

A Demoness 81

Chapter 81: Harassing an Honest Person

The spirit beast was sniffing the area around the fence. When it saw Jiang Hao, it ran to him. “Master, this area has the same problem as the last one!”

Jiang Hao nodded. He squatted down to check the soil. The area was lacking severely in nutrients. If this went on, it would take two or three years for the garden to recover.

“Where are the Bone Flowers?” asked Jiang Hao

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The spirit beast led the way, and Jiang Hao followed it. After a while, he stood in front of a white flower. Even the stalk and the leaves were entirely white.

The Bone Flowers were used for strengthening the bones and or refinement of energy. It was an important spirit herb that was native to the Hundred Bones Forest.

Usually, the Bone Flowers needed a very specific kind of area to grow. Occasionally, people planted the Bone Flowers in the Spirit Herb Garden to raise them until they were ready to be harvested. There hadn't been any problems in the past.

After examining the area closely, he realized that the flower was the cause of the depletion of nutrients.

Jiang Hao used his Daily Appraisal on the flower.

[Mutated Bone Flowers: The Mutated Bone Flowers have lost all the characteristics of the usual Bone Flowers. It mercilessly absorbs the surrounding nutrients. Bai Ye's masterpiece. It was planted here to make things difficult for the guardian of the Spirit Herb Garden. This was done to earn profit while obtaining nutrients simultaneously.]

Jiang Hao felt helpless. How could someone profit from destroying a Spirit Herb Garden?

He didn't know who Bai Ye was. He had never heard that name before. "How many Bone Flowers are there in the whole garden?" Jiang Hao asked.

"Around 500," said Cheng Chou.

The Bone Flowers weren't very valuable. However, 500 of them could fetch a decent price.

"Inform the people of the Hundred Bones Forest. Tell them that we have a problem," said Jiang Hao.

"Alright." Cheng Chou did not hesitate.

After Cheng Chou left, Jiang Hao went to the market.

He sold 12 of his Hundred Thousand Swords Talismans. It fetched him about 300 spirit stones.

The aftereffects of the fight with Azure Mountain had passed. The prices and demand for items had returned to normal. Prices for some items had even fallen.

Jiang Hao barely managed to make 600 spirit stones in total. He was worried about the Bone Flowers and the problems associated with it.

Jiang Hao went back to the Spirit Herb Garden after that, but Cheng Chou was nowhere to be seen. So, he returned to his house.

Jiang Hao thought that he could meet Cheng Chou tomorrow, or he would definitely come to find Jiang Hao if something was wrong.

The next day, Jiang Hao still didn't see Cheng Chou in the garden. That night, Jiang Hao couldn't sleep so he cleaned his sword.

The following day, Jiang Hao watered the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower and headed to the Spirit Herb Garden.

He finally saw Cheng Chou there.

"Senior Brother Jiang, I went to look for the people from the Hundred Bones Forest yesterday. They said all other things have to wait because they are caught up in some urgent matter. We will need to wait for at least five days..."

Cheng Chou lowered his head guiltily. "I also found out that other Spirit Herb Gardens are facing the same problem."

Jiang Hao was worried. He didn't want to tell his master about it. Once he was accused, it would be troublesome.

Jiang Hao wanted to solve the problem without attracting any attention to it. If the Spirit Herb Garden couldn't be restored, there would be consequences.

'It seems the Hundred Bones Forest Sect is so fearless that they even try to destroy the whole Spirit Herb Garden for profit!'

"Uproot the Bone Flowers and place them far away from the Spirit Herb Garden," said Jiang Hao.

"Alright," said Cheng Chou.

Cheng Chou didn't object. He felt partly responsible for the problem.

Jiang Hao waited for five days, but the people from the Hundred Bone Forest Sect didn't come.

Cheng Chou had gone to confirm and had just returned. "They said they need five more days."

"What about the other Spirit Herb Gardens?" asked Jiang Hao. "How are they faring?"

"They haven't transplanted the Bone Flowers to another area yet," said Cheng

Chou. "They feel that uprooting the Bone Flowers will have... consequences."

The Bone Flowers that had been uprooted had almost withered. Cheng Chou was worried, but he didn't dare disobey Jiang Hao.

The thing about demonic sects was that the strong harrassed the weak. So, the guardians of the other Spirit Herb Gardens wouldn't dare start any dispute, no matter how much they had to suffer for it.

White Moon Lake also had a Spirit Herb Garden, but the Hundred Bones Forest would never dare to plant a mutated flower there. Zhou Chan was a formidable guardian. They feared offending her.

They only dared to mistreat weaker guardians.

"Then let's wait for them a little longer," said Jiang Hao.

The Bone Flowers had been transferred to an area far away from the Spirit Herb Garden, so there was nothing to worry about.

It had withered and was about to die.

If they delayed any longer, things would escalate, and it would no longer be possible to solve the problem peacefully.

Jiang Hao was willing to compensate for the dying Bone Flowers. He didn't care if the Bone Flowers died.

Usually, ordinary Bone Flowers were very resilient. They didn't wither away so easily. This mutated version could only survive if it could absorb nutrients from other spirit herbs.

Seeing Jiang Hao calm made Cheng Chou feel at ease. Several other Spirit Herb Garden guardians were already panicking. They didn't want to transplant the flower to an area outside the garden, so they watched as their gardens suffered great damage.

Jiang Hao instructed the spirit beast to keep an eye on the garden, and he worked on the spirit herbs.

After finishing his work, Jiang Hao didn't hang around. He patrolled the garden to make sure there weren't any other problems.

Jiang Hao couldn't help but sigh. He felt burdened. Not only did he have to be wary of the traitors and spies in the sect but also needed to be careful of his fellow disciples.

Two days later, Jiang Hao checked on the seed he had planted beside the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. He surrounded it with 99 spirit stones. He then watered it.

'Now, I have to wait nine days more...'

After nine days, the seed was supposed to take root and sprout. At that time, bubbles would start to appear.

Jiang Hao knew that purple-gold and gold bubbles would be impossible to get for now. The seed couldn't grow into a divine tree yet.

For the past few days, Jiang Hao had spent most of his time selling talismans and studying the other forms of techniques from the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade.

He studied the first and second forms very closely. Jiang Hao wanted to strengthen the two forms even more. He mostly used his usual saber to practice it but sometimes switched to the Primordial Heavenly Blade.

He still hadn't found out who Bai Ye was. He didn't dare ask around because he didn't want to raise suspicion.

Another three days passed in a flash, and Jiang Hao finally saw someone from the Hundred Bones Forest Sect arrive at the Spirit Herb Garden. The one who had arrived was some disciple in the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

His name was Li Kai. Jiang Hao had talked to him in passing.

"Junior brother Jiang, you're not very kind!" said Li Kai as Jiang Hao approached.

Li Kai's dominating aura radiated around him.

"Why do you say that, Senior Brother Li?"

Jiang Hao ignored his aura. They were at the Spirit Herb Garden. The sect didn't tolerate fights in the garden.

"I was only a few days late, but you uprooted the Bone Flowers and left it out to die?"

Chapter 82: A New Divine Ability

"There was a problem with the Bone Flowers," said Jiang Hao calmly. "It was destroying the Spirit Herb Garden. It would have destroyed more areas if I hadn't uprooted it."

"Are you saying that the Hundred Bone Forest Sect is trying to destroy the Spirit Herb Gardens?" asked Li Kai. "How is it that only you have a problem with it? It seems the other Spirit Herb Gardens let the Bone Flowers grow until someone from our sect came over to discuss it. Do you feel like you are powerful enough now and don't have to care about offending the other sects?"

Li Kai was on a roll. “Nobody pointed out any problems at the time when we paid you to plant the Bone Flowers in the Spirit Herb Garden. It seems the complaints are coming from you only when the Bone Flowers is about to mature. Is there really a problem with the Bone Flowers, or do you have a problem with us, Junior Brother Jiang?”

