

Battle Through the Heavens #Chapter 71: Circumstances of the Xiao Clan - Read Battle Through the Heavens Chapter 71: Circumstances of the Xiao Clan

Chapter 71: Circumstances of the Xiao Clan

After sitting for nearly an hour, a pretty maid finally walked in. Her two hands carried a silver tray, and in the center of the tray was a faint red ring.

Taking the silver tray and sending back the maid, Ya Fei personally handed over the goods to Xiao Yan and smilingly said: "Old Sir, the cauldron as well as all the alchemic ingredients you need are all in the 'Storage Ring'".

Extending a hand to pick up the storage ring, Xiao Yan let it roll about in his palm then faintly nodded. Yao Lao's voice also sounded out at just the right time: "Okay. After refining the Qi Gathering Pill, I will bring it to you."

Ya Fei's pretty eyes were filled with delight as she hastily nodded.

"Alright, there's no need for you to send me out. I'll go out by myself."

Waving his hand, Xiao Yan took the ring and slid it onto his finger. Then, without even turning back, he headed towards the back of the parlor and went out. On the table, the blue jade card was still there as he did not want to owe the people too much. Thus, he had just left it there.

Staring at the receding figure leaving through the door, Ya Fei nibbled her red lips, then stepped forward to take the blue jade card into her hand. Musing a bit, she asked in a clear voice: "Uncle Gu Ni, to refine a Qi Gathering Pill, the success rate is not that high right?"

"Yes. It's said that even Pill King Wang Gu He's success rate for refining Qi Gathering Pills is only around 7 out of 10. For normal fourth tier alchemists, the success rate is only around 5 out of 10," Gu Ni said in a low voice.

"But this old sir, he succeeds in refining on the first try....." Ya Fei said as she knitted her thin black brows.

"Who knows, maybe his luck is good....." Gu Ni shook his head and didn't care too much about the matter. After all, for alchemists, luck was a big factor in successfully refining pills. If one's luck was good, even when continuously refining several times, one would not fail.

"Could it be..... that he's not just a fourth tier alchemist?" Ya Fei asked with hesitation after pondering a bit.

“Haha, how is that possible. The number of fifth tier alchemists in Jia Ma Empire can be counted on one’s hands. At that sort of status, even if it was the empire or great forces like the Misty Cloud Faction, they would all view this person as a VIP. Why would such a person come to our own auction house to auction pills.” Gu Ni laughed.

At this, Ya Fei also slightly nodded her head and let out a sigh, bitterly laughing: “It seems that I don’t have enough experience. I’m afraid that my previous hesitation negatively impacted this mysterious alchemist’s favorable impression of us by a large amount.”

“You can’t blame yourself for this. That kind of huge transaction, even I wouldn’t dare to answer easily. That you are capable to this extent is already very good. In regards to our relations with that alchemist, in the future, just take your time and get along amiably. As long as he does not develop any sort of ill will towards us then it’s fine.” Gu Ni said comfortingly.

Forcing a smile to her face as she nodded, Ya Fei sat lethargically on the chair, revealing her figure. As her lovely eyes blinked, having some doubts, she softly asked: “What does he intend to do with so many low-grade medicine ingredients?”

“Those medicine ingredients have the effect of stopping bleeding and strengthening bones. I think he should be planning to manufacture healing medicine.” Gu Ni muttered as his eyebrows pursed together. Similarly puzzled he said: “But with his status, why would he manufacture these cheaply-priced healing medicine?”

Hearing this, Ya Fei’s beautiful eyes slightly narrowed, her long fingernails lightly tapped on the table. A moment later, realization dawned upon her, she softly said: “Looks like this old sir seems to be very caring towards the Xiao Clan.....”

Eyebrows wrinkled tightly together, Gu Ni’s expression suddenly changed into one of amazement: “Are you saying that he wants to give the Xiao Clan healing medicine?”

“Recently I’ve heard that the Jia Lie Clan had invited over a first tier Alchemist. The cheap “Return of Spring Powder” has already snatched away half of the city’s crowds, if the Xiao Clan does not act soon, I’m afraid that their marketplaces will end up embarrassingly empty.” Ya Fei eyes darted around as she voiced out her conclusion, smugly smiling she continued to explain: “Previously, the old sir had already said that if there was a chance, he would co operate with the Xiao Clan and buying so many healing ingredients at this time could only mean one thing: he meant what he said.”

“Heh, looks like the Xiao Clan has really lucked out this time, while the Jia Lie Clan is going to be in trouble.” Having listened to Ya Fei’s analysis, Gu Ni grinned. An envious look was on his face since obtaining the help of a fourth tier Alchemist was not something just any clan could receive.

Slightly inclining her head, Ya Fei gave an easy smile as she said: "We should also make some contact with the Xiao Clan soon, though adding a flower to a bracelet will make one somewhat happy, providing help when one needs it the most is a much better way of strengthening both parties ties."

Gu Ni approvingly nodded his head, with a fourth tier Alchemist behind them, ties with the Xiao Clan were now important.

.....

Exiting the auction house, as usual, Xiao Yan prudently turned round and round the streets for at least half a day before finally taking off his disguise in a desolate alley.

Tossing and catching the light red "Storage Ring" in his hand, Xiao Yan was somewhat happy. This kind of Storage Ring was made by a type of uncommon material called "Storage Stone". The characteristic of this material was that there was a unique small space within it where any lifeless objects could be stored. Though this was extremely convenient, due to the sparsity of the "Storage Stone", its was extremely precious. The lowest grade "Storage Ring" in Xiao Yan's hands only had a space of about three to four square metres, yet it costs almost 100,000 gold. In the Xiao Clan, Xiao Yan had only seen his father and the first Elder own Storage Rings.

Xiao Yan fiddled with the Storage Ring for a while, hesitatingly examining it. In the end he did not wear it but rather carefully stored it in his bosom. This kind of ring was considerably pricey, if it was seen by his father or others, he would have a hard time explaining how he came to obtain it.

Xiao Yan kicked the black mantle into the gutter before carefully walking out of the desolate alley. Afterwards he quickly dashed back to his clan.

As Xiao Yan followed the lane that passed through the clan home, he heard his father's furious voice from Meeting Room. Eyelids twitching, Xiao Yan moved forward to secretly peer through a crack in the door.

"Dammit, Jia Lie Bi that bastard is too much, he actually dared to brazenly steal our business!" Within the room, Xiao Zhan was currently raging as he pounded on the table. Tea from the teacups spilled all over the table.

"Presently, the marketplaces of the Xiao Clan had already lost a great amount of traffic. The merchants left in the marketplace are also very worried and frightened. A few of them have even secretly left for the Jia Lie Clan's marketplaces. If this continues, in another half a month I am afraid that..... our marketplace will go bankrupt." The second Elder said with a gloomy face as he gnashed his teeth together in fury.

"How about..... I bring a few of our clan's elites and secretly deal with that alchemist?" The third elder's gaze were ferocious as he suggested this in a dark tone.

“There are at least two Da Dou Shi protecting the Alchemist, it won’t be so easy.” Xiao Zhan helplessly said as he moved his hands to and fro.

“But if we continue in this manner, our losses will be too great. The profits from the marketplaces of Wu Tan City is a large part of the total revenue of our Xiao Clan.” The Third Elder was somewhat unwilling to back down.

The corners of Xiao Zhan’s mouth twitched. At the moment, he could not think of any good ideas.

“That day at the auction, didn’t that mysterious alchemist say that there might come an opportunity where he would work with us? Seeing how Gu Ni was so respectful towards him, his tier as an alchemist is definitely not low. If he could help us, then that Jia Lie Clan would definitely lose out.” The First Elder, who had been silent up until now, suddenly spoke up in a soft voice.

“Ai, who knows if he just randomly blabbered. For people of that kind of status, what kind of benefits would they get out of cooperating with us? For such little profit, would they even care?” Xiao Zhan laughed bitterly and shook his head as he sat on the chair and sighed.

The three elders were all silent as well. Indeed, it was a bit challenging for the Xiao Clan to establish connections with people of such status.

“F**k. We’ll bear it for a few more days. If the Jia Lie Clan still does not practice restraint then don’t blame us for retaliating no matter the costs!” Licking his lips, Xiao Zhan gripped onto the chair frame as an ominous glint flashed across his eyes.

Outside the door, listening up till here, Xiao Yan faintly shrugged his shoulders as his hand played with the storage ring at his chest. Letting out a cold smirk, he slowly left.

Chapter 72: Learning to Refine Medicine

Xiao Yan left the meeting room and returned to his room to make some final preparations to refine some healing medicine. Once he was done with his preparations, he stealthily snuck back to his desolate cave, the one he previously trained in.

As Yao Lao had said before, it was important to not be disturbed during the medicine refinement process and given the great number of clan members, this would be difficult to accomplish at home. If by chance something, like Xiao Yu bargaining on him, was to happen, Xiao Yan would be unable fully bear with the consequences

Sneakily stepping into the cave, Xiao Yan was itching to get started, so he quickly fished out the Storage Ring from his bosom and pushed a stream of Dou Qi into it. The light red ring emitted a flicker of light before a roughly half meter long red medicine cauldron poofed into existence within the cave.

