

A Demoness 61

Chapter 61: Senior Sister Yan, Be More Careful of People Like Me in Your Next Life

If Jiang Hao didn't run to the deepest part of the mine, she could find him soon.

Yan Hua walked deeper into the mine. She didn't seem worried about losing her way. She walked slowly and with purpose.

It got hotter. That was because the deeper part of the mine had lava. It was not an easy walk toward the opening to the outside.

"Are you trying to escape the mine alone, or did you really make your way there to check?" Yan Hua licked her dry lips. She wasn't in a hurry. This was what she enjoyed. She liked to play the game of predator and prey. The more the prey tried to escape, the more fun the hunt would be.

It made her feel excited. She took out a small knife from the fold of her clothes. It was used to skin animals or even people.

She sighed. "I wonder how it will feel when I split his chest open and take out his heart." She laughed softly. "I want to see what face he makes."

She walked on and came to a cave that was scorching hot. In the middle of the cave was the opening where lava surged. If anyone fell in, they would burn to death.

Yan Hua was a little surprised. 'He runs so fast...'

She looked around. She saw a path leading away, but she saw no trail of Jiang Hao. It meant he hadn't left this place. Yan Hua smiled as she blocked the saber with her knife.

The next moment, she felt a dagger in her neck. She was taken aback.

She turned to look behind her. The saber pierced her heart. A knife flashed and cut her hand which held the knife. Her severed hand fell to the ground.

She still didn't see Jiang Hao anywhere. Another sword pierced her from the side. Several swords flew at lightning speed and impaled her from all sides.

However, Yan Hua didn't look to be in pain. There wasn't even any blood.

"Junior Brother Jiang, you're really naughty, aren't you?" Yan Hua turned to look behind her. Only her head turned around on her neck. Her body remained as it was.

She could finally make out a faint figure. It was Jiang Hao.

His heart sank. Yan Hua was harder to kill than he had expected. He had impaled her from every direction and still couldn't find any weak point in her body.

'Did she turn herself into a puppet too?' Jiang Hao wondered.

However, his Daily Appraisal ability had confirmed that this was her real body!

Jiang Hao appraised her once again. The panel told him that weak points existed in her body, but they were difficult to find.

"Senior Sister Yan, were you looking for me?"

She laughed. "When did you figure it out?" She was impressed. "Junior Brother Jiang, you are smarter than I expected. It is no wonder you were chosen to take care of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. It's very impressive." "How many traitors like you are in the sect?" asked Jiang Hao.

He was charging his saber for a head-n attack. He needed a little time.

Yan Hua laughed again. "Do you have any last words?" She pulled out her spirit sword.

She looked at ease because she knew there was nowhere for Jiang Hao to escape.

Jiang Hao didn't plan on escaping. He took out his Primordial Heavenly Blade. Purple energy swirled around the hilt of the saber.

"Senior Sister Yan, be more careful of people like me in your next life." He brandished his saber and rushed forward.

He used the second form from the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade: Mountain Suppression technique.

Boom!

A majestic aura surrounded the blade.

Yan Hua was stunned. Her calm eyes finally showed some semblance of fear.

The Primordial Heavenly Blade, Shiyu, descended with a force and cut through all obstacles. Yna Hua's head turned blank.

Bang!

Blood and flesh exploded and flew everywhere.

Jiang Hao used the saber two more times to make sure she was really dead. He was worried that Yan Hua might get up at any moment and attack him again, so he threw the flesh and blood into the lava pit. He collected the stones and debris stained with her blood and threw them into the lava too.

Jiang Hao waited for a while to make sure Yan Hua wouldn't crawl out of the pit suddenly. He then began to plan his next steps.

"She's dead," he muttered. "She's really dead... I need to find out what is happening outside. If the Heavenly Note Sect isn't a match for the attackers, the mine will blow up soon. I need to leave."

He looked at the path that led outside. He wanted to go that way, but he was worried he would stumble upon Situ Jian and the others.

Jiang Hao waited there near the lava pit. He didn't want to rush out and fight Situ Jian and the others. There was no use fighting against four people at the same time.

He glanced at the lava pit. He needed to be wary of the people from the Heavenly Saint Sect in the future.

Yan Hua had been difficult to kill. He couldn't imagine how much more tough the Saintess-in-training, Ming Yi, would be.

Senior Brother Mu Qi had an affair with the Saintess, so he needed to be extra careful of him too. Mu Qi might be used by the Saintess to get to him, and he wouldn't even realize it!

Boom!

The mine shook again. The lava surged up.

"I can't wait any longer..."

Jiang Hao sheathed the Primordial heavenly BADE and prepared to leave. Just as he took a step forward, he realized that someone had just entered the cave.

"The road there is blocked. We have to take this road." Beixue's voice rang out.

Soon, Situ Jian and the others arrived too. They were as equally shocked to see Jiang Hao as he was to see them..

Chapter 62: Why?

Jiang Hao sighed inwardly as more and more people followed behind them.

This was such a harsh coincidence. He was trying so hard to avoid them, only for them to walk in on him here.

The Half-Moon Blade appeared in his hand. He didn't want any conflict.

Anyone who could bypass the Lawless Tower was not as simple as they looked.

Shangguan Wen and the others stared at Jiang Hao warily. They hadn't expected to run into Jiang Hao too.

For a moment, everyone was too stunned to do anything.

Just as Shangguan Wen and Beixue drew their weapons, Situ Jian stepped forward with a smile. He stopped them.

"Fellow disciple Jiang, what a coincidence! We're just going to make our way through that path. We won't interrupt you in... whatever you were doing if you allow us to leave quietly. Please do us this one favor."

Situ Jian gestured to the others to walk forward. He was last in line. As everyone walked toward the path, he turned back to look at Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao had no intention to fight all of them. If they just wanted to leave peacefully, he was more than willing to oblige.

He didn't want to take any risks. It was better for everyone to leave this place as soon as possible. Besides, he had just fought with Yan Hua and exhausted much of his energy. He wasn't at his best to have another go.

Jiang Hao watched the people make their way across the lava pit toward the small path.

"Thank you, fellow disciple," said Situ Jian. "I'll definitely send you a gift in the future as a token of gratitude." He then turned around and followed the others out.

When everyone had left, Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief.

If they had made their way here, it meant that there was some fierce fighting going on outside.

If the Heavenly Note Sect was winning, all of them would be dealt with. However, if the Blackheaven Sect had the upper hand, it would be too dangerous for him to go outside. He might be dragged into the fray and then killed!

Situ Jian and the others walked on.