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All the blame was shifted to Jiang Hao so casually. Jiang Hao didn’t want to argue because it’d be useless anyway.

“I went to look for you twice,” said Cheng Chou in Jiang Hao’s defense. “I already mentioned the problem in detail, but none of you cared. If you hadn’t dragged out the matter for so long, it wouldn’t have come to this!”

“Hmph!” Li Kai glared at the fearful Cheng Chou. “The Hundred Bones Forest Sect has paid you to maintain and take care of the Bone Flowers because we have no time. Do you think we would have paid you to raise the Bone Flowers if we had the time to run over whenever you called us? We did inform you that we had urgent matters to attend to. Isn’t it normal for us to take a few days more to deal with those matters and then find the time to see you here? For a matter as small as that, you found it okay to destroy our flowers?”

Jiang Hao waved Cheng Chou away and told him to continue with his work. Chang Chou turned and left reluctantly.

“Senior Brother Li, how do you want to deal with this? It’s better if we find a reasonable way to solve it. What’s done is done anyway.”

“Alright,” said Li Kai. “You’re right. A mature Bone Flower costs 5 spirit stones. This Spirit Herb Garden was given a total of 500 Bone Flowers. That would be

2,500 spirit stones.

“Isn’t the Bone Flower worth only 3 spirit stones?” asked Jiang Hao.

“That was before. The price of everything has risen since the fight with Azure Mountain,” said Li Kai. “I heard you made a lot of contributions to the sect lately. I’m sure you have some spirit stones to spare.”

Li Kai knew about Jiang Hao. He had done his homework properly before coming here. Manlong had asked Jiang Hao for help during the fight with the Blackheaven Sect, and Jiang Hao had helped him.

Manlong was smart. He received the reward for capturing the enemy but pushed Jiang Hao to take the fall by shifting the credit to him.

In this way, most people, including the Blackheaven Sect, thought that Jiang Hao was the reason Xuanyuan Tai was captured while Manlong reaped the benefits.

Jiang Hao was silent. He didn’t have 2,500 spirit stones. He had never seen that many spirit stones in his life.

Jiang Hao could only pay 900 spirit stones. He had 20 Hundred Thousand Swords Talismans, but that was barely enough.

“Senior Brother Li, will you be taking away the Bone Flowers too?” asked Jiang

Hao as he glanced at the Pile of withered Bone flowers.

“Yes. The flowers belong to us. It’s only right that I take them back,” said Li Kai.

“Then shouldn’t you reduce the price by a bit?” asked Jiang Hao.

“The Bone Flowers belonged to us from the beginning. The compensation is your apology for destroying them. The two don’t overlap. Do you have the spirit stones to pay for them or not? I know you earn spirit stones very quickly. You can pay the remaining amount in three months.” Li Kai looked at him. “I am reasonable, you know. If you can’t pay in three months, you can take six months to pay back. However, the delay would add some interest.”

Jiang Hao now knew for sure that Li Kai had spent a lot of time to find out about him. He had done his homework well.

“Alright,” said Jiang Hao. He took out 500 spirit stones and handed them to Li Kai. “Here. Please accept this for now. I’ll pay the rest back within three months.”

“Sure. You are very easy to get along with, Junior Brother Jiang.” Li Kai smirked. “I heard that your garden is suffering from depleting nutrients. I have a treasure here that can replenish the nutrients lost. I can sell it to you for 1000 spirit stones. I wouldn’t sell them to anyone at that price.”

“Alright. Thank you.” Jiang Hao nodded.

Jiang Hao took the two black pearls and watched Li Kai leave. He activated the Daily Appraisal ability.

[Li Kai: The Hundred Bones Forest’s inner sect disciple, at the late stage of Foundation Establishment Realm. He was instructed by Ming Zuoquan to retrieve the Bone Flowers and extort you. He thinks that you are stupid, rich, and timid. You’re the scapegoat in his eyes. He is going to report to Ming Zuoquan seven days later.]

‘Ming Zuoquan?’

Jiang Hao vaguely recalled the name. He was the True Disciple of Hundred Bone Forest.

‘Bai Ye didn’t appear...’

Jiang Hao decided to find Ming Zuoquan in seven days.

He looked for Cheng Chou and asked him if he was alright. After confirming that he was okay, Jiang Hao buried the two black pearls in the areas where the Bone Flowers had been planted.

The nutrients did get replenished, but the land wasn’t as fertile as before. If he wanted the area to recover from the deficiency, he needed to find something else.

Jiang Hao decided to visit the Spirit Herb Garden tomorrow to make sure there was no other trouble. He then headed back to his house and continued studying the second form of the Seven Forms of the Heavenly Blade.

Days went by, and Jiang Hao spent his time between his house and the Spirit Herb Garden. He worked tirelessly.

On the seventh day, Jiang Hao woke up early in the morning. He watered the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. The scent of the flower cleared his mind.

However, his attention wasn't focused on the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower today. He was delighted to find that the Seed of the Immortal Peach Tree had sprouted.

The tender seedling had pushed through the soil and unfurled its delicate leaves. There was a purple bubble beside it.

[Divine Ability Fragment +1]

It wasn't a gold bubble, but Jiang Hao was still happy. He had waited for a purple bubble for so long. He could finally obtain another divine ability!

He didn't rush to get it. Instead, he activated the Daily Appraisal ability. [Peach Tree Sapling: It is related to the Immortal Peach Tree. After bearing

[Peach Tree Sapling: It is related to the Immortal Peach Tree. After bearing fruit, it will reincarnate nine times and fully grow into the Immortal Peach Tree. Placing it near a divine item and watering it with a bowl of water every day will make it grow faster and bear more fragrant peaches.]

'A bowl of water every day...'

Jiang Hao was surprised. The seed had seemed very high maintenance in the beginning because it was supposed to be surrounded by 99 spirit stones. However, it was fairly easy to tend to after taking root.

Jiang Hao was curious. 'Will surrounding it with more spirit stones make a difference?'

As for placing the sapling near a divine item, Jiang Hao didn't have to worry about it. It was already growing near the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

Jiang Hao returned to his room. [Divine Ability: 3/3 (can be obtained)]

Jiang Hao chose to obtain the ability.

His thoughts scattered. Jiang Hao felt his spiritual energy gather at the center of his forehead. He realized that the new ability would be concentrated there.

A few moments later, he knew the name of this new divine ability: Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit..

Chapter 83: Another Kill

[Name: Jiang Hao]

[Age: 21]

[Cultivation: Intermediate Stage of Golden Core Realm]

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

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Sutra]

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

Clear and Pure Heart, Reappearance of Hidden Spirit]

[Lifeblood: 40/100 (can be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 45/100 (can be cultivated)]

[Divine Ability: 0/3 (cannot be obtained)]

'I need to find more purple bubbles for one more ability.'

Jiang Hao wondered where he could find purple bubbles. 'Should I wait for the Immortal Peach Tree to mature?'

He didn't know how long he would have to wait. He didn't think much about it for now.

Jiang Hao focused on his new ability. He raised his hand to feel the center of his forehead. 'What kind of power is this?'

He activated the ability. The divine ability had two parts. When he activated it, all his spiritual energy moved toward the center of his forehead and concentrated into a vortex.

It was unstoppable, but Jiang Hao didn't panic. He waited and let the energy flow to the center of his forehead. Jiang Hao realized that this was the first part of the ability: Hidden Spirit.

The next was "Reappearance". When all the energy was swept and concentrated into a vortex, the second part of the ability could be activated to restore the energy to his body.

Jiang Hao realized that this ability was very useful, especially when he was too exhausted to fight and had to face a strong opponent. He could then use the stored spiritual energy and instantly recover.

Jiang Hao wondered what would happen if he activated the ability when he was at his peak. He decided to try this new ability for the next few days and get more familiar with it.