The entire medicine cauldron was a dark crimson red and it gave off a slight glow. There were two malevolent looking snake heads carved beneath the cauldron, their gaping maws forming two connected cavities for air to enter into the cauldron. As the two cavities wound and extended deep into the cauldron, the diameter grew smaller and smaller. If one were to try to look in, they would barely be able to see anything.

At the apex of the medicine cauldron was a dark crimson red cauldron lid forged in the shape of a giant serpent. Besides the lid, there was also a special hole for ingredients to enter.

The top of the cauldron lid was littered with many fine holes made by Ice Silver. These had the effect of dissipating heat to prevent excessive heat from building up, which might lead to an explosion. On one side a transparent screen of Essence Ice was installed at the middle part of the medicine cauldron so that the whole refining process could be clearly seen by the alchemist.

The surface cauldron was engraved with the forms of wild untamed devil beasts that seemed to almost leap off the cauldron.

Observing the beautiful appearance of the medicine cauldron, Xiao Yan nodded his head in satisfaction. Xiao Yan rubbed the ancient black ring, and Yao Lao appeared with a flash of light.

“En, it’s a cauldron with two outlets. For an alchemic amateur like you, it’s not bad at all,” Yao Lao said indifferently as he cast a glance at the orifices of the snakes on the dark crimson red medicinal cauldron.

“A cauldron with two outlets?” Hearing the unfamiliar term, Xiao Yan’s eyes blinked as he looked on doubtfully.

“Medicinal cauldrons also have their own set of tiers. The more outlets for fire a cauldron’s furnace has, the higher tier a medicinal cauldron is and thus the rarer it is. Don’t assume that one can just randomly make a few holes to add another few outlets. Outsiders don’t even have a hint of discernment for the mysteries of these outlets. Outlets are the essence of a medicinal cauldron, and require extreme precision to polish to perfection. If one were made with even the slightest error, the whole medicinal cauldron would be considered junk. As such, the more outlets a medicinal cauldron has, the better the auxiliary effect is for an alchemist when refining. Of course, if you wish to control multiple outlets, you need very high soul perception. For the current you, to control two fire outlets is already the limit.” Yao Lao laughed as he explained.

“For an Alchemist, the importance of a good Medicine Cauldron is akin to that of a good sword to a warrior.”

Giving an almost indiscernible nod, Xiao Yan stared at this big cauldron in front him and asked a bit blankly: “Now what should I do?”

“For now it’d be better if you’d familiarize yourself with the medicinal cauldron. Press one hand against an outlet, and then rouse the Dou Qi within you and channel it inside.” Yao Lao sat cross-legged within the cave as he directed Xiao Yan.

Nodding his head, Xiao Yan placed a hand on the outlet and slowly closed his eyes. Within his body, a revolving, dim and yellowish Qi slightly rippled. Dim, yellow Dou Qi bubbled out strand by strand, consequently making the palm of his hand glow with a yellow light.

Once that dim, yellow Dou Qi reached his palm, it grew still. Then, as if it had encountered an abrupt and violent gravitational pull, it suddenly flooded out of his hand and passed into the outlet, drilling into the medicinal cauldron.

“Pu.....”

There was a muffled noise, then after the dim, yellow Qi had transferred through the fire outlet and unexpectedly transformed into a dim, yellow flame essence. Within the medicinal cauldron, it flickered and blazed.

The fact that his palm suddenly spit out fire, alarmed Xiao Yan and almost made him reflexively withdraw his hand. However, after sensing that his palm was cool, he panicked substantially less.

“En, not bad. On your first try, you’ve already succeeded in producing a flame.”

Observing the roiling flame within the medicinal cauldron, Yao Lao nodded and said in a low voice: “The flame that you’ve mustered together this time isn’t actually the refining flame. Right now you should concentrate on controlling the trace of Wood Element within your body and pour it into the medicine cauldron!”

Xiao Yan complied by closing both eyes. Bit by bit, his thoughts focused as his outstanding spiritual perception continuously scanned his body for that light trace of Wood Element.

After more than ten minutes, Xiao Yan finally found the Wood Element in his body for the first time. He let out a sigh of relief as he opened his eyes.

“Found it?” Seeing Xiao Yan opening his eyes, Yao Lao asked, astonished. As the former nodded his head, Yao Lao could not help but inwardly praise Xiao Yan. When Yao Lao first found the wood element in his body, it had took him almost half an hour. From this it can be seen how strong Xiao Yan’s spiritual perception is.

Xiao Yan stretched out a finger to lightly press on the other fire outlet. Little by little, a stream of extremely weak green Qi flowed in.

Just as the green Qi entered the medicine cauldron, the light yellow flame within abruptly calmed down, as if there had been a chemical reaction. At this moment, even though Xiao Yan had not yet been able to control the flame, he could feel that the franticness within the flame had been tamed by the wood element. Furthermore, due to the principle that wood gives birth fire, the flame at this time was much more controlled and would last longer than before.

“Good.....” Satisfied, Yao Lao nodded his head as he reached out a finger to touch Xiao Yan’s forehead, transferring information directly into the latter’s head.

“This is my own healing medicine formula, you can use it for practice. I will guide you through as I warn you about the temperature of the flame and the composition of medical ingredients to refine.”

Xiao Yan squinted as he processed the new information in his head as he slightly inclined his head to acknowledge.

“Blood Clotting Powder: one stalk of Blood Clotting Grass, one Lively Fruit, two Poppy Flowers.....”

After Xiao Yan committed to memory the amount of each required alchemy ingredients, his spiritual perception gradually channeled into the medicinal cauldron as he diligently tried to control the mild flame.

Making a flicking motion with his finger over the ring, a dark red stalk of Blood Clotting Grass appeared in his palm. A little while later, Xiao Yan threw the stalk into the maw of the engraved serpent at the apex of the cauldron.

Once the Blood Clotting Grass was thrown in, Xiao Yan did not control the flame in time. The fire simply blazed upwards and in the blink of an eye, the stalk of Blood Clotting Grass turned into a pile of ash and the cauldron’s unique mechanism expelled it out of the cauldron.

Looking at this first failure, Xiao Yan laughed with a bit of embarrassment.

“Continue.” Yao Lao indifferently said.

Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Xiao Yan once again threw in a stalk of Blood Clotting Grass. This time, the Blood Clotting Grass persisted within the fire for a while but as before, it turned into a pile of ashes.

“The temperature is too high.”

Xiao Yan wiped his sweat away. Now that he personally tried to refine a pill, Xiao Yan finally realized that this type of work, as expected, could not be easily accomplished by just any person.

After continuously burning up a whole twenty or so stalks of Blood Clotting Grass, with some difficulty, Xiao Yan finally had a grasp on the most suitable temperature for Blood Clotting Grass.

Again tossing in a stalk of Blood Clotting Grass, Xiao Yan's expression grew solemn as his spiritual perception firmly suppressed the temperature of the flame. His eyes passed through the Ice Essence and unwaveringly fixated on the stalk of Blood Clotting Grass suspended within the flame.

The flame seethed about for a period of time and the Blood Clotting Grass finally started to shed its layer of skin and the juice accumulated within its leaves gradually began to evaporate into specks of faint, white powder. The essence of the Blood Clotting Grass had finally been successfully refined by this greenhorn, Xiao Yan.

Chapter 73:First Refinement

In the narrow cave the flames within the cauldron casted shadows onto the cavern walls, creating shadows of dancing fangs and claws of wild beasts.

Xiao Yan concentrated with every fiber of his being as he watched the surging flame attentively, his pale face was streaked with beads of sweat. Refining medicine for long periods of time was a task that consumed an extreme amount of Dou Qi. Since Xiao Yan's Qi Method was the lowest ranked Low Xuan, his Qi foundations and endurance were nothing special. Thus it was not an easy task for him to persevere for almost two hours in front of the cauldron.

Yao Lao squinted his eyes as he gazed upon Xiao Yan, who had once again successfully refined a Blood Clot Grass into a fine white powder. Knowing that Xiao Yan had already reached his limit, Yao Lao gave a slight nod and gently said: "Well done, take a break."

Hearing this, Xiao Yan's shoulders immediately dropped and his body softly fell to lie on the ice cold floor as if all the energy in his body had been suddenly drained away. Gasping for air, his chest rose and fell rapidly; battered with exhaustion, he could barely even lift a finger now.

"Training now would give the best effect."

Yao Lao said indifferently as he cast a glance towards the Xiao Yan who lifelessly laid on the ground.

Laziness and diligence clashed in the heart for a mere moment before Xiao Yan internally howled in anguish as he unwillingly sat up. His trembling hands formed into a training seal as he slowly closed his eyes.

Seeing Xiao Yan's stance, Yao Lao laughed as his sight turned towards the ten plus jade cases before the cauldron. These cases were filled to the brim with pale white powder refined from the Blood Clot Grass and were results of the efforts of Xiao Yan.

From left to right, the pale white color of the powder became richer and richer until the last case, in which the color of the powder had almost reached a pure white.

Gazing upon this extremely obvious improvement, Yao Lao felt pleasantly surprised as he nodded his head approvingly; in his heart he once again praised Xiao Yan's outstanding spiritual perception.

He shot a glance towards the Xiao Yan who was currently recovering his Dou Qi before sitting himself crosslegged against the stone wall, leisurely closing his eyes to recuperate. Xiao Yan had only refined the first type of ingredient, there were still two more types waiting for him to slowly practice on.