Jing Ru looked troubled. "The situation isn't safe for us. What if Jiang Hao sends someone after us?"

"Don't worry. We need to move fast and leave this place as soon as possible. We still have a little time," said Situ Jian.

"But... the mine has too many supervisors. If Jiang Hao meets one of them, he might come after us," said Jing Ru. She turned to the others. "What do you all think?"

Ren Shuang wanted to go back and end Jiang Hao before he caused any trouble. However, she didn't say it out loud. She knew that if she did something like that, Situ Jian would leave her behind.

"I also think that he is a danger to us all. He is only in the middle stage of the

Foundation Establishment Realm. I can go back and kill him quietly,” said Shangguan Wen

“I’ll come with you. I feel that he shouldn’t be left alive,” said Jing Ru.

Situ Jian couldn’t stop them. Beixue didn’t say a word.

Shangguan Wen and Jing Ru turned around and made their way back.

Situ Jian sighed. “Come on, move your feet! We need to leave as soon as possible! If anyone slacks off, I’ll leave you behind.”

He led the way in quick strides. No one dared to speak against him.

“Is he really that dangerous?” Beixue projected a message to him.

“I don’t know...” said Situ Jian. “But my intuition tells me that we shouldn’t make him an enemy, even if he is only in the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. I think Junior Brother Shangguan feels the same. To ensure our safety, I can’t wait for them. Our safest plan is to leave them behind. They can always use the teleportation array and return to us if they’re still alive...”

Beixue didn’t say anything further. The group walked quickly and reached the exit.

Situ Jian projected a message to Ren Shuang that only she could hear. “If they don’t come back, you’d better be careful what you say to your sect. Your words might cause more destruction than necessary. That’s all I want to say.”

After waiting for a while, Jiang Hao walked past the lava pit. However, just as he was going to leave, he sensed something.

A knife was aimed at his neck. It was just too quick. The Half-Moon blade blocked it.

Clang!

Jiang Hao turned around in a whirl and kicked at his attacker. There were two of them.

Without losing any time, Jiang Hao used the first form of the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade: Moon Slaying.

The blade glinted silver and he attacked. The impact forced his attacker backward.

Jiang Hao finally saw who it was. Shangguan Wen from the Blackheaven Sect. Their eyes met.

Jiang Hao had already moved past and slashed the blade across his neck. Blood spurted from the fresh wound.

Shangguan Wen stared at Jiang Hao in disbelief. The person in front of him wasn't at the Foundation Establishment Realm. Instead, he was in the intermediate stage of the Golden Core Realm.

Shangguan Wen clutched at his neck as he fell to the ground.

Jiang Hao saw a woman in the corner trying to make a move. It was Jing Ru from the Wind Lightning Sect.

She looked shocked and frightened. Jiang Hao's blade shook. It had already locked onto her. Jing Ru had no choice but to accept her fate and fight.

Both of them were in the intermediate stage of the Golden Core realm, but Jiang Hao suppressed her will with the Mountain Suppression technique. His Half-Moon Blade slashed down.

Jing Ru could not believe it. She had accompanied Shangguan Wen to assist him if needed. However, he died in the blink of an eye despite how strong he was.

Boom!

As the saber descended on her, Jing Ru

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s mind went blank.

“Why?”

That was the last word she heard..

Chapter 63: Unexpected Disaster

Jiang Hao killed them quickly. He then observed his surroundings. He wasn't sure he could handle it if Situ Jian and Beixue also came out of the shadows to attack him.

He had used too much of his energy and didn't know if he could use the first and second forms of the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade again today.

Although the fight had been short and quick, it had consumed too much of his spiritual energy.

He checked to make sure the two people were dead and then threw them into the lava pit.

Jiang Hao then made his way toward the small path. He had let the captives go, and they had still attacked him. To eliminate any danger, he wanted to find them and get rid of them all.

If it hadn't been for the knowledge he had gained from the Nameless Manual, he might not have sensed Shangguan Wen at all.

As expected, Shangguan Wen had been the most dangerous of the bunch.

Jiang Hao checked his Half-Moon Blade. It was full of cracks. He needed to buy another saber soon, but he didn't have enough spirit stones to afford a decent one right now.

Jiang Hao hesitated. He then followed the path to look for the others. However, he couldn't find any sign of Situ Jian and the rest of the captives.

'They already left?' Jiang Hao was surprised. 'They didn't wait for Shangguan Wen and Jing Ru?'

He understood that Situ Jian hadn't sent the two after him. Maybe Situ Jian didn't want to be his enemy, after all.

'Looks like there is no way to get to him now.'

There was an explosion outside. A sandstorm surged. Jiang Hao hesitated a while before making his way toward the small exit.

The mines were not safe anymore. If he was caught in the fray, he would definitely die!

Jiang Hao ran toward the exit. When he finally reached the outside of the mine, he could see that he was surrounded by broken rocks and rubble.

He turned to look in the direction where the explosions were still going on. There were continuous spells being cast to disintegrate the place.

Parts of the mountain cracked, and the earth shook. Jiang Hao was frightened. The spell and the magic he sensed were far too powerful. How strong was the person casting it?

He fled. He had just advanced to the intermediate stage of the Golden Core Realm. If he stayed here, he would definitely die!

He ran as quickly as he could and came upon a forest. This was the edge of the sect. Jiang Hao examined his surroundings and decided that this area should be safe for now.

He hadn't seen anyone on his way here. He had no idea where Situ Jian and the others had vanished. Jiang Hao finally stopped for a breather.

'I'll wait and see who wins. If the Heavenly Note Sect wins, I'll return to the mine. If not, I'll stay away. There is no reason for me to rush my death. Even if I get punished later for running away, at least I'll be alive.'

The destruction of the mine didn't mean that the Heavenly Note Sect would allow itself to be conquered. The enemy had come for the treasure. They would leave after finding it. They didn't have the army to conquer the whole sect.

Most of the experts of the Heavenly Note Sect were outside fighting the Azure Mountain. That was the reason why the enemy sect had seized the opportunity to storm the mines. Otherwise, they wouldn't stand a chance.

There was another explosion nearby. The impact destroyed some trees and bushes. Jiang Hao's armor had protected him from the flying shrapnel.

Jiang Hao summoned his saber in a panic. He couldn't stay hidden for long.

"Hahaha... are those what they call the top ten disciples of the Heavenly Note Sect? Pathetic!"

"Was that all they could do? I don't think I want to be part of this stupid game any longer. I'm leaving."

Jiang Hao didn't want to get involved in whatever this was. He only wanted to flee.