After that, Jiang Hao headed to the Spirit Herb Garden. He stood at the entrance and looked at the sky. The sky was a deep blue today.

“The day is so beautiful today. I can finally sleep in peace after tomorrow,” said Jiang Hao.

“Master, you haven’t been sleeping well?” asked the spirit beast.

“What about you?” asked Jiang Hao without answering the question. “Have you been sleeping well?”

“I’m always in the courtyard. I sleep late, but I wake up very early.”

Jiang Hao knew that it spent most of its time staring at the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

It wanted to lick the petals of the flower but held back in fear every time. When it got tired of staring at it, it would then fall asleep late in the night.

It then woke up before dawn and stared at the flower again. That was its routine.

“Master, are we going to the Spirit Herb Garden again? Can we go somewhere else today?” asked the spirit beast.

“I can’t.” Jiang Hao shook his head.

“Then how will the sect know about my existence? They should all know about me and understand how invincible I am.”

Jiang Hao said nothing. He didn’t know how to tell the beast that this was a demonic sect. Someone would probably kill it if they discovered it.

Jiang Hao was counting on the gold bubble the beast might give. Once it stopped giving bubbles, Jiang Hao could throw it out if it wanted to roam around so much.

“Master, can you get me a storage treasure? I can’t even accept gifts from people without it,” said the spirit beast.

“Find Cheng Chou and get him to find you a suitable treasure,” said Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao then headed to the Spirit Herb Garden and the bubbles swarmed over to him.

[Strength +1] [Spirit +1] [Normal long saber +1] [Endurance +1]

[Vitality +1]

Jiang Hao sensed the minute changes in his attributes as the bubbles absorbed into his body.

In the afternoon, Han Ming came to visit him. He gave him a token and said that it was from the Lawless Tower.

“There is a place at the side of the Lawless Tower where you can absorb plenty of energy. I often go there when I need to increase my cultivation.” Han Ming smiled. “I worked hard outside and did well in the competition because of it. I feel like I had an advantage because of that. You can make use of it too.” Jiang Hao realized that Han Ming was here to show off again.

“You’re truly amazing, Junior Brother Han.” Jiang Hao humored him.

Han Ming left feeling very smug of himself.

Jiang Hao couldn’t help but sigh as he saw Han Ming leave. If Han Ming was this way with everyone in the demonic sect, someone might try to get rid of him.

A demonic sect was the least safe among all places in the world.

The next day, a man took a small path to the Hundred Bones Forest. It was in the evening and the sun had already set.

Everything was silent. Not even the birds chirped.

“Senior Brother Ming, I’m here to pay my respects,” said Li Kai.

A white-robed man walked into the courtyard. His eyes were cold. They held no emotion.

He looked at Li Kai. “Come in,” he said.

Li Kai walked into the man’s house. He took out his storage treasure and handed it to Ming Zuoquan.

“This is our harvest this time, Senior Brother Ming.”

Ming Zuoquan took the storage magic treasure and checked it. His brows furrowed slightly.

“There are spirit stones here but no other things...”

“Not just a small amount,” said Li Kai. “I have yet to collect 2,000 spirit stones from Jiang Hao. He is from the Cliff of Broken Hearts and has many spirit stones! I told him I can give him more time, but he’d have to pay interest. He refused.”

“Jiang Hao?” asked Ming Zuoquan. “Is that the same person that Manlong threw under the bus to escape the attention of the Blackheaven Sect?”

“Yes. But we don’t have to worry. I asked around and found out that he won’t create unnecessary trouble. Hates confrontation. Always keeps to himself. We’ll be fine.”

“Can he afford it, though?”

“He can! The Heavenly Joy Pavilion made him pay 1000 spirit stones in three months. He paid it back with no problem at all,” said Li Kai.

“1000 spirit stones in three months? Hm... Maybe we need to take good care of this person if he can afford to pay so much,” said Ming Zuoquan as he took out a pill from his pocket and threw it at Li Kai. “Here. This is for you. You did a good job. This pill can help you advance very quickly.”

Li Kai accepted the pill and thanked him profusely. He had worked so hard for this pill. Tonight, he could finally advance to the peak stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. He would then be one step away from advancing to the Golden Core Realm.

Just then, he heard something buzzing past his head.

A long spear pierced through Li Kai’s head at lightning speed. His head exploded.

Blood splattered on Ming Zuoquan’s face. He couldn’t understand what had just happened. Li Kai didn’t even have the time to react before he dropped dead..

Chapter 84: The Consequences of Killing a Formidable Disciple

Li Kai was dead. He died right in front of Ming Zuoquan, and he couldn’t even do anything.

He felt shocked and powerless.

Ming Zuoquan was at the Golden Core Realm. He calmed himself and looked around.

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However, in the next second, a saber stabbed him from behind.

The robe on his body protected him. Ming Zuoquan sighed in relief. He didn't waste any time. He started to gather his power.

A purple light flashed. His defense shattered and his robe disintegrated.

The silver-white blade pierced through Ming Zuoquan's body.

The attacks had happened so fast that there was only a difference of a few seconds between Li Kai's death and Ming Zuoquan's fall.

"Please, I'm willing to submit to you. I'll work for you," said Ming Zuoquan. He didn't want to die.

"Forget it. Not in this life." The black saber also emanated purple energy as it slashed Ming Zuoquan's throat.

"You... I'm a formidable disciple..."

The saber flashed again. This time, Jiang Hao used the second form of the Heavenly Blade: Mountain Suppression.

Ming Zuoquan was cut into pieces.

"Even formidable disciples have just one life," said Jiang Hao.

He then left with the storage treasure.

Jiang Hao looked at the storage treasure. It had belonged to Li Kai.

He inspected the place but found no other treasures inside. He didn't find any clue about Bai Ye either.

'I wonder who he is...'

Ming Zuoquan was in the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm. Bai Ye might be even stronger.

'I might not be able to deal with Bai Ye right now...'

Jiang Hao didn't wait any longer.

Before he attacked Ming Zuoquan, he had used the Daily Appraisal on him. However, he had learned nothing important from him.

'There are a total of 1,600 spirit stones,' thought Jiang Hao as he looked into the storage treasure. 'I paid 500... so who are these from?'

Jiang Hao asked around and found out that at least four other people had been tricked. It was a pity that people tried to do this sort of thing. The guardians of the Spirit Herb Gardens volunteered to work in exchange for sect resources. 'Speaking of which, I haven't received any resources for a long time...'

After taking the spirit stones and the 3,000 black pearls, Jiang Hao destroyed the storage treasure.

He would have to face another investigation by the Law Enforcement Hall later. He didn't know how serious the death of a formidable disciple was.

He could only wait for Liu Xingchen to arrive.

After that, he returned to his house to practice the new divine ability.

Early the next morning, Jiang Hao opened his eyes and felt instantly re-energized. The power stored in the new ability really did wonders for him.

'This is truly amazing!'

He had just used the Reappearance part of the new ability. The surge in power he felt was extraordinary.

He almost wanted someone in the late stage of the Golden Core Realm to provoke him so that he could test his new power.

Jiang Hao caught himself. He couldn't afford to be reckless. The Reappearance of Hidden Spirit Ability would be his trump card. He wouldn't use it as he pleased.

'Divine abilities are so useful. I wonder how long it'll take me to collect purple bubbles again...'

Jiang Hao walked out of his house after storing his power in the Hidden Spirit in the middle of his forehead.

The spirit beast was already waiting for him in the courtyard.

"You woke up so early today," said Jiang Hao.

"Master... something has happened," said the spirit beast. It sprinted up to

Jiang Hao to show him its collar. "Look.. it's cracked."

"Then don't wear it."

"No! If I don't wear it, how will others know that I'm your spirit beast?" The spirit beast was anxious.

"Master, buy another one for me. If you do, I'll tell you something important."