.....

After training close eyed for almost an hour, the Qi Cyclone within Xiao Yan's body once again emitted a bright light after it had previously gone dark from the depletion of Dou Qi before. Furthermore, the brightness this time seemed to be a little bit clearer than it was a few hours before.

Gradually opening his eyes, the powerless feeling from before had retreated by more than half. Stretching his neck, the cracking sounds made Xiao Yan sigh in happiness.

"Done training? Continue then." Yao Lao smiled as he opened his eyes to look upon the now lively Xiao Yan.

Bitterly laughing as he shook his head, Xiao Yan who had experienced the painful process of alchemy had finally understood that he had been 'conned' by Yao Lao. When Yao Lao had previously done alchemy, all he did was twirl his hands about as he refined the ingredients to create the elixirs that people would go crazy for. This simple looking process had left a strong impression in Xiao Yan's mind that alchemy was extremely easy. Yet now that Xiao Yan had tried a hand at it personally, he now knew that alchemy was more difficult than being a miner.

This understanding had come too late, thus Xiao Yan could only sigh as he once more sat before the cauldron and started to refine the essence of the other two types of medical ingredients.

Equipped with the previous experience of refining Blood Clot Grass, Xiao Yan, this time, was clearly much more relaxed than before. After burning eight Lively Fruits and ten Poppy Flowers, he finally managed to extract the components needed to make the healing medication.

From the Lively Fruit, an almost fully black and small kernel was obtained. This kernel had the effect of improving blood circulation. If an experienced mercenary was injured in the wilderness while lacking healing medication, often times, he would grind a Lively Fruit and use it to alleviate the injury.

From the Poppy Flower, a light red liquid was obtained. This kind of fluid had a numbing effect and can be used to relieve pain.

Eyeing the three medicines which had been arranged neatly in front of Xiao Yan, Yao Lao nodded slightly and quietly said: "All of the required ingredients have been refined, now fuse their medical abilities together. This is the most important step in alchemy."

With a deep sigh, Xiao Yan respectfully nodded. Proficiently throwing the pure white powder into the cauldron, he smoked it under a warm fire for about ten minutes until the pure white powder turned slightly reddish before speedily pouring the Poppy Flower liquid in too.

Just as the liquid entered the cauldron, it wrapped around the pure white powder. Boiling for a short time in the flame, the two ingredients slowly fused into a light, red and viscous liquid.

His spiritual perception strove to control the temperature of the flame as the viscous, light-red liquid was slowly smoked.

As it was continuously baked above the flame, the viscous liquid gradually changed into a dark red paste.

Through the transparent lens, Xiao Yan stared unwaveringly at the dark red paste within the cauldron. Slightly hesitating, he finally threw in the tiny black kernel from the Lively Fruit.

Though the tiny black kernel entered the cauldron, nothing happened. The tiny kernel bounced about in the flame, refusing to fuse into the dark red paste.

"Different ingredients have different resistances to temperature, so you need to learn how to control the temperature of any part of the flame. In areas that require a low temperature, you have to suppress the flame while in areas that require high temperature, you have relax your control to increase the temperature of the flame....." Yao Lao lectured as he gazed upon Xiao Yan who was perspiring in worry.

Xiao Yan licked his dry lips as he nodded. He promptly divided a part of his spiritual perception to exert control over the flame below the tiny kernel to gradually increase its temperature.

"Bang....."

As the spiritual perception relaxed its control over the temperature, a single uncontrolled flame fiercely soared up and burnt half of the tiny black kernel to ashes in an instant, causing Xiao Yan to break out in cold sweat as he hastened to desperately suppress the flame.

One part of his spiritual perception had to maintain the temperature of one side of the flame while another part had to increase the temperature of the other side of the flame. This kind of multitasking caused a headache for Xiao Yan.

However, after going through a few more perilous situations, Xiao Yan finally calmed down from his flustered state. He wiped away the sweat that had gathered on his forehead as he sighed deeply before concentrating the rest of his Dou Qi into the fire outlet.

Within the cauldron, the tiny black kernel could no longer bear it and finally ruptured under the increasing temperature of the flame. Fine jet-black powder gradually floated into the light red paste and dyed the latter in a deeper shade of color.

As the last pinch of jet-black powder floated into the paste, Xiao Yan finally let out a long sigh. His hands slowly separated from the fire outlet and the flame within the cauldron gradually died down.

At the sight of the panting Xiao Yan, Yao Lao faintly smiled as he waved his hand, lifting the cauldron lid and settling it onto the floor. With his right hand, he willed the huge lump of crimson red paste to leap up, where it remained floating in midair.

Yao Lao glanced at the crimson red paste which was emitting a strong medicine smell. His hands made cutting motions in the air as the dark red paste was cut into at least a hundred tiny pieces.

Taking the Storage Ring from Xiao Yan, Yao Lao flicked it as over a hundred small jade bottles suddenly spread out all over the narrow cave.

After arranging the jade bottles, Yao Lao waved his hand again as the liquid like paste in the air accurately landed into the jade bottles.

Randomly choosing a jade bottle, Yao Lao smiled as he passed it over to Xiao Yan while bantering: "Congratulations, your first attempt at alchemy was a success!"

Impatiently receiving the jade bottle, Xiao Yan gazed at the slightly impure crimson red fluid within while in his heart feelings of excitement and pride welled up.

"Haha, from this point on, I can also be considered an alchemist!"

Chapter 74:Turning up Uninvited

As several days passed, Xiao Yan spent nearly every day beside the cauldron. Although these days were extremely exhausting, the Storage Ring, which was full of healing medicine, made him feel gratified as he rested.

Of course, another thing to be mentioned was that after almost five days of continuous alchemy, the Dou Qi in Xiao Yan's body unknowingly became much more powerful. Judging by his current progress, he had almost reached the One Star Dou Zhe level.

With these two pieces of good news, Xiao Yan managed to grit his teeth and survive the ordeal.

As Xiao Yan hid in the cave to painstakingly refine medicine, the situation in Wu Tan City continued to unravel. The atmosphere between Xiao and Jia Lie Clans had become increasingly strained, just two days ago the Jia Lie Clan took the opportunity to come up with various market rules that favored merchants, causing a large portion of the merchants who had originally been observing from the sidelines to begin moving to the marketplaces of the Jia Lie Clan.

Faced with a measure that was obviously aimed to rock the foundations of the Xiao Clan, all of the high ranking members of the Xiao Clan came to be possessed by a violent rage that threatened to evolve into a murderous intent.

.....

"God dammit, I can't take it anymore, in a mere five days, our Xiao Clan has lost at least 50% to 60% of its profits; if this continues all of our marketplaces will go bankrupt!" Within the Clan Meeting Room, the third Elder exclaimed in anger, an ominous glint on his face.

All the higher position clan members were seated within the huge hall; the fury in their hearts was expressed by their gloomy complexions.

"This truly cannot drag out any further..." The first Elder slowly spat out each word, continuing, he said: "Although master Gu Ni from Primer Auction House has aided us by manufacturing over a hundred bottles of healing medicine, this amount is too little; it is completely incomparable to the massive amount from the Jia Lie Clan. Although we might be able to maintain a deadlock with the Jia Lie Clan in the short run, in the long run, as those healing medicines run out, we would once again arrive at the awkward situation before."

The first Elder sighed before letting out a bitter laugh and saying: "Although if Gu Ni was willing to fully support us, based on quantity, we would definitely be able to drag it out with the first tier alchemist from the Jia Lie Clan. However, he is from Primer Auction House after all, they seldom involve themselves in the clash of clans. To have helped to such an extent is already very unexpected."

Seated in the leader's chair, Xiao Zhan nodded his head, a gloomy look on his face. Though the quality of the healing medicine that the Jia Lie Clan sold was low, the quantity was vast and the price was cheap. This suited the preferences of the mercenaries, who were often caught in bloody situations.

"If we could also get a first tier Alchemist, we would be able to contend against them..." In the big hall someone lamented.

Hearing this, Xiao Zhan helplessly shook his head. There were only a few Alchemists in Wu Tan City; to woo any one of those arrogant chaps was easier said than done. This time, the Jia Lie Clan had struck the lottery and actually received an alchemist's help.

In the corner of the hall, Xiao Yu, Xiao Ning and the other members of the younger generation of the clan were also present. As they gazed upon the gloomy expressions on their elders, they did not dare carelessly interrupt and so they endured the stifling atmosphere in silence.

"Older sister, is that first tier alchemist really so strong? How could he have forced our Xiao Clan into this situation?" Somewhat unable to tolerate the oppressive atmosphere, Xiao Ning quietly inquired Xiao Yu who sat beside him.

Xiao Yu softly sighed, letting out a bitter laugh, she answered softly: "Indeed, the alchemist is a very unique profession... The strength of a first tier alchemist is at best in the Dou Zhe level and in a straightforward battle any of the elders in the clan could easily kill him. Yet the true terror of an alchemist is not in direct battle but rather that they are able to create elixirs that people go crazy for. With these elixirs, they possess the incomparable ability to rally supporters. Many strong practitioners are willing to serve under an alchemist for the sake of obtaining these elixirs."