Just as he prepared to run, he heard someone call him.

“Junior Brother, wait!”

The rough voice carried the kind of authority that one couldn't disobey. The two people stared at him. This was a disaster!

A chill ran down Jiang Hao's spine. The two people were far stronger than him. He sensed that they were beyond the Golden Core Realm!

Fighting them would be suicidal. He then turned to the one who had stopped him.

A few paces away stood a white-robed man in the middle of a magic array. There was a lot of blood on his robe.

The other person looked buff and sturdy. He looked strong but was trapped by strange runes. The distraction had given him a chance to break free from the runes holding him. He was in the Heavenly Note Sect's uniform.

That meant the person in the bloody white robe was from the Blackheaven Sect.

“Junior Brother, hurry and help me stop him, ” shouted Manlong.

Jiang Hao sighed inwardly. He didn't want to get involved in the fight, but he couldn't ignore a senior's plea for help when both of them belonged to the same sect. He would be considered a traitor if he didn't help.

“Little fellow, I advise you not to interfere.” Xuanyuan Tai stared at him icily.

Jiang Hao decided to put up an act. He took out the Ten Thousand Sword Talisman and threw it at the intruder. That might not even be enough to prevent him from teleporting away..

Chapter 64: No Barrier For Protection?!

Jiang Hao had never intended to get involved. However, he happened to be nearby and couldn't refuse to help a fellow disciple from the same sect.

If only he had seen them beforehand, he would have gone the other way! He had no choice but to put up an act to show his fellow disciple that he was doing his best.

He threw the Ten Thousand Sword Talisman. That was all he was willing to do. The enemy could easily block that attack and leave.

Everyone assumed that he was in the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Stage, so just trying to help was worthy of praise.

Jiang Hao activated the Ten Thousand Sword Talisman. The enemy had already activated the magic array. His talisman wouldn't hinder the enemy's magic.

Jiang Hao wanted him gone more than anybody else.

Jiang Hao thought that by the time the Ten Thousand Swords even reached the magic array, the enemy would have long disappeared. However, the swords stabbed into the array and interrupted the enemy.

One of the swords even stabbed Xuanyuan Tai in the thigh.

Xuanyuan Tai turned to Jiang Hao with contempt in his eyes. Jiang Hao was speechless.

'Seriously?' thought Jiang Hao. 'It's an important array which could help you escape and yet... you didn't even put a barrier for protection?!'

The interface blinked and informed him that he had obtained an Aggro bubble.

[Aggro +1]

Jiang Hao was preparing to attack. He didn't want the enemy to annihilate him in his anger.

Boom!

Manlong had completely broken free from the runes. He charged at Xuanyuan Tai and slammed him to the ground with one hand.

"Tsk... is that all you have?" Xuanyuan Tai stared coldly at the Manlong. "Do you think you've finally caught me?"

"Try being this insufferable when you are sent to the Lawless Tower!" said Manlong. He turned to Jiang Hao. "I'm Manlong, a disciple from the Flowing

Waterfall. What's your name, Junior Brother?"

"Jiang Hao from the Cliff of Broken Hearts," said Jiang Hao politely.

"Alright," said Manlong. "Thank you for your help. I'll be sure to credit this to you. However, even if I don't, I hope you can understand. I have worked hard to subdue this piece of sh*t." Manlong laughed.

"Of course, Senior Brother Manlong," said Jiang Hao. "I barely did anything. It was all your effort. I just happened to be passing by."

Jiang Hao didn't really care for any sort of credit right now.

Manlong chuckled. "You seem wise. However, if I get a reward, I'll be sure to direct the remaining resources to you. I'll remember your help."

Manlong looked around. "You should wait here until tomorrow. The matter with the mine should be resolved by then. Don't loiter around. It's dangerous." He then left with the defeated enemy.

Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief when the two people left. He didn't really care about credit and recognition. He had helped Manlong in capturing an important disciple of the Blackheaven Sect. The more people knew about that, the more he would be targeted!

He had already provoked a lot of people. He didn't want to add the Blackheaven Sect to the list. It would be difficult to clear his name in the future. He couldn't live like a runaway all his life!

He retreated to the depths of the forest. Although Manlong had said it was safer here, he didn't quite believe it.

However, he had no choice but to wait it out. The problem in the mines might be resolved soon.

Jiang Hao sat cross-legged under a tree. He placed his Primordial Heavenly Blade on his lap. He was refining and accumulating energy in the saber.

If anyone came close, he would need to use the saber to attack. If he had enough energy accumulated in the saber, it would work in his favor. He sat there the entire day. The next morning, the area around the mines was quiet.

However, he waited till evening to make his way back to the mines. The situation seemed to have been resolved.

'It looks like everything is fine now. I can't hear any explosions.'

The mines looked intact, which meant that the Blackheaven Sect had failed.

Jiang Hao walked all the way to the little exit from where he had fled the day before. He found Wu Jing and the other miners where he had left them.

They sat cross-legged on the ground, looking scared. Some of them had been injured because of the explosion. It had been impossible for them to get out.

They weren't stupid. They knew that they would drop dead the minute they stepped out, so they had chosen to wait inside.

They were lost and frightened. Jiang Hao had told them to wait here and then disappeared. They felt that their supervisor had abandoned them.

"Senior Brother Jiang, you're back!" said Wu Jing.

The others turned to look. Their faces brightened. Even though previous inner sect disciples had treated them very badly as their supervisors, they were happy to see Jiang Hao.

They felt that Jiang Hao was different. He was kinder.

Jiang Hao nodded and acknowledged them. He distributed some Pain-Relieving Talismans to the ones injured. He asked Wu Jing if he was alright.

Wu Jing was happy to see him. He told Jiang Hao that Yan Hua was looking for him.

Jiang Hao stayed quiet.

A few miners had run away when the commotion started. The rest had stayed put till someone came to rescue them.

"I found a way out," said Jiang Hao. "Follow me."

He led the miners through the small path past the lava pit.

They met Liu Xingchen and some other disciples who were there to rescue the miners.

“It’s good to see you, Junior Brother Jiang. I have some things I need to talk to you about.”

Liu Xingchen was glad to see that Jiang Hao was okay..

Chapter 65: Making a Great Contribution

The miners were escorted out by Liu Xingchen’s group.

Jiang Hao followed Liu Xingchen out to the edge of the mine. The people of the Law Enforcement Hall were searching the mine to find the intruders.