A collar would cost him more than a thousand spirit stones. Jiang Hao sighed. It was just too pricey.

However, the spirit beast was right. If he didn't get it a collar soon, others would target the beast.

He had 1,900 spirit stones in total. If he spent 1000 on a new collar, he would be left with only 900.

Jiang Hao didn't even know if he could afford more tea leaves for the demoness. Jiang Hao decided to go to the market next time and decide there.

He appraised the black pearls.

[Nutrient Pearl: Bai Ye's masterpiece. It's a product he developed in order to advance. It can provide nutrients to the soil and can also cause spiritual energy to increase abnormally.]

Bai Ye again! Jiang Hao was curious about what realm the person belonged to. He was definitely someone knowledgeable if he could develop such devices.

Jiang Hao wondered if he would get in trouble for taking so many nutrient pearls. It was better to advance to the next stage as soon as possible.

Jiang Hao walked out of the courtyard to head to the Spirit Herb Garden and ran into Lui Xingchen.

He was followed by two other Law Enforcement Hall disciples. All three looked very solemn.

Jiang Hao felt uneasy. He thought there would be at least a few days before they sought him out.

"Junior Brother Jiang, we meet again..." Liu Xingchen looked very serious.

"Senior Brother Liu, hello! What brings you here?" asked Jiang Hao.

“There was... an accident. We are searching for a murderer. We need to observe the people related to the victims for a few days,” said Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao realized that the death of a formidable disciple in the Golden Core Realm was a big deal.

“And this victim is somehow related to me?” asked Jiang Hao.

“Yes. Remotely, I should say,” said Liu Xingchen. “You need to come with us. Before we go, could we take a look inside your house? It’s part of the process. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Of course,” said Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen turned to the other two people behind him. “Go in and search.

Please be considerate. Don’t damage his things.”

Liu Xingchen didn’t follow them inside. He stood near Jiang Hao. “Is there anything significant in your storage treasure, Junior Brother Jiang?”

Jiang Hao’s heart sank, but he didn’t dare show any emotion on his face. He remained calm. “Nothing much. A few talismans, medicinal pills, and some spirit stones.”

“That’s good,” said Liu Xingchen casually.

“If you venture to any places which are guarded, they will check your storage treasure. I’m just informing you.”

Jiang Hao was shocked. Things had indeed turned very serious..

Chapter 85: Should I Ask That Woman For Help?

Liu Xingchen's words shocked Jiang Hao.

There were 3,000 nutrient pearls inside his storage treasure!

If his storage treasure was investigated, Jiang Hao would surely be exposed for Zuoquan's death.

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Jiang Hao was relieved that Liu Xingchen wasn't in a hurry to check it now. He felt that he was doomed, but he maintained his cool.

'I have to find a way to hide the storage treasure away,' thought Jiang Hao.

When the people from the Law Enforcement Hall were done with their search, Jiang Hao followed them outside. It wasn't like he had a choice to refuse.

"We are heading to the place where the Law Enforcement Hall conducts its investigation. The investigation might last for seven days. I'll have to trouble you for that duration, Junior Brother Jiang," said Liu Xingchen politely. "Of course, it's no problem at all," said Jiang Hao. "Which disciple was killed?"

"A disciple from the Hundred Bones Forest," said Liu Xingchen. "Junior Brother Jiang, do you have any sort of beef with Li Kai?"

"We had a little disagreement with matters related to the Spirit Herb Garden," said Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen nodded. "Four other guardians of the other Spirit Herb Gardens have been taken along to the Law Enforcement Hall too," he said. "We had to round up everyone who had contact with the Hundred Bones Forest disciples in the recent days for questioning."

“Senior Brother Li is an inner sect disciple, right?” asked Jiang Hao.

“It’s... hard to say. The Law Enforcement Hall is taking over the investigation for this,” said Liu Xingchen. “I don’t have the qualifications to head the investigations related to formidable disciples. Otherwise, I would’ve been able to tell you more about it.”

Jiang Hao nodded. “What is the general process when it comes to such investigations?”

“Well... first, the people connected to the case are all rounded up for questioning. They are observed for a while. This lasts for about two days at most,” said Liu Xingchen. “Then, the investigation officially begins depending on the clues collected. That might last about three days. The last two days are set aside for the outcome.”

“Normally, it doesn’t take that long,” said Liu Xingchen. “The seven-day duration is to make sure the investigation is unbiased, and the twelve branches are informed about the developments.”

Jiang Hao had many questions. He wanted to ask what would happen if someone vouched for him. Would the sect let him go?

The murderer would be thrown into the Lawless Tower as punishment. His realms would be eaten away! Perhaps he could still mine and collect bubbles and try to find some way to bypass the Lawless Tower...

‘The mine is destroyed! It still hasn’t been renovated! Maybe I can find work somewhere else as a laborer...’

Jiang Hao’s heart sank. It was over for him! ‘I wonder if the Reappearance of

Hidden Spirit ability would be enough to fight against the Lawless Tower... No... If I’m caught, nothing can save me unless my master protects me. That’s unlikely.’

Internally, Jiang Hao was in turmoil. Outwardly, he seemed fine.

According to Liu Xingchen, it was unlikely for the Law Enforcement Hall to ask for his storage treasure for at least two days.

As long as Jiang Hao could find a secluded place to hide the nutrient pearls, he would be fine.

'Who should I ask for help?'

He looked at Liu Xingchen. Jiang Hao didn't think he could help. Besides, he couldn't confess. He would be taking a risk without knowing whether Liu Xingchen would help him for sure. It was too dangerous.

'Who else? That woman?'

Maybe he could ask her to visit him on the pretext that she needed to take her flower away.

Compared to Liu Xingchen, Jiang Hao trusted her more.

"There have been multiple murders in the sect, but this time, it's a formidable disciple who ended up dead. So many things are involved... The Law Enforcement Hall cannot let it slide because that would mean that the killer is roaming free while we cannot do anything about it. It would ultimately shake the foundation of the sect. The Law Enforcement Hall is taking over fully to find that murderer," said Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao hadn't realized that things would escalate to this level.

"So... if I'm killed someday, will the Law Enforcement Hall do everything in its power to find the murderer?" asked Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen laughed. "Do you still remember the case that I mentioned to you before? A murderer was roaming free in the sect. He relied on his ability to hide and kill anyone that could provide a clue to his whereabouts. The Sect Master wanted him to be put down. Then, the Law Enforcement Hall applied for the sect's supreme treasure, the Heavenly Essence Soul Modeling Mirror. They were determined to find the murderer at all costs. They eventually caught him and killed him on the spot."

Liu Xingchen looked at Jiang Hao. "It was from that time that the Law Enforcement Hall tightened its rules. Those on the Law Enforcement Hall's list, whether as a suspect or a witness, are given full protection. Of course, sometimes the rules make exceptions like... Junior Sister Yun Ruo."

Jiang Hao lowered his head and sighed.

The iron doors closed with a loud bang. Jiang Hao was made to stay in a small room. There was a big hole in one corner of the ceiling that let in a bit of light that did nothing to brighten the room.

There was nothing in the room, except a mattress. He sat down on it and observed his surroundings.

With his study of the nameless manual, he could now detect slight fluctuations in spiritual energy around him.

This was simply a detention room in the Law Enforcement Hall. The security wasn't strong, and the room didn't have magical protections.

'As someone in the middle stage of the Golden Core Realm, I could easily escape from here but doing so would be equal to admitting to guilt. The sect will hunt me down... but waiting here to be proved guilty is equally dangerous.'

Once he was proven guilty, he would be thrown into the Lawless Tower. Would anyone even try to save him?

Maybe Elder Baizhi could help him since she was the one who had brought him the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower, or maybe that woman in red...

However, there was a possibility that Elder Baizhi wouldn't care. By the time Hong Yuye arrived, it might already be too late.

Jiang Hao took a deep breath and looked up at the ceiling.