"On the Dou Qi continent, many people compare an alchemist to a poisonous wasp's nest; once prodded, an alchemist would immediately gather an uncountable number of fighters. Faced with so many fighters, even if they are unable to kill you, they would still be able to tire you to death."

As Xiao Ning imagined the scene of being surrounded by fighters, he trembled as an envious look spread across his face.

"Don't be delusional, you should know about the harsh requirements to become an alchemist. The chances are even smaller than a meat pie dropping from the heavens." Rolling her eyes at Xiao Ning, Xiao Yu mercilessly splashed cold water over him.

Set back by Xiao Yu's words, Xiao Ning dispiritedly curled his lip as he said: "I'm afraid that our entire Xiao Clan does not have the fortune to come up with an alchemist."

Although Xiao Yu nodded in agreement to these words, in her mind a certain youth dressed in black garments abruptly popped up. Looking closely at the features of the youth, it seemed to be Xiao Yan...

Ruthlessly flinging away the thought, Xiao Yu whispered to herself in her heart: "How could I have thought of that little bastard? Humph, if someone with that kind of personality is able to become an alchemist, all of the alchemists in this world would be worthless."

After cursing Xiao Yan in her heart, Xiao Yu willed her gaze towards a corner by the window, there, a green clothed young maiden was quietly clasping a thick and simple book, occasionally moving her finger to flip a page as her eyes scanned the contents of the book. This tranquil and elegant appearance drew the furtive gazes of many of her peers.

"Such a good girl, why must she favor that little bastard?" Xiao Yu grudgingly shook her head as she once again maintained her silence.

Quietly sitting beside the window, although her attention was on the book, Xun Er was able to sense the depressing atmosphere in the hall. Her willowy eyebrows slightly knitted together. No matter what was said, she had also stayed in the Xiao Clan for over ten years. Moreover, even if it was not for Xiao Yan, she would never let the Xiao Clan be beaten by the Jia Lie Clan that badly.

"Hah. I hope that those bastards won't go overboard..." Xun Er sighed in her heart as she once again turned back to her book. With no Xiao Yan by her side, she practically had no reason to speak.

As the plans continued to be discussed within the hall, a clan guard hurriedly ran in and reported in a respectful tone: "Clan leader, there is a person dressed in a black cloak outside. He says that he has some collaboration matters to discuss with the clan leader."

At these words, Xiao Zhan and the rest of the elders were slightly shocked. Mutually exchanging glances, their once gloomy expressions suddenly soared with ecstasy. A few of them simultaneously stood up together and urgently ordered: "Quickly invite him in!"

Spotting the looks on Xiao Zhan and the three elders, everyone in the hall was somewhat amazed, immediately exchanging glances with one another.

"Haha. No need to invite me in. Clan Leader Xiao, how have you been? This old man has come uninvited." Yao Lao's clear laughter resounded from beyond the door just as the sound of Xiao Zhan's order faded.

Along with the laughter, a figure shrouded by a large black mantle unhurriedly walked into the hall under the crowd's stare.

At the instant when the person dressed in a black gown stepped through the door, Xun Er, who had all along submersed herself in her book, suddenly raised her eyebrows. Gradually lifting her small face, her autumn water eyes vigilantly stared at the black cloaked person who had just entered.

Chapter 75:Big Business

Staring at the man wearing a black cloak who had just entered, Xiao Zhan and the three elders promptly welcomed him; advancing with quick steps, Xiao Zhan showed a respectful smile and said: "Most esteemed guest , forgive me for I have been rather busy with the matters of the clan and was unable to come out to greet you Xiao Zhan, please forgive me. "

"Haha, no need to be so formal." Under the black mantle, an aged voice rang out.

Xiao Zhan eagerly nodded and gave a meaningful glance to the three elders, hinting them to promptly open up the path and said with a smile, "Please sit, most esteemed guest."

The man covered by a black cloak nodded and without being overly formal, directly walked up and sat on the seat next to the head of the table.

Seeing how respectfully Xiao Zhan was treating the man in the black cloak, the youths of the clan couldn't help but whisper among themselves. Myriads of curious glances unceasingly swept over that black cloaked man but upon hearing the elder say that he was an alchemist, their eyes suddenly became filled with ardor... and full of worship. No matter where, alchemists were the ones that had the most respected profession in the eyes of others.

"Sister, this person, isn't he the mysterious alchemist we saw during the auction the other day?" Xiao Ning's two eyes fixed on this man dressed in a black cloak as he tugged at Xiao Yu's sleeve, eagerly asking her.

"Yeah." Xiao Yu slowly nodded; her beautiful eyes were still staring at this silhouette covered by a black mantle, as her lovely face showed a slight expression of pleasant surprise: "I didn't think that this honorable sir would really come to our Xiao clan; it looks like what he said last time about cooperating with us wasn't just lip service... If we really obtain his help, the Xiao clan should be able to go through this predicament with ease. "

Hearing the whispers from the people around her, Xun Er wrinkled her brows and fixed her crystal clear eyes tightly at the stocky man in the black mantle. She didn't know why, but she felt that the man's gestures, his speech and his manners were not exactly harmonious.

After knitting her brows while pondering for a long time, Xun Er could only helplessly renounce this idea.

“Haha, sir; what brings you here?” Personally preparing a cup of tea, Xiao Yan asked with a smile.

“I was passing in the neighborhood, so I thought I’d come to visit your noble clan. I brought with me a few Foundation Elixirs that should be able to foster a good amount of youths from your side.” Under this black gown, the elder’s voice was quite joyous.

Having heard him, Xiao Zhan hurried to look around but didn’t see the faintest trace of Xiao Yan. He couldn’t help but bitterly smile.

“Haha, the Xiao family head doesn’t need to call him out, I have already met the young master, a quite fine youth, he’s quite to this old man’s liking...” Waving his hands, he stopped Xiao Zhan from calling someone to get Xiao Yan. The tone of the black cloaked man was filled with a touch of admiration that he didn’t conceal and made the youth hidden under the cloak quite embarrassed.

Hearing the black cloaked man’s tone filled with admiration, the eyes of everyone in the hall were filled with envy. To get such a high evaluation from such a high level alchemist wasn’t something that was easy to come by.

“All the good stuff happens only to this brat.” As he twitched his mouth, full of unwillingness, Xiao Ning’s tone was full of envy.

Xiao Yu, completely helpless, sighed, her jade-like hands on her cheeks, she silently whispered: “Is that brat so good? How come I never realized it before?”

Hearing the compliment, Xiao Zhan’s face revealed a huge smile and in his eyes, a glimpse of pride could faintly be seen.

“Xiao clan leader, I recently heard that your clan was facing hardships, right?” Xiao Zhan’s smile hadn’t stretched out completely before it was struck down by the oppressive voice of Yao Lao.

Nodding in agreement, Xiao Zhan smiled bitterly, “Surely this sir knows our Xiao clan’s current situation, right?”

“Mhh, I know a bit about it.” Nodding, the black cloaked man revealed a smile.

“Ai, in the current Xiao Clan, our business is already no more than half than what it was in the past. In the long term, I’m afraid that our influence is also going to sink down to that of a second-rate clan.” Xiao Zhan sighed in regret, wrinkling his brows. He seemed to age a few years at that particular moment.

“Haha, Even though I am not so close with Xiao Clan, I am getting along quite well with your son. If you, Xiao Clan leader, are not afraid that this old man may have some bad intentions, how about cooperating together?” The black cloaked man smiled gently.

Having heard him, Xiao Zhan was startled at first but soon became wildly joyful; that was all he was what he was waiting for... He gave a look full of excitement to the three elders and soon after, nodded without the slightest hesitation: “Sir, we want to cooperate with you; we’d love to in fact.”

The assistance of an alchemist above the second tier was something that Xiao Clan could not even dream of. Xiao Zhan didn’t think that his own clan had something that could interest a second tier alchemist and hearing the alchemist’s words, that he would cooperate with the Xiao Clan, Xiao Zhan deduced that the reason of the alchemist helping should be because of Xiao Yan. With such an opportunity, Xiao Zhan would be fighting to get the chance.

Seeing Xiao Zhan’s approval, the black cloaked man nodded and a white palm appeared from the cloak. On his finger was a red-colored ring and with a flick, it immediately flickered in red light...

Staring at his palm, as white as a youth’s, Xiao Zhan was shocked. The palm gave him a... familiar feeling.

But Xiao Zhan didn’t have the time to ponder about the cause of his sensation of déjà vu; immediately, a pile of jade bottles appeared on the table.

The huge table was, in a blink of eye, entirely covered with little jade bottles; there wasn’t a single place left empty.

Staring at these jade bottles that appeared out of thin air inside this big hall, except from the green clad lady that was near the window, all the other clansmen, without the slightest exception, were shocked by this tremendous amount of pills to the point that they could hardly breath.

“Here are 1283 bottles of the healing medicine, “Blood Clotting Powder”. It isn’t the best healing drug in terms of quality but compared to the Jia Lie Clan’s “Return Spring Powder”, its effects are lot more outstanding.” Watching the stunned people in the hall, the black cloaked person carelessly introduced his “merchandise”.

Xiao Zhan, shocked with mouth wide open, took a deep breath of the surrounding ice-cold air, “This is truly a big business!”

Chapter 76:Co-operation

In the silent hall, a crowd of red-hot gazes unwaveringly stared at the little jade bottles on the table which numbered over a thousand. Almost no one had ever personally seen such a large quantity of elixirs.