“Many people from the other sect infiltrated the mine, but Elder Baizhi trapped them in time. Some of the intruders are dead, some escaped, and others were captured. A portion of the mine has been destroyed... blown up. The intruders likely found what they came for.” Liu Xingchen looked solemn as he gazed down at the pit. “There is nothing we can do about that right now. Overall, we have won this fight and the situation is under control. I didn’t know about any of this before. Otherwise, I would have come to warn you.” He looked at Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao felt a little emotional. He didn’t look at Liu Xingchen. He looked down into the pit. There was some power in there.

It seemed that the Heavenly Note Sect had already made preparations. Otherwise, the entire mine might have been destroyed. He was curious. Was there really a treasure in this mine? How had the Blackheaven Sect found out about it?

Jiang Hao had a nagging feeling that the Heavenly Note Sect’s mine was not as simple as it appeared to be. There was the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower too!

Jiang Hao thanked Liu Xingchen for looking out for him. He asked him if it was true that a treasure was hidden in the mine.

"I also heard that there is some kind of treasure hidden in the mine, but I don't know if that's true. If it was true, wouldn't the Elders take it away to some other secure place? Will they just leave it in the open for it to be snatched? I feel like the rumor was spread deliberately to lure the traitors to the mine. Our Heavenly Note Sect is not really that simple." Liu Xingchen smiled.

Jiang Hao nodded. That demoness knew about this. Even someone as powerful as her hadn't tried to snatch the treasure away.

No one knew if the treasure truly existed in the mines. People would repeatedly try to verify it anyway. Was the Blackheaven Sect that stupid, though? Would they send people for the treasure without even making sure if it actually existed?

'Maybe the Blackheaven Sect didn't really care for the treasure...'

"The mines need to be made safe. Junior Brother Jiang, you can probably go back now," said Liu Xingchen.

"Right now?" Jiang Hao was surprised. "But I still need to mine."

With Yan Hua dead, he was in much less danger. If he continued to mine persistently, he would soon be able to advance to the late stage of the Golden Core Realm.

"The situation here is chaotic right now," said Liu Xingchen. "We need to seal the mines for a while. Everyone will be made to leave."

Liu Xingchen looked at Jiang Hao. "There is another matter... It's the reason I needed to speak to you privately."

"What is it?" asked Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao really needed to go back and check on the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. He also needed to buy some good quality tea before that demoness visited him again.

“Junior Brother Jiang, did you do something recently? Helped capture an enemy, by any chance?”

“I barely did anything... but yes. Sort of.” Jiang Hao told Liu Xingchen everything about his encounter with Manlong and the person from the Blackheaven Sect.

“Junior Brother Jiang, this isn’t a small matter. Manlong is from among the top ten disciples of the sect, and he has been praising you to the skies. He obtained a new cultivation technique and a magic treasure as a reward. He left you the rest of the resources that he obtained because of your contribution. So... that will impact the Law Enforcement Hall and its decisions.”

“Why would that impact the Law Enforcement Hall?” Jiang Hao asked in confusion.

“Junior Brother Jiang, do you remember that your name was on the suspect list?” asked Liu Xingchen. “Being on the suspect list means that you are under the Law Enforcement Hall’s radar. They restrict and monitor your activities. However, because of the contribution you have made, Manlong is speaking up for you. You’re still on that list because you’re a suspect, but the Law Enforcement Hall hasn’t found any evidence against you. With such a huge contribution, you’ll no longer be under suspicion. It’s highly likely that your name will be removed from the list. Do you know what that means?”

Jiang Hao’s heart sank. “The Law Enforcement Hall will no longer restrict my movements, and I can leave the sect at any time. If the people from the Heavenly Joy Pavilion put my name in for the next mission, I’ll have no choice but to obey. At that time, no matter what happens outside, it will not be under the jurisdiction of the Law Enforcement Hall...”

Liu Xingchen nodded. “But... there is a way to keep your name on the suspect list.” He looked at Jiang Hao. “Do you know Yan Hua?”

“Senior Sister Yan?” Jiang Hao was surprised at the abrupt question. “Of course, I was working under her in the mines.”

A talisman flew down and Liu Xingchen caught it. He glanced at it. “Do you know that she disappeared? According to our investigation, she is most likely dead. However, it could also be equally true that she faked her death to escape the sect. We have reason to believe that she was a traitor from another sect. At least that was what we got from a traitor we recently captured. We have no evidence for now.”

“How does that relate to me, Senior Brother Liu?” “Do you know what she was after?”

“She was looking for me,” said Jiang Hao. “Is there a witness who can verify that?”

“Yes.”

“So, you must have met her before she disappeared.”

‘Yes...’

“Alright,” said Liu Xingchen, “Yan Hua is considered a traitor for colluding with other sects and revealing secret

Chapter 66: Junior Brother, Please Don't Make Any Great Contribution Again

Jiang Hao felt that the whole situation was absurd.

Others tried hard not to end up on the Law Enforcement Hall's suspects list.

Meanwhile, he was here trying to make sure he remained on their suspect list. He had Yan Hua to thank for letting him stay on that list.

“Senior Brother Liu,” said Jiang Hao. “I wanted to ask something... what kind of punishment does the Law Enforcement Hall allot for offenses?”

“Punishments?” Liu Xingchen was confused. “Offenders are usually sent to the Lawless Tower.”

“Other than that?” Jiang Hao asked.

“Most of the time the punishments are handled by the main branches of the sect themselves. The Law Enforcement Hall doesn’t interfere with everything unless it has something to do with the sect as a whole, or if the main branches cannot handle it. Only grave offenders are sent to the Lawless Tower.”

“Will the Law Enforcement Hall punish people for mining without a permit?” Jiang Hao asked.

“No... the Law Enforcement Hall doesn’t get involved with small matters like that. Unusually, they handle cases like murders and traitors in the sect.”

Jiang Hao nodded. It seemed he needed to ask the Cliff Master for help once again.

“Junior Brother Jiang, you’re in the middle stage of the Foundation

Establishment Realm, right?”

“Yes.” Jiang Hao was puzzled. “Is something wrong?”

Liu Xingchen shook his head. “You’re in your early twenties?”

Jiang Hao nodded.

“You have the potential of becoming a formidable disciple, but you have been involved in serious cases many times. You were somehow found connected to traitors in one way or another. The Cliff of Broken Hearts might not really be willing to take you in and train you. Also, you are on the suspect list of the Law Enforcement Hall. You’d better be careful, Junior Brother Jiang.”

Jiang Hao understood him. When he had informed his Cliff Master after killing a traitor, his master had kept quiet despite finding out that he was in the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. The Cliff Master might not have wanted to be involved.

