.

The spirit beast tended to its injuries in front of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. Jiang Hao opened the book he had just obtained.

He planned to read it through once before attempting to study it closely.

At midnight, Jiang Hao closed the book with a frown.

He couldn't understand it at all.

This cultivation technique was difficult and hard to comprehend. He could only roughly understand its essence. It was indeed a body technique, and it was for speed so that he remained undetected by others. However, it required him to merge his own strength and aura with the surroundings and conceal his sharpness to remain calm and composed.

This technique was related to one's state of mind.

Jiang Hao couldn't help but sigh. The technique was the most challenging one that he had encountered so far.

Although the Seven Forms of the Heavenly Blade were difficult to learn, he could always use the Clear and Pure Heart ability to learn them easily. However, the Light and Dust technique was complicated. It wasn't just about spiritual energy but also about mental stability.

If his state of mind hadn't improved through the recent journey, he couldn't comprehend this technique at all.

However, it was true that the most difficult techniques often turned out to be the most powerful ones.

'I will focus on it for the next two days...'

"After reaching the Primordial Spirit Realm, I should be able to learn some techniques from the Hong Meng Heart Sutra. By then, I'll have other abilities as well."

Under the moonlight, Jiang Hao saw the spirit beast sleeping next to the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. It drooled in its sleep.

Jiang Hao got up and observed his wooden house. There was indeed a small bathroom in his house that he used, but it was too small. In the past, he had designed a natural water supply device that constantly pumped water into the bathroom. So, he had never needed a tub.

Jiang Hao also realized that putting a tub in the bathroom would take up a lot of space.

'Do I need to expand the room?' he wondered.

Jiang Hao realized that the sky was lightening up. 'Is it already dawn?' Jiang Hao cleaned his house for a bit.

Once the sun had risen fully, Jiang Hao walked out of the courtyard with the spirit beast.

"Did anything happen at the Spirit Herb Garden when I wasn't here?"

"Yes. Something significant did happen," said the spirit beast. "Somebody has transformed the Spirit Herb Garden completely and the people working there are suffering."

'Transformed?' Jiang Hao immediately thought of Miao Tinglian. She was always nagging at him about how he should be running the garden.

If she really transformed it, then he would have fewer things to do in it. Which would mean fewer bubbles...

He regretted bringing her into the sect.

"Is there anything else?"

"I, the Spirit Beast Lord, have faithfully fulfilled my duty and served my master wholeheartedly."

Jiang Hao sighed. "Tell me something useful. What about Xiao Li? Has she caused any trouble?"

“Somebody came to the cafeteria looking for you, Master.”

That surprised Jiang Hao. “What do you mean?”

“They said Xiao Li often takes your name so that she can have extra food.”

Jiang Hao was speechless. He remembered that Xiao Li often used the spirit beast as an excuse when she got into trouble. ‘She is using my name too?’

Jiang Hao sighed. Xiao Li was indeed causing trouble. The spirit beast too!

If it continued to unlock its hidden talents, it would become even more powerful. His small courtyard couldn’t contain it anymore.

In a few years, he must find a way to release it.

“I regret bringing her into the sect. I thought all the trouble would be handled by the Cliff Master, but I always get dragged into it,” said Jiang Hao. “In a few years, when she can take care of herself, I’ll tell her to go her own way.”

When he arrived at the Spirit Herb Garden, Jiang Hao saw Cheng Chou talking to someone. An outer sect disciple at the ninth stage of the Lifeblood Refinement Realm.

Upon seeing Jiang Hao, the person saluted and then walked away.

‘Senior Brother Jiang, you’re back!’ Cheng Chou exclaimed. He had looked forward to Jiang Hao’s return.

After the Spirit Herb Gardens were taken over by other inner sect disciples, he felt a bit uneasy. He was afraid of being targeted.

These three months had not been good for them because the guards kept changing.

In the beginning, Senior Sister Miao Tinglian had been doing well, but after the renovation of the Spirit Herb Garden, she had gone away to do other things.

The other inner sect disciples didn't seem to be willing to take care of the garden. If Cheng Chou slacked off, he had to bear the brunt of their anger.

No one dared to say anything.

Jiang Hao noticed that many people in the garden looked unhappy. They were all worried.

If it were only the Golden Core Realm seniors visiting to inspect the garden, there were fewer problems. However, usually, it would be some Foundation Establishment Realm seniors who came to inspect the garden.

They were insufferable.

The spirit beast was right about one thing. These people were suffering.

Jiang Hao sighed. Wasn't he also struggling on the edge of life and death?

"Is there anything going on in the Spirit Herb Garden?" Jiang Hao asked as he walked through the garden.

The garden had been transformed, and some growing methods had changed. He needed to familiarize himself with them.

There weren't many bubbles around like he feared. There were a few here and there. That was at least better than nothing.

Starting from tomorrow, he would steadily accumulate bubbles again. It would accelerate his growth.

“The matter is related to the Candlelight Pill Pavilion,” Cheng Chou said. “Some alchemists want to harvest the mature spirit herbs that they entrusted to our care. They want to take them back for free and pay back later.”

“Has this kind of thing happened before?” Jiang Hao asked.

“It has, but it’s worse this year. It seems like they’re intentionally doing this,” Cheng Chou said.

“Why not just withhold the spirit herbs from them?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Well...” Cheng Chou hesitated. “The Candlelight Pill Pavilion is a united place. Offending some of them would mean offending all the people from there. Not many are willing to take a risk like that. If someone does it, all of us will be targeted. We can’t afford to make enemies in the sect.”