Her pink tongue licked her red lips subconsciously, Xiao Yu was equally dazed at the sight of so many elixirs. A moment later, she shook herself out of the daze and with a sparkle in her eyes, she turned her sight to watch the black cloaked person.

The green clothed maiden seated by the window shoot a glance at the table full of small jade bottles with an astonished look flashing within those beautiful autumn water eyes. Her vision once again swept across the black cloaked person. Unable to find anything suspicious, she continued to look at the simple book in her hand.

In the absolute silence of the hall, the black cloaked person coughed softly, bringing the person next to him: Xiao Zhan, back to reality.

“Eh.....” Xiao Zhan blushed as he let out an embarrassed laughter. As he looked to the black cloaked alchemist, the respect in his gaze had gained another level. Not every alchemist would be able to effortlessly bring out over a thousand bottles of healing medicine at once.

“Sir, you should know about the Xiao Clan’s current situation, we need healing medication to pull back our lost popularity. To the Xiao Clan, your actions are undoubtedly providing help when we need it the most.” Xiao Zhan exclaimed gratefully. Slightly muttering to himself, Xiao Zhan hesitated before he finally spoke out again: “How about this, our Xiao Clan will take the responsibility of selling these healing medicine. As for the earnings, sir you will take 90% while the remaining 10% will go to us. Although I feel it is brazen of us to do so, after all, we still need some money to put things in order. Sir, what do you think about that?”

As he finished outlining his proposition, Xiao Zhan nervously gazed at the black cloaked man before him, afraid that he will not be satisfied with the terms. The current Xiao Clan could only completely depend on this mysterious alchemist.

“Haha.” The black cloaked alchemist laughed before shaking his head.

Seeing this action, the expression on Xiao Zhan’s face slightly changed. Just as he was about to forfeit the last 10%, an old voice interjected which left him dazed and at a complete loss.

“Clan Leader Xiao is too polite, although the elixir is refined by me, making sales is not an easy job. How can I possibly take advantage of you.....let us split it evenly, 50-50, haha.”

At the black cloaked man’s words, the originally anxious three elders and the rest of the clansmen suddenly opened their mouths in shock. It was quite a while before they

subconsciously touched their ears, skeptical if the words were genuine or not. 50-50? This.....this sir, isn't he too considerate to Xiao Clan? Given the current situation, even if he wanted all 100% of the profits, no one in the Xiao Clan would dare object.

"Meat pies have dropped from the skies....." This phrase resounded in everyone's hearts as they looked towards each other.

After a long while more, Xiao Zhan gradually regained his wits. He let out a deep breath then laughed bitterly, saying: "Sir, your words have overwhelmed us, we are already truly grateful for your timely aid; how can we possibly take any further advantage of you?"

As if it was of little importance, the black cloaked man waved his hands about and smugly laughed: "This little bit of profits holds no interest for me; if it were not for the fact that you would never rest easy, truth to be told I would be too lazy to collect even 50%."

Hearing this sort of arrogant explanation, Xiao Zhan could only shake his head as he smiled bitterly.

"I'll leave these elixirs for you to sell. If I have some time in the future, I will come and check up on them." The black cloaked man stood up and smiled as he said: "I still have other matters, so I won't be staying. Clan Leader Xiao need not send me off; go and set up arrangements for the sales instead, haha." With a tone of dismissal, he walked out of the hall under everyone's stares.

Before completely exiting the room, the black cloaked alchemist's steps suddenly stopped. Laughing faintly, he said: "Before I go, I'll say a few words more. Xiao Yan really isn't bad. Haha, goodbye."

Hearing this statement, Xiao Zhan rubbed his head. He was about to say something but the black cloaked man had already breezed out of the hall, gradually fading out of sight around the corner.

Staring at the black cloaked man's disappearing figure, Xiao Zhan let out a small sigh after a long while as he laughed bitterly, saying: "It seems that the relationship between Yan Er and this sir is a bit out of the ordinary. Or else, how could this person who isn't even familiar with us help us like this?"

The three elders all shared a glance and also let out a sigh and nodded. From the way the old alchemist had been expressing praise about Xiao Yan, he clearly looked favorably on Xiao Yan and his help to Xiao Clan would definitely be tied to Xiao Yan.

Within the hall, all the members of the Xiao Clan who were of Xiao Yan's age who had heard the black cloaked man's passing words, showed undisguised envy on their faces.

The blue clothed maiden near the window slightly inclined her head, her vision gazing through the window as the figure turned around the corner. Her willow brows slightly knitting together, an expression of doubt flashed across her delicate face.

.....

Outside of the Xiao Clan, the black cloaked man slowly continued forward until he reached a less crowded area. Only then did a young voice softly grumble from within the black gown: "Teacher, do you have nothing better to do than to point me out every single sentence. If they find out about this, I cannot guarantee that I will not offer you up."

"Hehe, I was only expressing my feelings. If it were not for Xiao Zhan who treated you well since you were young, where would I find such a good disciple? Thus it is only appropriate for me to thank him." The old voice bantered and laughed: "If I just gave them the pills, your cautious father would definitely believe that I had some ulterior motives."

Helplessly shaking his head, Xiao Yan looked around before asking: "Where shall we go now?"

"Towards the auction house so we can pass the Qi Gathering Powder to them; so as to avoid owing them a debt, that is something that I hate the most..... Furthermore, you have burnt up all the medical ingredients for practice, it is time to purchase other medical ingredients." Yao Lao muttered as he smiled.

Xiao Yan nodded to acknowledge these words. With some expectations, he smiled sweetly and asked: "Teacher, can the current me be counted as a first tier alchemist?"

"Tch, you think that just because you refined a few days worth of medicine you've become an alchemist? Healing medication is the simplest kind of elixir, refining that kind of stuff is nothing to be proud of." Yao Lao sneered, ruthlessly dousing Xiao Yan with cold water.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan was a bit gloomy: "Then when can I genuinely be considered as a first tier alchemist?"

"In the alchemy world, the minimum requirement for a first tier alchemist is to be able to refine a pellet type pill and not the simple kind where all you have to do is mix essences into a paste."

"It seems that there's quite a distance for me to go." Hearing these requirements, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head and strode forward, advancing towards the auction house in the city square.

Chapter 77: Breaking the Supply of Ingredients

Primer Auction House, the reception lobby.

On top of a table, there was a small jade case, in which a medicine pill lay peacefully. Due to the smooth, round, and glossy pill, a strong, nice fragrance pervaded the room, causing everyone to feel attentative.

Watching the pills, the two managers of the Primer Auction House, Ya Fei and Gu Ni, couldn't hide the glee on their faces.

Through the black gown, Xiao Yan could see that the two were forgetting themselves in front of him, which caused him to inwardly express disapproval and ridicule them: "If they knew that Yao Lao skimped on the materials when he made this Qi Gathering Powder, what would their expressions be like?"

The Qi Gathering Powder Xiao Yan brought was very much inferior to the product he himself used and yet this powder, half-heartedly created by Yao Lao, was able to surprise both Ya Fei and Gu Ni.

"My dear sir, your alchemy techniques are truly admirable. The Qi Gathering Powder you created can already be compared to that made by fifth tier alchemists." Gu Ni wholeheartedly praised the light green pill.

Under the black cloak, an old voice lightly rang out: "Please receive this Qi Gathering Powder well. After receiving so much help, I just had to express my thanks or else my conscience would be deeply perturbed."

"Haha, sir, you are too kind. You are a guest here and the favors between us are simply favors between friends." Ya Fei smiled while lifting up the case with jade-like hands.

Yao Lao refrained from commenting. Not only did Yao Lao not believe those words, even Xiao Yan scoffed at them as well. If it were really as she said, the Primer Auction House would have been bankrupt already.

From inside his clothes, Xiao Yan produced a piece of paper and handed it to Ya Fei. The old voice rang out: "Please do me another favor by finding these materials for me."

Eagerly accepting the paper, Ya Fei quickly glanced over it before complying with a smile. After the previous time, she dared not show any hesitation now.

Ya Fei called forth a serving girl with a wave and passed the paper to her, instructing her to prepare the ingredients as soon as possible.

Teacup in his hands, Xiao Yan lightly sipped. Suddenly, he thought of something and after a few seconds, Yao Lao's voice could be heard: "Miss Ya Fei, I have a question."

Hearing Yao Lao start to talk, Ya Fei smiled sweetly and gently replied: "Please go ahead sir."

"The Jia Lie Clan has bought a lot of medicine ingredients from here right?" Yao Lao questioned in a monotonous voice.

At this question, Ya Fei's heart slightly tightened and the expression on her lovely face slightly changed. Stealthily sharing a quick glance with Gu Ni, she silently hesitated for a moment before replying: "Previously the Jia Lie Clan had indeed purchased almost 100,000 gold worth of medicine ingredients and these medical ingredients..... also possess some healing properties."

Slightly inclining his head, his old voice suddenly disappeared into silence.

This sudden change in atmosphere from the black cloaked man caused Ya Fei's heart to feel somewhat nervous; she long ago knew that the former was preparing to help the Xiao Clan and yet the auction house kept selling large amounts of medicine ingredients to the Jia Lie Clan. Though she does not know his temperament, it is highly likely that this old gentleman would hold some grudge against the auction house.