However, he was afraid of leaving the sect because too many people wanted him dead. So, being on the suspect list gave him a little protection.

It was better to live as an inner disciple. The Cliff Master definitely wouldn't accept him after being associated with another traitor anyway. It was far too risky to train under a master.

"I need to leave now. Take care, Junior Brother Jiang. Please remember, you're still a suspect." Liu Xingchen. "Until we find Yan Hua, you might remain as our suspect, no matter how long it takes."

Liu Xingchen turned to leave and stopped. "Also, please don't make any great contributions that might remove you from the list."

Jiang Hao was speechless. "I understand."

The recommendation and praises from Manlong were really unexpected. He had only used one Ten Thousand Swords Talisman hoping it would fail. Who would have thought it would work so well?

"Oh right... Xuanyuan Tai has been captured," said Liu Xingchen before walking toward the mine. "The Blackheaven Sect will surely notice you now."

Jiang Hao was stumped. He had used one talisman, and his life was now in ruins! He shook his head and left the mine.

He couldn't linger here. Jiang Hao hoped that he could somehow convince his teacher to assign him the task of mining.

For now, he needed to head back and check on the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. It had been a month since he had been assigned to the mine. He had neglected it long enough.

The spirit beast lay down lazily in the courtyard in front of Jiang Hao's house. Its stomach growled while it stared at the tempting flower.

The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower had a unique smell. It wanted to bite and savor it.

It opened its mouth wide and then shrank back. "No... no. The master will be back. He'll punish me!" It stared at the appetizing flower. "But..."

It stuck its tongue out. "Just a lick..."

However, before it could try anything, a saber pressed its tongue down to the ground.

The spirit beast was terrified. It struggled but couldn't free its tongue.

"What's happening?" Jiang Hao asked sternly.

The spirit beast couldn't respond. It was still struggling to free its tongue. Jiang Hao slowly raised his saber from its tongue.

The spirit beast checked to make sure its tongue was fine. "Master... I wasn't doing anything. I saw that there was some dust on the leaf, so I was trying to clean it."

"Do you want to bet that on your life?" asked Jiang Hao.

If the spirit beast tried anything stupid with the flower, he would be in trouble, too. No one knew what that woman was capable of. She was a demoness, after all.

"If I see your tongue anywhere near that flower..." Jiang Hao left it at that. His intention was clear.

He walked away and pushed the tip of the Half-Moon Blade into the soil. The blade was full of cracks. It couldn't be used anymore. He needed another saber. This one couldn't withstand the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade techniques anymore.

The spirit beast was frightened. It cowered in a corner.

“Did anyone come here in the past few days while I was away?” asked Jiang Hao as he walked to the wooden chair.

“My reputation as a beast is formidable. Who would dare come here and disturb your place, Master?”
The spirit beast jumped onto a chair opposite Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao stared at the sharp-tongued beast.

The spirit beast panicked. “One person did,” it said, “Someone called Ming Yi came here looking for you.”

“What did she want?” asked Jiang Hao.

“She just said it was a pity you weren’t here, and that she would visit next time.”

Jiang Hao was deep in thought. ‘Fairy Ming Yi from the Heavenly Saint Sect... Did she come to find me because of Yan Hua?’

Jiang Hao got up and left to find Mu Qi and the Cliff Master. He had to inform them that he couldn’t go back to the mines for a few days and that he was back to tend the Spirit Herb Garden.

At the Hundred Flowers Lake, Baizhi knelt in front of Hong Yuye. She was covered in scars and bruises.

Hong Yuye was standing by the lake, feeding the fish. “Any updates on the Azure Mountain’s matter?”

Chapter 67: Han Ming Feels Like He Can Do It Again

Baizhi was worried about the incident that transpired in the mines. Although she had secured victory, it was still not enough.

If the Sect Master hadn't informed her at the last minute, she wouldn't have been able to capture so many traitors and intruders. The sect would have suffered great losses.

Baizhi had suspected that the mines would've been the target, but she hadn't paid enough attention. She was so focused on dealing with Azure Mountain that she had neglected the situation in the mines.

She had thought that the mines were inside the sect, so she would have enough time to make preparations. The mines were important for the sect. Spirit ores weren't the only things found in the mines of this sect.

However, the mines were dangerous. The miners were instructed to dig bit by bit before they were allowed to venture deeper to find other treasures.

The Sect Master had let slip the rumor about the special treasure hidden in the mines because of which they had captured many traitors and intruders. Baizhi was nervous. She couldn't see through the Sect Master's intentions.

"In the months that we spent fighting the Azure Mountain, it has become apparent that we have the advantage. The Azure Mountain isn't as strong as we thought. They are weaker because of internal disagreements. We plundered a lot of treasures and even obtained Azure Mountain's cultivation technique:

Azure Divine Transformation Technique."

Baizhi laid the treasures on the floor. There were sabers, books, pills, pendants, etc.

Hong Yuye glanced at them briefly and turned away. She did not care for trinkets.

Hong Yuye looked at Baizhi unwaveringly.

Baizhi took a deep breath. "I found clues about the person who might be behind the Azure Mountain's provocation. This is what I found..." Baizhi took out a stone slab. It floated toward Hong Yuye.

The stone tablet was full of strange symbols.

“This looks like something that came from overseas,” said Baizhi. “I think that the one who covets the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower is someone foreign.” Hong Yuye looked at the stone tablet a while longer and then put it away.

A book floated toward her. This was a manual for Azure Mountain’s cultivation technique: Azure Divine Transformation Technique.

She flipped through it briefly and then closed it.

“Looks like we’ve gained quite a lot this time,” said Hong Yuye. “Let the disciples compete. Those disciples in the Foundation Establishment Realm, Golden Core Realm, and Primordial Spirit Realm can compete for the treasures as a reward. Five from each of these major realms. As for the rest... exchange them for contribution points.”

“What kind of treasure should I set as a reward for the Foundation Establishment Realm?” asked Baizhi.

Hong Yuye glanced at the saber and thought for a moment. Then, she shook her head. “You decide that by yourself.”

She picked up the book. “Is the Azure Mountain destroyed for good?”

“Not entirely,” said Baizhi. “We attacked but were forced to retreat before we could completely occupy them. If we want to exterminate them, we need to mobilize larger forces. Other sects are helping them flee. It’ll take a long time to get rid of them.”

“That’s alright,” said Hong Yuye and threw the book to Baizhi. “If Azure Mountain no longer existed, you could use the manual to open a new branch in the sect. Since they are alive, the twelve main branches can compete to win this cultivation technique. This will be coveted by the twelve branches. It means one more option of cultivation technique to choose from.”