Jiang Hao regretted taking the nutrient pearls. He might have been able to get away with killing a formidable disciple, but he had made a grave mistake by taking the pearls.

If they searched him thoroughly, they would discover the pearls.

If Jiang Hao got out of this situation, he would never make such a stupid mistake again!

Jiang Hao thought about how to save himself. He could either break out of here and run, or he could ask Liu Xingchen for help by exposing himself. Either that, or he could ask that red demoness for help...

The woman in red knew a lot about him. If he could find something about her and use that as leverage to at least help him hide his storage treasure, he might be able to get away this time.

But how would he contact her?

He had two days at most. He needed to decide what to do in these two days.

Jiang Hao stayed put in the room and waited for the days to pass. He was waiting for the final decision.

In the worst-case scenario, he might have to depend on Liu Xingchen to buy him some time.

The next morning, Jiang Hao was woken up by a noise in the room. He turned around to see a white shadow crawling down from the hole in the ceiling. The spirit beast's head looked down from the hole. It grinned when it saw Jiang

Hao.

"Master, you didn't buy me a collar."

Jiang Hao was speechless..

Chapter 86: The Demoness Arrives Again

Jiang Hao was surprised and delighted to see the spirit beast. He didn't know that the beast would come for him.

It had gone through so much trouble just for a collar!

"How did you get in?" Jiang Hao asked. Although the security was not that strict in the detention rooms, it would still be difficult for a beast in the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm to sneak in without being detected.

"I saw the hole in the ceiling and climbed in," said the spirit beast as it jumped and landed on the ground. "Besides, I have something that allows me to travel to places undetected."

!!

As the rabbit jumped down, it seemed to be covered in a white mist. It was visible for a fleeting moment, and then it disappeared from sight.

Jiang Hao picked the beast up by the back of its neck and looked at it closely.

The spirit beast crossed its hands indignantly.

"How is this possible? What is it?" asked Jiang Hao.

"I did say I could tell you something important if you bought me a collar, but you didn't listen."

Jiang Hao hadn't expected the beast to have such an ability. The spirit beast's appearance had opened new options for Jiang Hao. Maybe there was hope yet...

Jiang Hao activated the Daily Appraisal ability.

[Evil Spirit Beast: Signs of high intelligence. The beast is at the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. It has just discovered its innate power to deceive the world, weaken its presence, and bypass simple array formations and human perception. It is from the Bloodline of the Evil Beast. Feed it 100 spirit stones for 49 days to further activate its dormant bloodline. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its favorability. Now, it reveres you.] The spirit beast's ability was indeed something!

However, its ability was still weak. It could only bypass simple array formations and deceive those in lower cultivation realms.

The beast had entered without anyone knowing, but it might not be able to leave in the same way.

"Master, please get me a collar! This one has already cracked so much!"

Jiang Hao was silent. He placed the beast down on the floor. "I remember you asking for a storage treasure before."

"Cheng Chou got one for me!" said the spirit beast as he showed it to Jiang Hao.

"It's really nice," said Jiang Hao. "Now, listen to me. Will you be discovered if you try to leave?"

"Nope."

Jiang Hao smiled. He transferred the nutrient pearls, spirit swords, sabers, and medicinal pills to the spirit beast's storage treasure.

“Here. Take this, and go out the way you came in,” said Jiang Hao. “Don’t let anyone near your storage treasure. I’ll definitely buy you a collar when I get out of here.”

“Really?!” The spirit beast was delighted.

Jiang Hao nodded. “Yes, but only if you manage to remain undiscovered.” “Bah! Leave that to me! I’m invincible,” said the beast.

“Hide your storage treasure somewhere secluded where no one can find it. You can retrieve it when I tell you it’s safe.”

The spirit beast nodded readily and climbed out of the hole in the ceiling. It disappeared from sight.

Jiang Hao finally calmed down.

It was risky to depend on the woman in red, Liu Xingchen, or even Elder Baizhi. The woman in red was his safest option out of the three, but she was unpredictable.

The spirit beast was the best choice. It would never betray him, but he still worried that it would be caught by someone outside.

Suddenly, there was a commotion.

“On the right! Chase after it!” came a voice from outside.

Jiang Hao’s heart skipped a beat. The Heaven Extinction Gu Poison was helping him stay calm. Without it, he didn’t know what he would have done. He was still too young and immature. No matter how much he tried to be careful, he always got into unnecessary trouble-

Jiang Hao sighed. The most important thing right now was to find an opening for himself to be free from this place.

The commotion outside died down. Jiang Hao waited.

If the spirit beast was caught, it would be over for him!

Sure enough, there was a knock on the door.

“Junior Brother Jiang, your actions have been exposed, but I can still save you.”

It was an unfamiliar voice. Jiang Hao wanted to believe that someone was willing to help him, but he wasn't that naïve.

“I don't understand what you are trying to say,” said Jiang Hao.

“You know what I mean. You only have one chance. Do you want to seize it?”

Jiang Hao realized that the person outside might be someone sent by the Law Enforcement Hall to lull him into a sense of security so he would confess everything. That unfamiliar person didn't even mention the spirit beast, which meant the beast might have already escaped.

Jiang Hao remained silent. The person outside sighed in frustration and left while muttering something.

Jiang Hao waited. There was no sound in the darkness. He didn't hear anyone outside.

The next day, when he opened his eyes, he saw a figure in red sitting beside him.

It was the woman in red! She was looking up at the hole in the ceiling.

When she saw him wake up, she turned to face him. “It seems you like small and confined spaces. First, the mine, and now, this.”

Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief. He bowed awkwardly. "Senior, greetings." He didn't know how she got here, but he knew by now that she could do anything.

Hong Yuye waved her hand. A table, two chairs, and a teapot with hot water appeared in an instant.

She sat down on the chair. "Do you have any tea on you?"

"Yes." Jiang Hao always carried the Red Azure tea that he had bought. He got up and hurriedly made some tea.

If the spirit beast hadn't appeared yesterday, she'd have been his saving grace..

Chapter 87: Was The Demoness Waiting For Me To Ask Her For Help?

After brewing the tea, Jiang Hao stood at the side.

The room was small and quiet. He was worried that the door might open, and someone might find her here.

!!

"How long are you going to be here?" Hong Yuye asked as she sipped her tea.

"Maybe four or five more days," said Jiang Hao.

She made it sound as though he had come here willingly. He didn't want to stay here at all.

If the spirit beast wasn't caught, he would be allowed to leave in four or five days. The whole investigation only took seven days. If there were no evidence against him, he would be released.

"I thought you liked small and dark places," said Hong Yuye.

“Senior, you misunderstood. This place doesn’t compare to my house,” said Jiang Hao.

Hearing this, Hong Yuye became interested and asked, “Then how does your residence compare to the mine?”

“I meant I like my house. I was in the mine to help out another senior,” said Jiang Hao.

Hong Yuye looked at him with a faint smile, but Jiang Hao remained calm. He did not believe that this woman could see through his thoughts.

After Hong Yuye poured herself another cup of tea, she said calmly, “Use the divine ability that you used on me last time.”

‘The Daily Appraisal?’ Jiang Hao was a little hesitant since he might have to face interrogation later, and he wanted to save his ability for that time, but he had no choice.

He lowered his energy consumption as much as possible.

“Senior, I used it.”

Hong Yuye was just raising her teacup to her lips. Her hands stopped. She looked at Jiang Hao.

He just stared at her without blinking. A few moments later, he was slammed against the wall by a terrifying force. He stood up in pain. Thankfully, he wasn’t injured.

“It is no wonder you only get along with that beast,” said Hong Yuye. “You’re full of lies.”

Jiang Hao didn’t dare to say anything and just stood there quietly.

“I’ll give you another chance to use that divine ability,” said Hong Yuye.

Jiang Hao sighed inwardly. He had no other choice. He did activate his ability this time.