The mood in the hall gradually became oppressive, looking towards the silent black cloaked man, Ya Fei started to feeling restless. If it were not for Gu Ni constantly stopping her with his looks, she would have opened her mouth long ago.

"Both of you should know what I intended to do by buying so much medicine ingredients last time right?" A good while later, the old voice finally broke the stifling silence.

Lightly nibbling on her red lips, Ya Fei slightly nodded her head and replied in a low tone: "Sir had intended to refine the ingredients into healing medication to aid the Xiao Clan, yes?"

"Just before I came, I handed over all of the refined healing medicine to the Xiao Clan." Slightly nodding, Yao Lao said in a deep voice: "Perhaps in another two days, the Xiao Clan and the Jia Lie Clan will start to use healing medicine to battle for popularity in Wu Tan City."

Faced with this kind of topic, Ya Fei did not know how to reply, thus she could only cleverly maintain her silence.

"The manufacturing of healing medication requires a large amount of low-grade medical ingredients. In Wu Tan City, besides Primer Auction House, no other medicine stall has the capabilities to provide such a large amount." Seeing the wordless Ya Fei, Yao Lao continued to remark to himself.

"In the later stages of this healing medication battle, besides the price and quality, having a sufficient supply of medicine ingredients is a key factor."

“Thus I hope that Primer Auction House will decline to provide the Jia Lie Clan with medicine ingredients from now on!”

Just as Yao Lao’s voice resounded out, Xiao Yan’s line of sight penetrated through the black mantle and focused upon the mature beauty who was as lovely as a fox spirit. He had less than two months left in Wu Tan City and thus, within this time, he had to help his father to defeat the Jia Lie Clan. Only then could he leave on the training journey with Yao Lao at ease.

Ya Fei’s charming face slightly changed as she heard Yao Lao’s words. In a difficult position, she said: “Sir, our Primer Auction House has a rule that forbids us from involving in any kind of conflicts between the clans. If we agree to your request, that would be tantamount to indirectly helping the Xiao Clan, this is not in accordance to our rules.....”

“I can refine two Qi Gathering Pills for you free of costs.” Yao Lao said, undisturbed.

“Sir, it is not a problem of elixirs, truly.....” The enticement of two Qi Gathering Pills caused Ya Fei’s smooth hands to tremble, however she continued to endure.

“Three pills.....”

“Sir.....” Ya Fei forced a smile, right beside her, Gu Ni’s face contorted, three Qi Gathering Pills? That would be worth at least 500,000 gold right?

“Five pills!” An aged voice armed with an indifferent tone relentlessly smashed against the baseline in Ya Fei’s heart.

“Hrrrr.....” Ya Fei’s large eyes screwed shut as she lightly inhaled a breath of ice-cold air. After a long time, her eyes abruptly opened, Ya Fei let out a bitter laugh as she said: “Sir, you’ve won. From now on, Primer Auction House will never again provide the Jia Lie Clan with any medical ingredients!”

“Miss Ya Fei’s will is indeed somewhat beyond my expectations; one month later I will bring over the goods. Of course only if Primer Auction House does not let me down.” Yao Lao said as he let out a small laugh.

“Sir, be at ease, Ya Fei knows who is important and who is not very clearly.”

In any case, Ya Fei had already experienced many years in the auction house, thus she quickly calmed down. Between the Jia Lie Clan and an alchemist who was at the very least fourth tiered, there was absolutely no comparison. The choice was not hard to make, actually, the true difficulty laid in how to select the best moment to earn the greatest profits and Ya Fei was very satisfied with the current outcome.

Chapter 78: Training and Training and then Breakthrough

Only after seeing the black clothed man walked out of the lounge, satisfied with the ingredients in his hand, could Ya Fei finally relax her shoulders. Her body was cuddled-up on top of the chair, making her look like a curled-up fox. This lethargic position of hers had a peculiar charm to it.

“This dear sir... is truly daring.” Said Ya Fei with her head stuck to the cool back of the chair.

Beside her, Gu Ni was rubbing his forehead, sighing: “Five pills of Gathering Qi Powder...It’s true that he’s a fourth tier alchemist, but still, isn’t his way of conducting business a bit grand?”

Ya Fei nodded and pursed her red, small lips before proceeding to mock herself: “I thought I could last against his pressure, but who would’ve thought...”

Gu Ni laughed, replying: “If it were me in your shoes, I’m afraid I would’ve gave in by the time he mentioned the third pill. You were able to exceed my expectations and persevere until the fifth, so be proud of it.”

“What I showed was perseverance? Upon hearing his offer, my mind blanked out and so I wasn’t able to think straight. But who would’ve thought...that he would be so forward with his request and threw in two extra pills.” Said Ya Fei while rolling her eyes. She couldn’t refrain from laughing at the situation.

“Well facts are facts and your mind blanking out helped the Primer Auction House rake in an extra 400,000 income.” Expressed Gu Ni while laughing after he heard her explanation.

Ya Fei used her hand to cover up her mouth, letting out a few tender laughs. As she started to get up from her chair, she sighed: “Looks like the Jia Lie Clan is in for it now.”

Gu Ni agreed as well, nodding his head.

“But doesn’t it seem a bit suspicious? Isn’t our dear sir supposed to be a complete stranger to the Xiao Clan? Why is he helping them so much? He’s even willing to spare five pills of Qi Gathering Powder to cut off the Jia Lie Clan’s supply chain,” Ya Fei said while a hint of suspicion flashed across her eyes.

“Who knows... Our respected alchemist sure is mysterious, isn’t he? I didn’t know that the Jia Ma Empire had a figure like him,” Said Gu Ni helplessly.

Ya Fei nodded slightly, her eyes wandering. After muttering a bit, she replied: “Looks like having a phenomenal relationship with the Xiao Clan will be a must. With these pills, I’ve increased the profits of the auction house by four-fold. Let’s see if anyone can surpass me at the next employee assessment, shall we?”

After these words were said, the ends of her red lips formed a smile. With hands behind her back, she exited the lounge while humming a song to herself.

.....

Walking out of the auction house, Xiao Yan let out a long sigh, in a low voice he said: "Teacher, thank you very much."

"What's there to thank, if the Jia Lie Clan is not stamped to the ground would you be able to concentrate when I bring you on the training journey?" Yao Lao helplessly replied.

"Hehe." Xiao Yan grinned, without any further words he followed his usual twisting and turning about the streets routine before taking off the black mantle in an empty corner and carefully exiting the street, heading towards the Xiao Clan.

Back at the clan, when Xiao Yan occasionally met another clan member, he could feel that their gazes were filled with even more envy. Evidently, word of what had happened in the hall today had spread amongst the clan.

Xiao Yan ignored these looks as he continued his slow journey towards his room. As he turned a corner, a girl in red suddenly appeared in a head on collision course. Thankfully Xiao Yan braked to a halt in time, successfully avoiding the awkward crash that had threatened to unfold.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge? I've finally found you." The girl in red retreated a step back and lifted her head. Her young and pure face contained its own type of charm. The combination was a bit contradictory, causing the girl to have a little more indescribable charm compared to other girls of the similar age; this kind of charm even made Xiao Yan glance a few more times.

This girl whose face was filled with joy was none other than Xiao Mei.

Xiao Yan's gaze swept across Xiao Mei's pretty face. Rubbing his nose, he asked in a monotonous voice: "Is there anything?"

As she heard this somewhat unfamiliar greeting, Xiao Mei's radiant face slightly darkened, in a low voice she answered: "Clan Leader wants Xiao Yan ge-ge to make a trip to the study room."

"Hmm?" Slightly startled, Xiao Yan nodded and smiled in reply: "Okay got it, thanks." He waved goodbye before turning towards the study room located in the front courtyard.

"Xiao Yan biao-ge, thank you for before." Xiao Mei softly said as she watched Xiao Yan's straightforward and clearcut steps walking away. A flash of disappointment could be seen in her eyes as she bit her lip.

Xiao Yan paused his step as he elegantly waved towards Xiao Mei without turning, coolly replying: "No problem."

Staring at Xiao Yan's retreating figure, all of a sudden, Xiao Mei gathered her courage to ask: "Xiao Yan biao-ge, will you be participating in the enrollment test for Jia Nan Academy?"

"Maybe." With both hands on the back of his head, Xiao Yao slowly and gradually left, leaving behind this word.

When Xiao Mei heard Xiao Yan's reply, her overcast but pretty face finally brightened. Pinching her hands into a fist, she stood on the spot as she looked as Xiao Yan's figure finally faded from sight before lightly and bitterly sighing and turning around to leave.

.....

Xiao Yan strolled about in the clan before he finally arrived in front of a spacious room. Lightly knocking on the door, he slowly pushed the door open and entered.

In the room, Xiao Zhan and the three elders were discussing something but as they saw Xiao Yan enter, they closed their mouths in unison.

"Father, you were looking for me?" With a smile on his face, Xiao Yan walked up and asked.

Xiao Zhan smiled back as he nodded his head, glancing at the three elders, he hesitated before asking in a low voice: "You should have seen that old sir right?"

"Yes." Xiao Yan inclined his head, naturally he knew what Xiao Zhan was referring to.

"Do you know where he came from?" Xiao Zhan muttered.