Balzm nodded. she couldn't compete because she was the Acting sect master. Only the rest of the eleven branches could compete to own the Azure Divine Transformation Technique.

Jiang Hao went to meet the Cliff Master. He had suffered some injuries because of the incident at the mines. It seemed no one had remained unscathed.

After that, he went to find Mu Qi and informed him about the incident and how he was sent back. Mu Qi thanked him profusely and offered him many resources and rewards. He was happy to give them away.

Jiang Hao bowed and thanked him.

Back at the Spiritual Herbal Garden, Jiang Hao met Han Ming.

After a few months of fighting, Han Ming's cultivation had strengthened. He was no longer the young and naive youth from before.

"Senior Brother Jiang," said Han Ming. "How nice to meet you again!"

"Junior Brother Han, it's nice to meet you too! Still up for a challenge?" asked Jiang Hao.

Han Ming chuckled. "Not yet... I still feel that I'm not strong enough. I just needed some spirit herbs, so I came over. I contributed a lot this time and gained a lot of resources to further my cultivation. Senior Brother Jiang, you should also try it. That way, your cultivation will increase faster, and you'll also gain experience."

"Junior Brother Han, I'm glad to see how strong you've become. Ordinary people can't even compare to you," said Jiang Hao.

Han Ming smiled confidently. He bid farewell to Jiang Hao and turned to leave. "Senior Brother Jiang, you should also contribute to the fight and advance quickly. Otherwise, I'll catch up soon."

Jiang Hao smiled in return. Only he knew how much he was trying to avoid "contributing" to the fight.

If he did anything to “help” and clear his name, Liu Xingchen definitely wouldn’t be able to help him out next time..

Chapter 68: Jiang Hao Makes It To The Top Ten

After seeing Han Ming off, Jiang Hao walked around the Spirit Herb Garden.

The spirit beast followed him around. “Who is that?”

“A True Disciple,” said Jiang Hao. “His status is higher than mine in the sect, so don’t cause any trouble.”

“True Disciple? It’s no wonder he didn’t give me a second glance. Master, you need to work hard to elevate your status around here.”

Jiang Hao glanced at the spirit beast but didn’t respond. He had been in the mine for so long. Jiang Hao knew that the beast was just joking. By now, it knew how to act around others, especially in the sect.

“Master, why don’t you follow me? Everyone in the underworld knows that I have unlimited potential and will definitely dominate the world in the future.”

Jiang Hao ignored the beast. The beast was getting arrogant day by day. Jiang Hao only hoped that it wouldn’t cause any trouble.

He busied himself in the Spirit Herb Garden. He was once again back to collecting a few bubbles a day.

Jiang Hao missed mining. It was so easy to get bubbles in the mine.

If nothing worked, Jiang Hao had planned to do something that would get him punished and sent back to the mine. However, the mine needed to be made safe first. It would take too long..

Even other miners were being assigned jobs in other areas of the sect.

In the evening, Jiang Hao returned to his house and planned things out.

He had received news that the Heavenly Note Sect had won against the Azure Mountain. They had brought home many treasures. The battle was over.

The Heavenly Note Sect had captured many intruders and traitors. If the captives were lucky, the other sects would come to claim them. If not, they would be doomed to work in the mines forever.

Women who were captured might be taken away by the Heavenly Joy Pavilion

Jiang Hao sighed. He couldn't interfere in this matter. He had no status, no resources, and no spirit stones even to buy a saber. How could he help others when he couldn't even help himself?

He took out the talisman manual and read it. He needed to earn more spirit stones.

Jiang Hao only had 350 spirit stones left. He still needed to buy a good saber and some good quality tea.

He opened the talisman-making manual. The first on the page was the Healing Talisman. It was similar to the Pain-Relieving Talisman but much more effective.

Few people bought the Healing Talisman, but there was always someone in need. It was good to have them handy. He would definitely find some customers for it.

A Healing Talisman wasn't as effective as a Healing Spell, but it was useful in emergencies. For example, if someone was seriously injured and, in a state, where they couldn't cast a Healing Spell, a Healing Talisman might just buy them some time till they were rescued.

Therefore, people in the Foundation Establishment Realm and Golden Core Realm often kept these talismans handy, especially if they were venturing outside the sect.

Jiang Hao studied the process of making such a talisman. The paper used to make these was the same as the one used in the Ten Thousand Swords Talismans. The price was half of what a Ten Thousand Swords Talisman would cost. He could only sell it for about 30 spirit stones.

“It’s a pity I didn’t make any talismans before the battle with the Azure

Mountain,” muttered Jiang Hao. “Otherwise, I could’ve earned a lot.”

The Healing Talismans would have sold for a lot because people going out to fight would have stocked up on them. Now, there would be fewer people buying it, and they would refuse to pay more than 30 spirit stones for it.

Taking a deep breath, Jiang Hao activated the Clear and Pure Heart ability and began to study the process for making Healing Talismans.

At the Cliff of Broken Hearts, Han Ming headed to the Cliff Master, Ku Wu Chang’s house.

He looked excited. He was eager because the Cliff Master had said that all those who had contributed to the fight would be included in the Top Ten list depending on how much they had contributed. All those who made it to the list would receive a lot of rewards.

Han Ming didn’t have a hope of making it into the top ten disciple list of the sect. However, he was sure he would be in the top ten when it came to disciples from the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

He had participated in the battle from the outset, passed five trials, and killed six generals. He had made a lot of contributions.

Han Ming wasn’t the only one present in the Cliff Master’s courtyard. There were two other disciples. A Senior Brother and a Senior Sister.

There were only nine formidable disciples in the Cliff of Broken Hearts, including him.

Han Ming greeted Jiu Wu and Fei Zhu. They waited patiently in the courtyard.

Moments later, Mu Qi arrived. He turned to the Cliff Master. “Master, the Law

Enforcement Hall has sent over the merit list with the rankings.”

He handed the list to the Cliff Master. Mu Qi then stood and waited with the other disciples.

“Senior Brother Mu, am I in the top ten?” whispered Han Ming.

Mu Qi chuckled. “I didn’t get to peek at it, but the Law Enforcement Hall recognizes your contributions, Junior Brother Han. I’m sure you’ll be in the top ten.”

Han Ming was excited, but he didn’t show it. He knew how to exercise self— control, especially among the seniors. If it was someone of lower status than him, then he could do whatever he pleased.

Han Ming would show off to Jiang Hao soon. This would work to his advantage in covering for the humiliation he had faced at Jiang Hao’s hands in the last fight.