The information given by his ability hadn’t changed. He could only see her name followed by a bunch of question marks.

“I used it,” he said truthfully.

This time, Hong Yuye didn’t say anything, but instead sat quietly and drank her tea.

Jiang Hao couldn’t understand this woman. She was a woman of few words. This was the longest she had stayed with him. Jiang Hao made more tea and served her.

Hong Yuye only stood up when the sun began to set, and everything around Jiang Hao disappeared. The chairs, table, and teapot were all gone as though they had never been there in the first place.

“Next time I visit you, I don’t want to see you here...”

She didn’t say what would happen if she found him here next time, but the implication was clear. The air turned so cold and oppressive that Jiang Hao had a hard time breathing.

“I understand,” said Jiang Hao.

She just looked at Jiang Hao, and when she saw that he didn’t say anything else, she turned around and left. There was a red shadow that disappeared after a while. Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief. She was finally gone! However, it was strange that she had stayed here for so long this time. She even paused for a while when she looked at him right at the end.

‘Was she waiting for me to ask her for help?’

Jiang Hao didn't feel that the woman in front of him was particularly kind, but the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower was in his courtyard. She had given it to him to raise it. That was proof enough that he was of some value to her. She would help him if he asked. Whether it was this woman, Liu Xingchen, or any others, they would help him for a price.

In the absence of the beast, he would have chosen this woman to help him. If he had known she would come, he might not have asked the beast to take the storage treasure. Now, there was nothing to do but wait.

At night, the door of the small black room opened, and Jiang Hao was brought out. He found himself in a slightly dark room with three people sitting across from him, two men and a woman.

In the middle sat a bearded man. "Jiang Hao from the Cliff of Broken Hearts?" he said.

"Yes." Jiang Hao nodded. "Sit down. I have something to ask you."

Jiang Hao sat down calmly.

"You are much calmer than the others, I'll grant you that," said the woman on the left.

Although he couldn't see their faces, they didn't sound young. The one on the right sounded younger than the other two.

"I'm the Law Enforcement Hall's Deacon Elder, Fan Lu. I'm also the person in charge of this matter. I hope you'll cooperate and tell us everything you know," said Fan Lu solemnly.

Jiang Hao nodded. "Of course."

"We have reason to believe Li Kai came to look for you. Why?"

"There was a problem with the Bone Flowers that they planted in the Spirit

Herb Garden.”

“How did that go?”

“He made me pay 500 spirit stones.”

“Did you hate him for it?”

“I didn’t really hate him, but I was a little frustrated.”

“What were you doing when Li Kai died?”

Jiang Hao wanted to say he was cultivating in his room, but he didn’t. It had been nighttime when he had killed them.

“When did he die exactly?”

“Doesn’t matter. Did you deliberately throw out the Bone Flowers so that they would wither away?”

“When Liu Chen died, he left behind some clues relating to the Cliff of Brother Hearts. Do you think that relates to you?” “That is...” Jiang Hao was taken aback.

“Just answer “yes” or “no”,” said the woman.

“How many spirit stones are there in Li Kai’s storage pouch?”

“I don’t know.”

“When Cheng Chou found out that there was a problem with the Bone Flowers, did he look worried or angry?”

“Worried.”

“When Li Kai died, did he look happy or depressed?”

“I don’t know that.”

“Did Ming Zuoquan bring a storage magic treasure with him?”

Jiang Hao was confused. “I don’t even know what to say to that. I don’t know.” At this moment, Jiang Hao felt puzzled. The questions had no logic to them.

These people just asked random questions to confuse him. He felt as though something was trying to affect his mind, similar to Senior Sister Yun Ruo’s bewitching technique.

In the wee hours of the morning, the questioning stopped. T wanted to check his storage treasure. He handed it over. They rummaged through it and returned it to him.

“Alright. You can go back to your house in two days. Until then, we might have to trouble you again.”

Jiang Hao nodded and walked out.

The three people inside looked at each other.

“He was by far the best,” said Fan Lu.

“He was calm even under my bewitching spell. I don’t know how he did it,” said Yan Mei.

“I didn’t find anything special in the storage treasure either.”

“He is from among the top ten disciples of the sect. We can’t detain him for too long without evidence. If we find nothing else tonight, we’ll have to let him go.”

Yan Mei nodded. “I can’t shake off my suspicion, though.” “He is in the top ten because Manlong threw him under the bus.”

“The Blackheaven Sect and the Wind Lightning Sect are both watching. Whoever has the merit will attract their attention. It won’t be long before someone comes after him. At that time, even Ku Wu might not be able to protect him. The aftermath will be tragic,” said Fan Lu.

“Then I’ll have to trouble you two for the rest. I’ll go and report to the Master,” said Bai Ye, the youngest person of the trio.

Fan Lu and Yan Mei stood up and bowed to him as he left..

Chapter 88: Possessed By The True Dragon’s Remnant Soul

At night, Jiang Hao rested in the small black room with his eyes closed. In his sleep, he saw the path that Li Kai had taken and even saw Li Kai himself. Jiang Hao followed Li Kai subconsciously until a purple light flashed, bringing him back to his senses. Jiang Hao was still asleep but was aware that someone had cast a spell on him.

This sudden realization made Jiang Hao break out in a cold sweat. If he had not cultivated the Hong Meng Heart Sutra, he might have killed Li Kai and Ming Zuoquan in his dream, as he had done in reality. Jiang Hao looked at the forest and turned to leave. He wanted to follow Li Kai, but he didn’t dare.

However, just as he turned to leave, Li Kai suddenly attacked. Jiang Hao subconsciously defended himself. He even asked Li Kai why he was attacking him, but Li Kai didn’t respond.

!!

In the end, Jiang Hao was heavily injured. He fell to the ground. Li Kai’s bone sword flashed and slashed down. Jiang Hao’s eyes flew open. He looked around the dark room uneasily.

He felt that something had locked onto him; it should be the work of some expert.

Jiang Hao sighed. The consequence for killing a formidable disciple was indeed severe.

Next time, he would lure them outside. It was no wonder that many people in the Heavenly Joy Pavilion restrained themselves even if they hated him. Jiang Hao wasn't a formidable disciple, but his name was on the Law Enforcement Hall's list. They did not dare attack him.

Who would want to risk going to the Lawless Tower anyway? Even if they made it out after a while, they would be crippled.

Early the next morning, Jiang Hao stood outside the Law Enforcement Hall, watching the sunrise. He was a little surprised. It was only the fourth day, and he had been released.

In other words, the beast hadn't been caught and no one had any evidence to prove him guilty.

"Congratulations, Junior Brother Jiang," said Liu Xingchen. "You are the only one who was released so early."

"Didn't you say it would take seven days?"

"It's because you have made great contributions to the sect, so they can't hold you for long. It must be stressful just having your name on the suspect list, let alone being locked up for days!" Liu Xingchen walked with Jiang Hao.

"Moreover, the Cliff of Broken Hearts won't just sit around and watch without doing anything. Your recent contributions have made you valuable to the Cliff of Broken Hearts. Even the Law Enforcement Hall can't take that away. As long as you are proven innocent, they cannot detain you for long. The others will have to stay put for another three or four days."

Jiang Hao was surprised. The system was indeed fair.

“Junior Brother Jiang, you look surprised, ” said Liu Xingchen. “Although we are called the demonic sect, we do have a proper system in place. If someone kills the disciples, it reflects badly on the sect. The Law Enforcement Hall is just. They will do anything to find the murderer. If they can’t find them on time, the Law Enforcement Hall will keep a close eye on everything. They might even summon the Heavenly Essence Soul Modeling Mirror for help.”

Liu Xingchen looked at Jiang Hao. “However, don’t think that the sect is a safe place even with rules in place. If it’s just injuries, the Law Enforcement Hall wouldn’t care. The decisions are all left to the twelve branches. The Law Enforcement Hall only intervenes if things get serious.