"I've only known him for a short time, how could I find out about his origins?" These were Xiao Yan's heart-felt words as he really did not know exactly where Yao Lao came from.

"But I know that he is an alchemist." Xiao Yan smiled and added.

"Nonsense." Xiao Zhan rolled his eyes as he smiled whole scolding playfully.

Xiao Zhan shook his head and laughed, with an excellent mood, he continued to ask Xiao Yan a few more questions about Yao Lao. However, Xiao Yan's muddled and silly replies meant that in the end, Xiao Zhan did not manage to find out anything.

"You little brat, I can't even tell if you're pretending." As he gazed at a seemingly completely ignorant Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan could not help but shake his head helplessly.

With a flourish of his hand, he continued to speak: "Forget it, go and continue whatever it is you were doing, if you meet that old sir in the future, try not to offend him. The future of the Xiao Clan depends on him."

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders, declining to comment.

"Ermph..... Xiao Yan, your current aura seems some what..... strong." The First Elder stared at Xiao Yan and suddenly stuttered out.

At the First Elder's words, Xiao Zhan was also startled, concentrating his gaze to sweep across Xiao Yan. A moment later, his mouth slowly gaped open and he let out in amazement: "You.....you have made a breakthrough to Dou Zhe?"

Hearing these words, the corners of the Second and Third elder mouths pulled apart, as they stared in disbelief at the youth in front of them.

"Hic....." Xiao Yan scratched his head before innocently spreading out his hands: "I think so, I was just training and training as usual and then somehow made a breakthrough....."

The corners of Xiao Zhan's eyes jumped, shocked at this development. He didn't know whether to laugh or cry and said: "What kind of 'training' was that?"

Over this period of time, Xiao Zhan had already gotten used to the miracles created by Xiao Yan. With a wave of his hand, Xiao Zhan forced a smile and said: "It's good that you made a breakthrough, if you have some time go to the rank testing association to receive a rank badge."

Xiao Yan nodded, the corners of his mouth raising playfully: "Then can I leave now? Honestly, I just trained and trained and then broke through....."

"You can get going already....." Rolling his eyes, Xiao Zhan playfully scolded him. This young fellow was simply ruffling people's feathers. Did he truly not know that when these three elders were condensing their Qi Cyclone, they failed twice in a row before becoming a Dou Zhe?

Staring at the stiff faces of the three elders, Xiao Yan grinned and broke out into laughter. Only after Xiao Zhan began scolding him again did he scurry out of the study.

Hearing the fading laughter of that youth, the three elders faces slightly loosened up. Looking at each other, they couldn't help but laugh with faces full of bitterness.

Chapter 79: Counter-Attack by the Xiao Clan

After receiving the secret aid of Xiao Yan in the form of the large quantity of healing medication, though the Xiao Clan did not publicize this news, they had already secretly started to prepare for their counter-attack against the Jia Lie Clan.

The events that occurred in the clan hall were kept a secret by Xiao Zhan and the three elders; everything regarding the healing medicine had been classified as the highest scale of prohibition. None of the clan members could mention this to the outsiders; if any one were to leak information, that person shall be punished according to the clan's rule.

Along with the silence of the Xiao family, the behavior of the Jia Lie clan became more and more arrogant, using all kinds of tricks and enticements without restraint to pull away all the customers of the Xiao family's market.

Even with this, the Xiao Clan remained silent.

Seeing the Xiao family watching in silence, some of the small forces allied with them became disappointed and also started to secretly prepared to move to protect themselves.

With an atmosphere a little bit stranger than normal, two days' time quietly passed.

It was another day of radiant and enchanting sunny weather while Jia Lie clan's market was as hot and crowded like always. On the main street, people's head were flowing like water. On the "Return of Spring Powder" stall, there was an even larger crowd of people; the sound of shouting, scolding, and scuffles all gathered in one place. The deafening voices pierced through the clouds.

Behind the brown medicine counter, a medicine salesman of the Jia Lie clan was watching the arguing mercenaries fighting over the medicine. The smile on his face had a prideful look, knowing he had an advantage by being the only supplier of the medicine.

Jia Lie Ku was a core member of the Jia Lie clan and was in charge of Jia Lie's clan most popular market.

Standing on the second floor of the reception hall, Jia Lie Ku looked down from high above upon the big streets of crowded people; his fat and oily face was filled with a complacent smile.

During this period of time, "Return of Spring Powder" had sold far more than Jia Lie clan's initial estimates. Under the huge temptation of benefits, the Jia Lie clan was no longer satisfied as they moved the price from 100 gold to 300 gold,

Initially the many mercenaries were disgusted by the price increase, however there was no other supplier for the “Return of Spring Powder”, thus they could only make a din and complain for a while before grudgingly accepting the reality of getting cheated.

Jia Lie Ku lightly hummed a small tune as his eyes pulled into a line and happily said: “Even if you don’t buy, other people will still buy.....”

Jia Lie Ku extended his short and fat hand to block the rays of the sun, unable to endure it in front of the warehouse. He wiped the sweat off his forehead as he grumbled: “Damn, it’s way too hot today, looks like I’ll have to release some of my ‘hot spunk’ tonight to cool off. Tch tch, the young girl from last time was so refreshing and lively.” As he recalled the ecstasy of that forbidden place, Jia Lie Ku was filled with an unbearably impatience, yet again wiping his sweat. Then his brows suddenly wrinkled up at the sight of a disturbance at the entrance.

“Damnit, fighting again? These mercenaries are all brawn and no brain, do they not know that it costs money to fix the things they break?” As Jie Lie Ku gazed at the disturbance, he could not help but curse in irritation.

“The Xiao Clan marketplace has also started selling healing medication!!”

Just when Jia Lie Ku was preparing to send guards to settle the disturbance, a loud shout was suddenly heard from the main street.

When Jia Lie Ku heard this sudden shout, the fat all over his body jiggled like a mountain crashing into the sea and on his face, his complexion slightly changed. However, a moment later he sneered and said: “Looks like there’s no hope left for the Xiao Clan, to actually come up with this kind of methods, they are practically asking for death.”

The shout had caused the once noisy main street to elapse into a period of silence, however, as everyone started looking at each other in dismay, one by one, the crowd started cursing: “Damnit, don’t even think about using this kind of dirty tactics to steal the place I had been queuing half a day for.”

It was clear that these people believed that the shout was a ploy to take the chance to shamelessly push to the front of the queue. After all, this kind of trick was common during this period of time.

After cursing, these people continued their rush for the “Return of Spring Powder” again.

Of course, not everyone had these thoughts. A small portion of the mercenaries who were sick and tired of the overbearing conduct of the Jia Lie Clan decided to check. After hesitating for a while, they chose to squeeze out of the street and head towards the Xiao Clan marketplace, half in doubt yet half in belief.

Standing upstairs Jia Lie Ku looked at the still extremely popularity on the main street. He could not help but laugh proudly and spoke shadily: "Xiao Clan? Hey, lets see how long you can persevere. Later on in Wu Tan city, the Jia Lie clan may be the only big clan. The times of the 3 influential clans? Hehe, those days have left forever!"

The effect of the shout from before on the busy marketplace was like a leaf dropping into the vast ocean, it barely made any ripples' the popularity of the Jia Lie Clan was not in the least bit affected.

Naturally, this was only temporary.

Half an hour after the shout, a few burly men wearing mercenary garb appeared before the marketplace entrance of the Jie Lie Clan. They rudely barged into the marketplace, bumping and pushing over the guards. With gleeful faces, they lifted the green jade bottles in their hands high into the air as they shouted out in unison, momentarily suppressing the noise of the marketplace.

"The Xiao Clan is also selling healing medication!!"

Their unified shout caused the marketplace to fall into silence as everyone's gazes turned to the source of the shout, a flash of understanding in their eyes.

One of the burly mercenaries who had just barged in hurriedly jumped onto a large rock nearby. With a "Qiang" sound, he drew the broadsword at his side before gritting his teeth as he pulled it over his arm, drawing a fresh line of blood.

Lifting his bloodied arm for all to see, the burly man tilted the green jade bottle in his other hand as a thick and viscous crimson red liquid slowly poured out to cover the wound.

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, the thick and viscous crimson red liquid invaded the wound. A moment later, the flow of the blood that was previously surging out slowed and to everyone's surprise, the blood had already congealed to form a thin layer over the wound.

On the main street, the gazes of all who had personally seen this scene suddenly lit up with passion: this kind of rapid staunching effect was essential to any mission!

"This is the new product sold by the marketplaces of the Xiao Clan called "Blood Clotting Medicine"! Not only is it more effective, but its price is also lower than the "Spring of Return Powder" by more than half! What are you people waiting for? Do you enjoy being extorted like idiots? Still not dispersing?" The burly mercenary held up the jade bottle as he cracked open his mouth and laughed savagely.

The main street was in silence.

One of the mercenaries who had just entered the marketplace blankly stared at the green bottle in the burly man's hand. A split second later, he abruptly turned around and ran.....

Gazing upon the shadow of the man who had desperately run out of the marketplace, The crowd in the marketplace slightly wavered before loudly moving off, together, their steps caused the ground to tremble as the crowd frantically stampeded out of the marketplace.