“Hmm?” Ku Wu Chang seemed surprised.

The disciples were even more curious now. Mu Qi was the only one who looked calm. It seemed as though he knew the reason for the Cliff Master’s reaction.

“Interesting... two of the disciples from the Cliff of Broken Hearts made it to the list of top ten disciples of the sect,” said the Cliff Master. “That’s good. This means our branch will have more possibility of winning rewards during competitions.”

“Master, who are they?” asked Han Ming eagerly.

Jiu Wu and Fei Zhu were also curious.

“One is Bai Yi. He is ranked seventh,” said the Cliff Master.

Bai Yi was the first disciple of the Cliff of Broken Hearts. He was very powerful, so it wasn't much of a surprise.

“What about the other one?” asked Fei Zhu. “Jiang Hao. He is ranked tenth.”

Han Ming was shocked to hear the name..

Chapter 69: Need to Get Rich

Han Ming's head buzzed when he heard Jiang Hao's name. He couldn't understand how Jiang Hao, who was still in the Foundation Establishment Realm, could make it into the top ten disciple list.

That didn't make any sense!

Only a few hours back, he had bragged about his achievements to Jiang Hao in the Spirit Herb Garden!

!!

Han Ming felt embarrassed. His achievements were nothing compared to this. He felt defeated.

He had clearly felt that he could surpass Jiang Hao soon, but...

When would he be able to best Jiang Hao in a fight?

The more he recalled Jiang Hao's calm face, the more embarrassed and frustrated he felt.

“Jiang Hao? Who’s that?” Jiu Wu asked curiously.

“I think I heard his name before,” said Fei Zhu. “He works in the Spirit Herb

Garden! I think he is in the middle stage of the foundation establishment Realm...’

“Yes. That’s him,” said Mu Qi.

“Middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm?!” Jiu Wu was in disbelief. “How did someone like that make it to the top ten disciple list from the whole sect?”

Han Ming perked up at the question. He wanted to know the exact same thing.

“A few days ago, the mine was under attack. Experts of the Blackheaven Sect and the Thunderstorm Sect led the attack. Manlong from the Flowing Waterfall was engaged in a fight with Xuanyuan Tai, an expert from the Blackheaven Sect. The attacker cast some runes which bound and rooted Manlong at that moment. Xuanyuan Tai was casting a teleportation array to escape when Jiang Hao single-handedly stopped him while giving Manlong the chance to break free. It was because of Jiang Hao that Manlong was able to capture Xuanyuan Tai,” said Mu Qi. “Xuanyuan Tai is in the late stage of the Primordial Spirit

Realm.”

Everyone was shocked at that. No one present had the courage to face someone in the late stage of the Primordial Spirit Realm, let alone fight them.

They lowered their heads. Han Ming was especially ashamed of himself. He didn’t think he could even muster the courage to stay put if he had been in Jiang Hao’s place.

“I recall that his name was in the suspect list of the Law Enforcement Hall. Has his name been cleared this time?” asked Fei Zhu.

“He... was cleared of previous suspicions, but he is somehow connected to the traitor Yan Hua this time. So, the Law Enforcement Hall cannot let him go entirely,” said Mu Qi.

Mu Qi was also puzzled by this. He didn't know if the Law Enforcement Hall was doing it intentionally. Did they somehow want to protect Jiang Hao or were they just trying to prevent him from becoming a True Disciple?

In his opinion, Jiang Hao had already proved himself worthy of being given the title of a True Disciple. The only problem was that his talent wasn't anything extraordinary. He was only above average. However, his performance and contribution were enough for the Cliff Master to take Jiang Hao under his wing.

He was still a suspect, so that wouldn't happen anytime soon.

Ku Wu Chang interrupted their discussion. “Well... you have all worked very hard. Keep it up! I'm told that the competition between the disciples is going to take place in a few months. Five winners will be selected from each cultivation realm. There aren't many when you consider the twelve branches in the sect. I hope you all can do your very best.”

They nodded.

Han Ming wanted to participate. This was his chance to prove that he was an outstanding disciple.

After one night of study, Jiang Hao finally understood how to make Healing Talismans.

For those in the Golden Core Realm, the success rate of making such a talisman was 50%. After a few practices, the success rate would at least be 80%. Jiang Hao was confident that he could get this right.

Being in a higher level of cultivation indeed had its perk. However, he couldn't sell too many of the talismans. Otherwise, some people might get suspicious.

There were some talismans that only those in the Golden Core Realm could create. He couldn't sell those yet. He could only sell the talismans that were possible for those in the Foundation Establishment Realm.

The first three talismans of the six Fine-Grade Talismans were of the latter type.

He needed to make a lot of those three types of talismans. He decided to make more of the Ten Thousand Swords Talismans. They sold very quickly. These were also considered the most ordinary and were easy to make.

Jiang Hao sighed and went out to the courtyard.

He looked at the Half-Moon Blade that he had buried in the dirt up to its hilt. It reminded him that he didn't have a saber that he could use.

He opened his interface. [Name: Jiang Hao]

[Age: 21]

[Cultivation: Middle Stage of Golden Core Realm]

[Cultivation Method: Heavenly Sound Hundred Revolutions, Hong Meng Heart Sutra]

[Divine Ability: Nine Revolutions Death Substitution (unique), Daily Appraisal,

Clear and Pure Heart]

[Lifblood: 6/100 (cannot be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 10/100 (can be cultivated)]

[Divine Ability: 2/3 (cannot be obtained)]

Jiang Hao sighed. The numbers were pitiful, to say the least. In two days, his Cultivation and Lifeblood had made little to no progress.

“Well, first things first,” muttered Jiang Hao. “I need to earn spirit stones. Then, I need to buy a saber and good quality tea. Oh, yeah... I need to save some spirit stones to feed the beast too.”

The spirit beast needed a lot of spirit stones. “I hope Senior Brother Mu Qi rewards me with spirit stones. He did say he was going to give me resources...”

Jiang Hao headed straight to the Spirit Herb Garden. The spirit beast jumped up and followed Jiang Hao. It shook its neck to make the collar comfortable. The spirit beast had gained enough intelligence to know what the collar was

The spirit beast had gained enough intelligence to know what the collar was for. However, it had no intention of breaking it and escaping into the wild. It was proud of the collar. The collar set it apart from the wild, uncivilized beasts that roamed around without a purpose. It was proud of the fact that it was a special beast with a master who took care of it.

“Master, can’t I eat people?” asked the spirit beast. “Do you find humans delicious?” asked Jiang Hao curiously.