Jiang Hao understood.

“You better be careful of the Hundred Bones Forest, ” said Liu Xingchen.

That puzzled Jiang Hao. “Why?”

Liu Xingchen laughed. “Do you think you’re inconspicuous? Your name had appeared so many times in the suspect list. You are associated with so many traitors. Everyone knows about you. Recently, you had a disagreement with Li Kai, and now he is dead. The person Li Kai followed might not be simple. He might target you in the future.”

Jiang Hao was shocked. He hadn’t realized that he was so famous in the sect. He needed to keep a low profile.

As for the Hundred Bones Forest, Jiang Hao felt that he would be safe as long as he stayed in the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

“If you want to have a better life in this sect, you need to become a True

Disciple,” said Liu Xingchen. “If you become a True Disciple, the Hundred

Bones Forest can’t touch you.”

“But then there will be no more restrictions on me to venture out,” said Jiang Hao.

The Heavenly Joy Pavilion would always find a way to do something to him outside the sect.

Right now, the Law Enforcement Hall was like an impassable wall. If he didn't have the protection of that wall, the Cliff of Broken Hearts couldn't shield him, no matter how much they tried.

There were also the Sunset Immortal Sect, the Blackheaven Sect, and the Heavenly Saint Sect at his back.

How could he survive if they all came at him?

“Maybe become a True Disciple first and then get on the list again,” said Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao thought that that was a good idea, but it wouldn't be easy.

The first step was to withdraw from the list, which was not too difficult.

Next, he would apply to become a True Disciple. He had about a 70% chance of success. Then, he would need to get on the list again, which would be very difficult.

“So, I can somehow make it to the list later?” asked Jiang Hao.

“Not very easily. Unless you're connected in some way to a traitor,” said Liu Xingchen. “Even then, the Law Enforcement Hall won't put you on the list without enough evidence. Your status will be too high. They will only do that if the matter is too big to ignore.”

Jiang Hao was speechless. It was too risky.

He suspected that Liu Xingchen was implicitly trying to make him find some traitor that he needed to catch.

Jiang Hao hesitated. He then used his Daily Appraisal ability on Liu Xingchen.

[Liu Xingchen: True Disciple of the Heavenly Faction. Born with the aura of a dragon and a cultivation base at the Peak of the Golden Core Realm. Nothing better to do than be a spy for the Heavenly Note Sect's Law Enforcement Hall. The reason he is on good terms with you is to get close to the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower to watch it carefully. He is paying attention to you because he thinks you are responsible for all the deaths. He is currently being possessed by the True Dragon's remnant soul.]

There weren't many changes from when he had appraised Liu Xingchen the last time, except for the last line.

'Liu Xingchen is possessed by the True Dragon's remnant soul?'

Jiang Hao was a little worried.

So far, Liu Xingchen had been nothing but helpful to him in every way.

Once the True Dragon's remnant soul took over his body, the old Liu Xingchen would be lost to him.

'Should I tell him?'

Jiang Hao didn't know how to tell him. He would want to know how Jiang Hao had found out about it. There was no easy way to inform Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao decided to pay close attention to Liu Xingchen.

After a while, they parted ways and Jiang Hao headed to the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

Jiang Hao went to meet his master and then returned to his house.

The spirit beast was lying beside the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. It stared at it intently, as though it wanted to do something to the flower. It looked around and saw Jiang Hao.

The beast jumped back in surprise.. "Master, you're back!"

Chapter 89: Returning the Favor

Jiang Hao silently observed the spirit beast, taking note of its collar. He also saw that the beast didn't have a storage treasure on its body. He did not ask about it and instead proceeded to water the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. Within a few days, the Immortal Peach Tree had shown some growth. Jiang Hao was pleased with its progress.

"I'll buy you a collar within a month. We'll talk about everything else after a month, alright?" said Jiang Hao. He then headed to the Spirit Herb Garden.

The beast pointed at its collar. "But it had cricked a lot. Why don't you help me fix it, Master?"

"You can fix it yourself."

!!

After that, he went to the Spirit Herb Garden. Cheng Chou was very happy to see Jiang Hao. The others also seemed relieved.

The others were not easy to talk to, except for Han Ming, who he found easier to interact with. The only thing he had to remember was that he had to be respectful to Han Ming. As long as he stroked his ego, Han Ming wouldn't cause any trouble.

"I asked around and found out that there was a similar incident with the Bone Flowers a few years ago. The Hundred Bone Forest threatened a senior. He disappeared," said Cheng Chou. "The same thing happened ten years ago as well."

Jiang Hao frowned. The incident seemed to happen every few years.

The deaths of Li Kai and Ming Zuoquan couldn't stop the matter. The real mastermind was Bai Ye.

Jiang Hao still didn't know who Bai Ye was. According to Liu Xingchen, the mastermind might target him. He needed to find out who Bai Ye was.

'I have to become stronger as soon as possible.'

Jiang Hao looked at Cheng Chou. "What level are you at, Junior Brother Cheng?"

"I'm still in the eighth level of the Lifeblood Refinement Realm," said Cheng Chou in embarrassment.

'He's already in his thirties...'

Jiang Hao was in his twenties and was already at the Golden Core Realm. He was called a senior because of his status as an inner sect disciple.

As a True Disciple, he would have had to call Han Ming "Senior Brother" if he had lost to him in the previous fight.

"What cultivation technique do you use?" Jiang Hao asked again.

"Hundred Revolutions of Heavenly Note," Cheng Chou said truthfully.

The Hundred Revolutions of Heavenly Note was a high-grade cultivation technique that everyone in the Heavenly Note Sect could get access to.

The Heavenly Note Sect didn't have 12 main branches before. It was said that the Sect Master destroyed each sect before turning them into sub-sects of the main sect.

The people from the Heavenly Note Sect were all from different lineages. The most important people formed the Law Enforcement Hall and lived on the Law Enforcement Peak.

The Hundred Revolutions of Heavenly Note became a cultivation technique that was available to all.

Jiang Hao decided to give some pointers to Cheng Chou to improve his cultivation.

Although his comprehension of the Hundred Revolutions of the Heavenly Note was not deep, he was in the Golden Core Realm. He could guide someone in the Cheng Chou was ecstatic to hear that Jiang Hao would help him out. To him, this was an opportunity of a lifetime.

A month passed, and Jiang Hao was not called to the Law Enforcement Hall. He didn't see any suspicious activity in the vicinity either.

Bai Ye didn't appear either.

The matter of Hundred Bones Forest seemed to be slowly coming to an end. The people from the other Spirit Herb Gardens were also released.

The matter wasn't a small one, but it didn't cause an uproar either.

Jiang Hao waited another month. Two months had passed since Li Kai and Ming Zuoquan's death.

After making sure that everything had died down, he told the spirit beast to go and get its storage treasure from where it had hidden it before.

"Master, can I buy a collar now?" The beast handed the storage treasure to Jiang Hao.

“Where did you hide this?” asked Jiang Hao after making sure nothing was lacking.

“In a turtle. The turtle is so old that it doesn’t even move from its place. I hid it in its shell.”

Jiang Hao was impressed. The spirit beast was smart.

“I’ll buy you a new collar tomorrow.”

The spirit beast looked euphoric. It had waited a long time for a collar.

Jiang Hao returned to his room and checked his interface.

[Lifeblood: 67/100 (can be cultivated)]

[Cultivation: 70/100 (can be cultivated)]

“It’s more than half. If I cultivate, I have a high chance of breaking through to the late stage of the Golden Core Realm.”

“It feels a bit wasteful if it doesn’t work..’

Jiang Hao had waited for the Hundred Bones Forest to make a move after Ming Zuoquan, but they had been too quiet.

“Forget it... I’ll just do it. I have been refining my cultivation for the past month.