On the rock, a strange smile floated upon the face of the burly mercenary at the sight of the frantic crowd. As a wind blew across the clothes of the burly man, a Xiao Clan emblem was faintly exposed.....

After the huge commotion, the originally bustling marketplace was suddenly deserted. Besides the few merchants who were still dumbstruck at the scene, there was barely anyone left on the main street.

“The Xiao Clan..... has started their counter-attack.”

This thought raced across all of the merchants as they gazed upon the now empty main street.

They exchanged gazes and as one they lifted their heads to look upon Jia Lie Ku. At this moment, the once gleeful fatty was already paralyzed on the spot with a deathly pale complexion on his face.

Meanwhile, in the other marketplaces of the Jia Lie Clan, similar situations were occurring.....

Chapter 80: Alchemist Liu Xi

The atmosphere in the brightly lit hall felt stifling and oppressive.

In the middle of the hall stood a table and at its center rested a small green jade bottle. From that bottle, a faint medicine smell emanated.

Many people were seated within the hall. From their attire, it was evident that they were the many upper echelons of the Jia Lie Clan; Jia Lie Ku was also seated among them.

In the hall, on the leftmost side, reclined a white clad youth lazily against the back of a chair. In truth, the youth would have looked rather charming, if it weren't for the lust filled look frequently flashing across his eyes, degrading his image. While he reclined, one of his hands could be seen slowly burrowing into the clothes of the pretty maid beside him. Even though there were so many people around him, no one seemed to care about such an unbridled action.

The pretty maid's cheeks slightly paled with the youth's vulgar act, but she did not even make a sound. But it was clear that a trembling, restrained look was brewing in her eyes as her tender body continuously shuddered.

"This is the 'Blood Clotting Medicine' that the Xiao Clan suddenly came up with and now, our popularity in the markets has already begun to plummet." Jia Lie Bi gazed upon the small green bottle on the table with a gloomy face, acting as if he did not see any of the youth in white's rude actions.

"How could the Xiao Clan have healing medication? Could it be that they have also managed to get an Alchemist?" Jia Lie Ao, who often clashed with Xiao Yan, cast a glance at the man in white besides him before frowning and asking.

Jia Lie Bi squinted his old wrinkled eyes, an ugly expression on his face: "Does anyone remember the mysterious alchemist we met at the auction house? At that time, he seemed to favor the Xiao Clan. If this 'Blood Clotting Medicine' is refined by him, then we are in big trouble. As you all may know, that person could be a third tier alchemist."

Hearing the term third tier alchemist, the white clothed youth finally stopped the hand that was roving about the maid's body reluctantly. He stepped forward and picked up the small green bottle to take a small whiff before pouring out a little of the contents and lightly rubbing it between his fingers. With a sneer, he concluded: "A third tier alchemist? Bull. This Blood Clotting Medicine is indeed more effective than the Return of Spring Powder but based on its quality, the person who refined it is obviously of a lower tier than me. The greater effectiveness of the medicine is due to the unique recipe."

At this information, everyone seated inwardly let out a sigh of relief. If the Xiao Clan had really obtained the help of a third tier alchemist then the Jia Lie Clan would have probably been doomed.

"From my experience, it is highly likely that the alchemist from the Xiao Clan is just a complete novice who somehow managed to borrow this recipe, from god knows where, to manufacture this Blood Clotting Medicine." On the face of the white clothed youth, there was only indifference and disdain.

"Hehe, being able to see a maker's skills from a tiny bottle of medicine, Liu Xi da-ge's insight is truly vicious." Jia Lie Ao smiled with a hint of flattery.

"It is merely one of the basic skills of an alchemist." Having been called Liu Xi with so much flattery, the white clothed youth modestly shook his head; however an obscure pleased look floated upon his face which did not manage to escape the observation of the old wily foxes seated around him.

"Although the Return of Spring Powder loses out to the Blood Clotting Medicine in terms of quality, the difference between the two isn't dramatic. The main reason why our

marketplaces are losing popularity is because previously we had raised the price too much. After we reevaluate our prices our popularity will slowly return, but lowering it back to its previous cost will be challenging. After all this Blood Clot Medicine will definitely pull away many customers. It seems that in the future, the Xiao Clan will also gain a foothold in the healing medication market of Wu Tang City.” Jia Lie Bi slowly muttered.

“Reevaluate the prices?” At these words, Liu Mu wrinkled his brows, evidently unwilling to cope with any sudden price reduction since he had already gotten used to the high prices.

Having seen the look on Liu Mu’s face, Jia Lie Bi inwardly cursed at how brainless Liu Mu was before obligingly explaining with a smile on his face: “Mr. Liu Mu, the current market situation is unlike before. Previously, we monopolized the healing medicine market in Wu Tang City but now, that is no longer so; thus we need to reduce our prices to regain our popularity.”

Liu Mu grudgingly shook his head, curling his lip, he said: “Do whatever you want, but remember, even if you reduce the price, I still get the cut we talked about when the medicine was worth 300 gold.”

Jia Lie Bi’s eyes couldn’t help but twitch as a cloud of anger began to descend upon his mind; he took a deep breath to calm down. His face still wore a smiling expression, however it seems to have grown a little colder: “Haha, of course. I will definitely pay Liu Mu’s share as we agreed.”

“Ok.” A satisfied look on his face, Liu Mu nodded his head and once again returned to his seat. Even more unbridled than before, he dragged the pretty maid onto his lap.

“Mr. Liu Mu, we do not have much ‘Return of Spring Powder’ left. Earlier, I have already sent people to the Primer Auction House to purchase ingredients. When the time comes, I’m afraid I’ll have to inconvenience you again,” Jia Lie Bi smiled before supplementing: “Additionally, I managed to buy a pair of valuable Ta Ge Er Desert Snake Women yesterday and I have already sent them to your room.”

When Liu Mu heard that he had to refine medicine again, a look of impatience flashed clearly across his face, yet after hearing the two words: Snake Women, the impatience immediately changed into a perverted expression. With the flame of lust burning in his eyes, he nodded his head and took charge of the situation: “As long as there is enough medicine ingredients, the Clan Leader need not worry about the quantity of Return of Spring Powder.”

At the sight of a Liu Mu who was so easy to control, the corners of Jia Lie Bi’s mouth turned to form an expression of disdain, inwardly he sneered: “With only thoughts controlled by lust, besides knowing alchemy, he has no other good points.”

Jia Lie Bi sneered as he shook his head, lifting his teacup with both hands to his mouth to take a sip before engaging in the topic Liu Mu was most interested in: sexual affairs, smiling all the while.

As he was once again making light talk with Liu Mu, a clan member hastily barged into the hall, quickly arriving at Jia Lie Bi's side before lowering his head to speak some words into Jia Lie Bi's ear in a hushed tone.

With a smile on his face, Jia Lie Bi listened to the clan member's report, a moment later, the smile on his face went rigid, "Ka Cha" the teacup in his hand was suddenly crushed to dust and the dust and tea mixed together as they flowed down his hand, dripping onto the floor.

"That wretched Primer Auction House, to actually use such a ploy with me!"

With a face full of fury, Jia Lie Bi abruptly stood up and roared in anger, a berserk Qi suddenly exploded out of his body forming tiny whirlwinds which hissed in mid air.

Seated closest to Jia Lie Bi, Jia Lie Ao suddenly found it hard to breathe due to the imposing Qi that emitted from his father and hastily rushing a few steps back. He anxiously shouted: "Father!"

Jia Lie Ao's shout allowed Jia Lie Bi to regain his senses. His face slightly twitched before coldly sitting down and saying: "Primer Auction House has refused to sell our Jia Lie Clan any more medicine ingredients!"

Once these words were said, the entire hall was in uproar, everyone looked at each other in dismay, alarm was visible on their faces.

"How can it be possible? Hasn't Primer Auction House always preserved their neutrality? How can they suddenly choose to oppose the Jia Lie Clan?" Jia Lie Ku's complexion changed at Jia Lie Bi's words and shuddered while involuntarily voicing his thoughts.

"If there were enough incentive, who would pointlessly maintain their neutrality?" Jia Lie Bi coldly snorted in reply as he slowly spit out a sigh. He cast a glance towards the Liu Xi who was in a sorry state due to his Qi before icily saying: "I fear that the Xiao Clan had some hand in this matter."

"They shouldn't have the ability to cause Primer Auction House to refuse to sell us medicine ingredients right?" Jia Lie Ao muttered.

"Humph, who knows what kind of conditions they used to move Primer Auction House." Jia Lie Bi stroked his aged face and without knowing why, a sense of unease filled his heart.

“What can we do now? Without enough medical ingredients, our stock of the Return of Spring Powder will quickly run out. At that time, it would be our turn to experience the spectacle of an empty marketplace.” Jia Lie Ku anxiously said.

Jia Lie Bi ground his teeth and coldly replied: “There are quite a few medical ingredient stores who still stand by our side, first send people to buy all of the medical ingredients they have to support ourselves as much as possible over this period of time. If even then we are still unable to survive, then go to the other cities and towns to buy medical ingredients at high prices, I don’t believe that the influence of the Xiao Clan will reach the other nearby cities and towns.”

As the words left his mouth, Jia Lie Bi took another teacup only to realise that his hands were lightly trembling. Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Jia Lie Bi had an inexplicable feeling that the Jia Lie Clan had stirred up something that should never have been touched.....