The spirit beast nodded.

“How many people have you eaten before?” asked Jiang Hao.

“Not even one... yet,” said the spirit beast. “But all great demons eat humans.

Everyone knows that I’m a great demon.”

Jiang Hao stared at the spirit beast. He wondered if he should let it go free because he didn’t want it eating human beings in the sect.

He continued walking toward the Spirit Herb Garden. “Well then, I guess I’ll have to get rid of you. I don’t raise demons.”

“Master, I was just joking,” said the spirit beast hurriedly. “I’m not a demon. I can be a rabbit. I love carrots anyway!”

Jiang Hao shook his head. ‘This beast has no shame...’

He saw Mu Qi in front of the Spirit Herb Garden. Jiang Hao felt nervous and excited.. He hoped today was the day when he would be rewarded with spirit stones!

Chapter 70: I Want Spirit Stones

Mu Qi waved at him. “Junior Brother Jiang, right on time!” he said. “I came here to ask you what kind of reward you wanted for helping me out.”

Jiang Hao desperately wanted to say that he needed spirit stones but held himself back. “It’s up to you, Senior Brother Mu.”

Mu Qi chuckled. “You shouldn’t be so humble, you know. You’ll be at a disadvantage.”

!!

Jiang Hao smiled. He didn’t want to cause trouble unnecessarily. He didn’t lack resources, except spirit stones. He could always get the bubbles in the Spirit Herb Garden.

“Well... I got some pills as a reward. Among them is the Golden Core Pill,” said Mu Qi. “But I can’t give that to you yet because you’re still in the Foundation Establishment Realm. So... I can give you some spirit stones instead. Will that be okay?”

Disciples in the lower realm couldn't have pills of the higher realm. Jiang Hao was actually in the Golden Core Realm, so he could accept the pill, but he didn't want to reveal his cultivation.

"That's perfectly alright!" said Jiang Hao.

Mu Qi chuckled. "It seems you're in need of spirit stones," he said. "Well.. Alright. I have another Golden Morning Pill. It isn't particularly expensive, but again, I can't give it to you because of your cultivation level. So, I am going to give you 600 spirit stones instead of the Golden Core Pill and 250 for the Golden Morning Pill."

Mu Qi took out the spirit stones from his pouch, counted them, and handed them to Jiang Hao. "Here, a total of 850 spirit stones."

Mu Qi took out a bottle of pills. "These are Cleansing Pills. It can help clear out poison or toxins from your body. These are fairly easy to make. I can give these to you directly." He handed Jiang Hao the bottle of Cleansing Pills.

Jiang Hao had made those pills before. They sold at around 70 to 100 spirit stones each. He had kept some for himself because he was afraid of being poisoned.

"There is this spiritual sword. I can give this to you directly as well."

Jiang Hao hesitated. "Senior Brother Mu, could you keep the sword and give me spirit stones instead?"

Mu Qi laughed. "Of course! This spirit sword is decent. It will cost around 1000 spirit stones, I think. I can give you that amount."

Mu Qi took out more spirit stones and handed them to Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao now had 1,850 spirit stones. If he added 350 spirit stones that he had on himself, he had a total of 2,200 spirit stones. That was a huge sum.

He could finally buy a better saber and tea leaves!

The Primordial Heavenly Blade was too powerful to be used as an ordinary saber.

He admired Mu Qi. Mu Qi was a good sport and was also very strong. He even received great rewards for his missions when compared to Jiang Hao!

Those in the Foundation Establishment Realm didn't even receive half as much in reward after missions. Having a higher cultivation level was indeed beneficial.

If he didn't already know that Mu Qi had acquired an inheritance in the mines and that's why he was being this generous, Jiang Hao would have suspected him of being a spy from another sect.

However, there was still the matter of his affair with the Heavenly Saint Sect's Saintess-in-training...

Jiang Hao needed to be careful.

"In a few months, there will be a competition. Junior Brother Jiang, do prepare for it," said Mu Qi.

Jiang Hao was confused. "A competition?"

"Yes. You didn't hear about it? The sect was victorious against the Azure Mountain, so they brought home a lot of looted treasures. The sect is going to distribute these treasures as rewards in the competition. Disciples from the Foundation Establishment Realm, Golden Core Realm, and Primordial Spirit Realm are all welcome to participate. The top five will get precious treasures as rewards."

Jiang Hao didn't respond. He couldn't care less about the competition and didn't really want to participate.

"You have made great contributions to the mine and to the sect. I think you'll be expected to participate in the competition. Usually, the competition would be among one or two branches, but this time, it's

between all twelve branches. Don't worry, though. It'll be a simple competition, and no one would be expected to jump realms. But you can if you're confident enough."

Mu Qi bid him goodbye and left. Jiang Hao sighed wearily. Now, on top of everything, he needed to figure out a way to lose in the competition.

His "contribution" had done him more harm than good so far. First, he was almost removed from the suspect list, which would have been dangerous. And now, a competition!

'I wonder what the reward is...'

He asked around out of curiosity. Cheng Chou had somehow found the list of treasures that were to be assigned as rewards for the competition.

"For now, only the rewards for the Foundation Establishment Realm have been decided," said Cheng Chou. "We still don't know what the rewards would be for the other cultivation levels. Here... see for yourself."

Cheng Chou left the list with Jiang Hao and went to play with the spirit beast. There were a total of five items.

The first was the Nine Suns Saber, which was forged from the Nine Suns True Fire Stone. It was compatible with all cultivation techniques. It also had true fire attacks and was suitable for all cultivators below the Return to Void Realm. Overall, it was a powerful weapon.

Jiang Hao knew that this saber was very valuable. If he sold it, it would fetch him a decent price. He wanted it, but he didn't know if it was possible for him to win first place.

The second reward was a cultivation technique called the Heavenly Dawn Spiritual Technique. This was used to train one's spiritual energy.

The third was a spell technique, the Nine Suns Flame. It could draw a sea of fire and cause rapid explosions to injure many enemies at once. It had the power to surpass realms and was terrifyingly efficient.

The fourth was a Daoist Robe, which allowed the wearer to float in the air. It also made them impervious to fire and water. It could be used to resist most types of attacks.

Jiang Hao didn't really care for the rewards, except the saber.

He had the Nine Heavenly Battle Armor for defense, so he didn't care for the robe. The spells and cultivation techniques were useless for him too.

He glanced at the fifth reward. Jiang Hao felt that this particular reward was very strange.

A seed that contained extraordinary spiritual energy. Carrying it around could increase one's cultivation speed, and it also had the effect of focusing one's mind..