I feel that I can advance to the late stage.”

At night, Jiang Hao sat cross-legged on the ground and began to extract his blood essence for cultivation. This time, the power surged within his body right from the beginning.

The Hong Meng Heart Sutra began to circulate, and Jiang Hao's entire body was covered in purple spiritual energy.

The purple energy floated around him like a vortex.

Jiang Hao felt the surging power in his body. He felt it trying to break through to the late stage of the Golden Core Realm.

However, it wasn't easy. His attributes kept dropping. He didn't dare lose his focus.

The next morning, Jiang Hao's furrowed brows relaxed, and the purple energy gathered in his meridians.

When all that subsided, a new power began to flow.

A powerful aura spread around him. He had broken through to the late stage of the Golden Core Realm.

Jiang Hao opened his eyes and sighed in relief.

'That was close. I almost failed...

He looked at his interface and was a little shocked.

[Name: Jiang Hao]

[Age: 21]

[Cultivation: Late 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, Reappearance of Hidden Spirit]

[Lifeblood: 7/100 (cannot be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 0/100 (cannot be cultivated)]

[Divine Ability: 0/3 (cannot be obtained)]

‘I exhausted everything and barely advanced. I’m still unable to refine my cultivation,’ thought Jiang Hao. ‘The rate is too low to refine everything.’ It would be safer to wait till it reached 100.

Reaching the late stage of the Golden Core Realm was a joyous occasion.

Jiang Hao felt that he could even fight head-on with Senior Brother Mu Qi with this new power.

Jiang Hao was also paying attention to Liu Xingchen. He had met and observed him for the past two months. There were no changes for now.

He didn’t even know why or how Liu Xingchen was targeted.

When he went out to his courtyard, the spirit beast was already waiting for him.

“You can go to the Spirit Herb Garden. I’ll head there soon,” said Jiang Hao.

The spirit beast nodded. "Master, be quick. Don't delay too much. Buy me a nice collar." Then the beast ran to the garden. It seemed to think that it would get a better collar if it rushed to the Spirit Herb Garden and did its work..

Chapter 90: Can't Afford to Please the Demoness

Jiang Hao observed his courtyard.

The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower was a little taller than before. Aside from that, there were no other changes.

The Immortal Peach Tree already reached his knee in just two months. Perhaps next year, it would bear fruit. It was growing unexpectedly fast.

!!

Fortunately, the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower hadn't matured very quickly. As long as the flower was here, Jiang Hao was considered valuable.

The woman in red, Elder Baizhi, and Liu Xingchen all had their eyes on the flower. So, in a way, Jiang Hao had their protection.

He had done his best to appraise the people who passed by in recent months, but he hadn't found anyone suspicious.

Jiang Hao headed to the market. He had avoided the market to keep away from the disciples of the Hundred Bones Forest.

The first thing he did while in the market was to buy a nice gold collar. The spirit wanted its collar to be eye-catching.

He wanted to return the favor because it had helped him. Next time, he would buy a collar that could be used on beasts at the late stage and peak stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. The price was 1,500 spirit stones and 2,000 spirit stones, respectively. As for the Golden Core Realm, he couldn't bring himself to ask. The price would certainly be exorbitant.

'Next time, I'll just save a lot of spirit stones and buy a collar that is suitable for a beast at the Golden Core Realm. That way, I don't have to buy it again and again.'

After that, he went to buy some tea leaves.

He bought the same tea he had bought before, the Red Azure tea. It cost him 150 spirit stones this time.

He spent 750 spirit stones on the tea. He only had 300 spirit stones left.

What he earned was barely enough to sustain the spirit beast and the demoness.

She only appeared once a month at most. How could it be so expensive to keep her happy?

Jiang Hao sighed. 'She's been asking for tea all this time. I hope she doesn't ask for refreshments too.'

After that, he set up a stall to sell some talismans. He did not have many talismans, so he only earned about 400 spirit stones.

With those spirit stones, he bought a stack of talisman-making materials.

He bought talisman pens and beast blood for about 500 spirit stones.

Now he had only 200 spirit stones left.

Fortunately, everything was going smoothly. He didn't meet anyone from the Heavenly Joy Pavilion or the Hundred Bones Forest.

Perhaps they were waiting for the right opportunity to strike. Only those who weren't very strong made trouble. Others waited and planned something big.

Jiang Hao didn't think anyone in the Hundred Bones Forest would think he killed Ming Zuoquan. Most people looked down on him anyway.

Everyone believed that Jiang Hao had only made it to the top ten because Manlong had chosen him to take the fall. Otherwise, he was someone in the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm who wasn't worth much.

Jiang Hao had heard many people whispering about him. He just ignored them all.

However, he was worried that the Blackheaven Sect would actually come looking for trouble. If the sect really pushed him out because of that...

He couldn't bear thinking about it. He needed to become stronger.

'I either have to find something unique to plant or find a new mine to get some bubbles...'

When he returned to the Spirit Herb Garden, Jiang Hao saw the spirit beasts waiting eagerly for him.

He threw the collar at it. The beast jumped and caught the collar. Then, it placed it around its neck.

"Master, do I look like a big demon?" asked the beast, twirling around to check out its new collar.

"Not really," said Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao walked to check on the herbs and absorbed the bubbles.

[Lifeblood Pill +1]

[Strength +1]

[Strength +1]

[Strength +1]

After absorbing the bubbles, Jiang Hao began to clean up. When he was tending to a specific herb that needed to be handled in a very tricky way, he felt impatient.

He was surprised at himself. Jiang Hao had never felt like this before. He used to enjoy tending to the herbs.

He had advanced from the ninth stage of the Lifeblood Refinement Realm to the late stage of the Golden Core Realm in less than two years.

In two years, he had accomplished something that would have taken others so many years to achieve.

It was inevitable for him to be a little proud. He was able to catch himself whenever he got arrogant, mostly thanks to the Heaven Extinction Gu Poison. Without it, Jiang Hao thought that his arrogance would've already killed him. Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief. 'I need to be more careful.'

Jiang Hao thought about the future. In another two years, he might be able to advance to the Primordial Spirit Realm. After that, it might take ten more years to cultivate his spirit. In thirty years, he could advance to Return to Void Realm.

Jiang Hao shook his head and chuckled. He was just daydreaming. The most important thing was to stay alive. For that, he needed to practice restraint and discipline.

He tended to the herbs to calm himself.

After returning to his house, he started to make talismans late into the night.

This time, he took his time. He only drew one line of the character. He wanted to practice patience and get rid of his reckless thoughts. Undoubtedly, the talisman he was making failed.

He then began to refine his cultivation.

Days passed by, and Jiang Hao followed his routine. He didn't leave the Cliff of Broken Hearts during this time.

Jiang Hao spent most of his time in the Spirit Herb Garden, tended to the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower, and refined his cultivation. He also drew talisman after talisman. He followed this routine every day.

Autumn passed and winter arrived,

It snowed for a while. Soon, the winter passed, and spring was marked by green saplings pushing their heads through the dirt.

Half a year passed in this way.

During this time, the Immortal Peach Tree continued to grow. It was already two meters tall.

Jiang Hao noticed that he had a better grip on his impatience and recklessness now. He no longer felt the need to hurry things up.

A beam of light appeared on Jiang Hao's desk. He had drawn an ordinary Heart Cleansing Talisman. It had taken him half a night, and he hadn't failed this time.

'Finally...'

Fortunately, no one had approached him to cause trouble in half a year.

He hadn't found anything about Bai Ye yet. He also hadn't met Liu Xingchen for a few months and didn't know what was going on.

The next day, Jiang Hao followed the same routine and refined his cultivation.

He had used up all the talisman-making materials and hadn't earned any spirit stones yet.

Now, it was time to get back into the world and earn some spirit stones.

When he walked out of his house, he saw Liu Xingchen walking toward him. There was something wrong with his aura..