Jiang Hao was baffled..

Chapter 160: Dealing With The Alchemists

After listening to Cheng Chou, Jiang Hao could feel how much stress the

Candlelight Pill Pavilion was putting on the Spirit Herb Garden and its workers.

The status of alchemists in the sect was indeed high, especially since they knew how to unite and leverage their advantages. Once targeted, the risk would be much greater.

However, he wanted to know why the Candlelight Pill Pavilion was targeting the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

Jiang Hao remained calm. “What if we don’t deliver the spirit herbs?”

“Well, we would still need to sacrifice the space and guard the herbs and take care of them. They won’t force us, but we will incur a loss. They can refuse to pay us because of the delay.”

“How was this issue resolved in the past?” Jiang Hao asked.

“We received inferior pills as debt repayment,” Cheng Chou said. “However, it was difficult to sell a batch of those pills since no one in the sect would buy them. We can only sell them outside the sect.”

Jiang Hao nodded. If the Candlelight Pill pavilion chose to pay in inferior pills instead of spirit stones, it would be a loss for the Spirit Herb Garden. “There was no problem before, so why isn’t it working now?” Jiang Hao asked.

“The amount is a bit high,” Cheng Chou said.

“How much?” Jiang Hao asked.

“3,700 spirit stones.”

Jiang Hao was astonished. It was no wonder the two sides were at a stalemate. There were nearly four thousand spirit stones. Jiang Hao remembered the last time he had paid the fine to the Heavenly Joy Pavilion. It had taken him three months to gather that money.

It would be difficult to earn that amount even after accepting multiple sect missions.

“Why is it that high?” Jiang Hao asked.

A Foundation Establishment Realm alchemist couldn’t afford that amount.

“It’s not just one person, but six,” Cheng Chou said.

“Six?” Jiang Hao calculated. Even if it was divided equally, it would still be over six hundred each. The amount was still considerable.

“What is the value of their spirit herbs?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Fourteen thousand spirit stones,” Cheng Chou said. “These spirit herbs require spirit liquid for growth, and we provide it. That’s why the cost reaches 3,700.”

“I see.” Jiang Hao nodded.

It seemed alchemists were wealthy, but their expenses were high.

“Now it seems that all six of them are running out of spirit stones, and they sent someone today to ask for spirit herbs. Continuing to delay this situation is not beneficial for us,” Cheng Chou said. “That’s why I want your help, Senior Brother Jiang.”

Jiang Hao thought about it. This matter was not his responsibility, but the spirit herbs in the garden benefited him. Cheng Chou probably came to him hoping that he would accept some of the pills since they knew he earned spirit stones by making talismans.

“Is it only our garden suffering through this?” asked Jiang Hao.

“Others also have similar problems. Six out of eleven branches are facing this issue. Actually, everyone wants to refuse them, but no one dares to be the first to stand out.”

Everyone understood this. They were all waiting for one branch to stand up against the Candlelight Pill Pavilion.

Jiang Hao nodded. “Go gather more information regarding this.”

"I already did that," Cheng Chou said and took out a list of names. "The situations of the six branches are all mentioned here. Due to the unity of the alchemists and the responsible nature of their orders, we need to find a solution."

That surprised Jiang Hao. It seemed that people from other places were not easy to harass. Unity did have certain privileges and power.

"What about the other branches?" asked Jiang Hao.

"No one dares to provoke the White Moon Lake or the Law Enforcement Hall. Alchemists wouldn't dare to do the same to them. If they were investigated because of this matter, the alchemists wouldn't escape punishment. The Hundred Bones Forest doesn't rely on the Candlelight Pill Pavilion for anything. So, they don't get involved with them at all."

Jiang Hao took the list from Cheng Chou and looked at it. He found that a total of forty people were involved. The total amount to be paid back was twenty-five thousand spiritual stones.

"In a few days, I will visit them. I'll keep an eye on the spirit herbs for now," Jiang Hao said.

He wanted to handle this matter peacefully. If the alchemists truly targeted the Foundation Establishment Realm cultivators of the Cliff of Broken Hearts, he would have to start practicing alchemy himself. There was no need for that. It would be too time-consuming, and he couldn't afford it at the moment.

The pills were of little use to him. His progress didn't rely on those pills. The only important one was the Snow God Pill, but it wasn't found anywhere. Perhaps only sects like Clear Sky School or the Bright Moon Sect had one. He could ask Liu Xingchen about it.

He postponed the matter of the debts for a few days because he needed to comprehend the Light and Dust technique in those few days. Maintaining the best state of mind would give him a sense of security.

Jiang Hao asked about Xiao Li.

“Junior Sister Xiao Li is getting greedier. The cafeteria wants to talk to you, Senior Brother Jiang,” said Cheng Chou. “There is no other problem. Junior

Sister Xiao Li always plays with the spirit beast in the garden most of the time. The seniors who taught her have given up on her completely.”

Jiang Hao sighed. “I’ll visit the cafeteria later.”

“Spirit beast, did you pluck Senior Brother Jiang’s peaches today too?” asked a voice.

“What did you say?” the spirit beast said righteously. “I never do that sort of thing. ”

“Really?” Xiao Li ran in and pinched the spirit beast’s cheek. She seemed to want to say something more, but she saw the spirit beast winking at her.

She was confused. However, she saw Jiang Hao walking over to her.

Instinctively, she hid the spirit beast behind her back and stood up. She lowered her head as if she had been caught doing something wrong..