

# Carefree Path of Dreams

## Chapter 11: The Secret Manual

Minister Lin was a trustworthy person. Not long after, a small bag was delivered to the secluded mountains.

Maybe because he felt guilty, or maybe he felt that the basic martial arts weren't much trouble, so he delivered three manuals at one go, which surprised Fang Yuan.

He sat on an emerald rock, and with Flower Fox Ferret by his side, carefully flipped the pages of one of the manuals.

"Black Sand Palm?"

Fang Yuan flipped the manual and scanned the manual quickly. He noticed that even though the book seemed old, the wordings were written with much force, and some of it was blurred. The corner of some pages was torn, which showed how many generations the book was passed down from. This manual was simply an antique.

"I can't believe he sent the original copy to me, looks like Minister Lin did not have any intention to cheat me..."

Fang Yuan nodded his head.

These type of martial arts manuals had to be as accurate as possible because even the slightest deviation from copying to another copy might result in an entirely different result altogether, so the original copy was still the best.

Just by holding on to the manual, Fang Yuan was able to know the amount of effort the martial artist placed into compiling the manual.

"Hmm... Even the most basic martial arts getting widely circulated goes to show that it has its own unique points!"

The other two copies were in a similar condition to this manual, and this made Fang Yuan feel slightly ashamed. He only requested for the most widely circulated ones because they were the easiest to verify.

Anyway, he was not allowed to practise martial arts if the manual was given by someone else. After all, learning martial arts was one of the easiest ways to lose control of one's conscious mind.

"It seems... I am guarding against others..."

Fang Yuan heaved a long sigh: "After all, I still have my medical skills. Even if I only research and not practice, I should be able to spot any problems. Compared to internal techniques, external techniques are better as it's quite difficult to go wrong with them, even if there are traps inside..."

Although this was known from another subject, it could also be used to prove the same theory.

He put down the manual and flipped the other two manuals.

"Eagle Claw Technique? It seems that the representative from the Spirit Returning Sect, Cold Face Steel Eagle, knew this technique. He probably knew the secret manual version of this technique, and would likely overpower the other widely circulated versions..."

Out of the three manuals, two of which taught external martial arts, and the last one taught a nameless technique. It focused on how to train one's body, increase tolerance to punches, and some breathing techniques as well. According to the author, once practised fully, holding a single breath would be able to take a hit from a normal weapon.

In the bag, there was also a small piece of paper, jotted on it the origins of these three books.

"Presenting the Black Sand Palm, the most widely circulated version of martial arts within Qinghe County."

"From villager Mengyuan, the Eagle Claw Technique. The most basic martial arts, but one will require a special set of Inner Power to be able to train to its highest level."

"The last book is the simplest set of breathing techniques, no, it is just some breathing techniques and methods to take hits from opponents, and it doesn't even have a name, so let's call it "Rough Breathing Technique..."

...

Fang Yuan realised that these three manuals were indeed the most widely circulated, and none of them was a treasure.

However basic a set of martial arts might be, it was also passed down from generations to generations with much thought put into it. Any normal person who was able to practise any type of martial arts would be able to defend oneself, so it was still worth cherishing the martial arts manual.

Using a 60-year-old Red Ginseng in exchange for these books was a fair trade.

"Considering how good the conditions of these manuals are... Minister Lin was still sincere."

Fang Yuan sighed and started to study each manual in detail.

Unknowingly, half a day went by and the sun began to set, with its rays scattering across the horizon.

"Keke!?"

"Keke?"

The Flower Fox Ferret saw how focused Fang Yuan was in studying the manuals, and became curious. It could not understand a single word written in the manuals and so it gave up trying to read it. The Flower Fox Ferret ran out into the forest, and not long after, dragged a large wild rabbit back and placed it in front of Fang Yuan.

"Haha... You only know about eating!"

Fang Yuan closed the last manual on the Rough Breathing Technique, looked at the Flower Fox Ferret and laughed.

The sky began to darken.

Next to the fireplace, Fang Yuan skinned the rabbit, marinated it and roasted it. He yanked out the thigh of the roasted rabbit and threw the remaining to the impatient Flower Fox Ferret. His mind was filled with the contents that he read about in the manuals.

'The world of martial arts seems to be of a higher level than the normal world... Black Sand Palm and Eagle Claw Technique are purely the outer power that can be stimulated with medicine. On the other hand, cultivating the inner power requires proper breathing techniques and patterns, or even focusing the mind... Regardless of the type of martial arts, there are always different levels of cultivation, and this is the 12 Golden Gates!'

This term '12 Golden Gates' was constantly repeated in all three manuals. Fang Yuan thought about it hard, and finally knew what it meant.

"Based on the theory of martial arts, the human body has unlimited potential. However, there are many mental barriers which restrict the use of maximum power. Therefore, the purpose of learning martial arts is to learn how to destroy these barriers to unleash one's potential!"

There were 12 of these barriers, as described in the manuals. This was why it was called the 12 Golden Gates.

Every time a martial artist broke through one of these gates, his strength would increase. The more gates that were broken through, the scarier it became.

After breaking all 12 Gates, one would attain the level of 'Wu Zong'!

There was only one such person alive, even within the Spirit Returning Sect.

"The 12 barriers within the human body... sounds similar to the 12 Meridians, 8 Veins in Medicine. Does that mean that the cultivation of martial arts is actually to strengthen the meridian of the human body?"

"The 12 barriers represent 12 levels, and in order to attain Wu Zong, every single one must be broken! I can't imagine how clever Leiyue is!"

After understanding the difficulty in practising martial arts, Fang Yuan had some doubts.

His impression of Leiyue's martial arts was not of such a high level.

"At that point of time I couldn't understand martial arts, but Master should have noticed, that the marriage was a little too rushed....."

When he thought of Master Wenxin, Fang Yuan sighed.

Master Wenxin treated him fairly, and everything was for his own good. The only regret was that he passed on early.

If he was still alive and saw Minister Lin, how would he react?

After his thoughts, the roasted rabbit in his mouth became tasteless.

Fang Yuan stood up, tidied the place and prepared some tea in the moonlight.

While performing the Meditative Tea Ceremony, Fang Yuan reminisced Master Wenxin, and this was his unique way of keeping his Master in his memory.

"Hisss!?"

The Flower Fox Ferret seemed to understand Fang Yuan, and at the same time seemed like it could feel the sorrow in Fang Yuan, and did not appear as joyful as the past few times.

In the deep secluded valley, there was no sun and moon. Time passed quickly and it was dawn.

Fang Yuan woke up early, and as usual, drank his morning tea and proceeded to farm.

In the Vermillion Jade Rice farm, the shoots grew to his hip level, and fruits started to form at the top of the shoots, causing the shoots to bend.

Fang Yuan dissolved the spiritual fertilizer in the spring water and watered the plants with the water. A light fragrance filled the air.

"Keke!"

"Keke!"

The Flower Fox Ferret jumped around as though it was very excited.

Although the small shoots of the Vermillion Jade Rice did not catch its attention, the ripened Vermillion Jade Rice did make it excited.

"Remember, don't steal it!"

For this, Fang Yuan had to sternly remind it and brewed large amounts of tea for it to drink before being able to appease it.

"Previously we did not plant much, so it would be good if we can harvest more than 10 pounds. But after this, we can plant even more, and should consider expanding the farm..."

Fang Yuan was excited.

The speed at which the Spirited Red Corn germinated and grew was faster than expected.

It must have been due to the spiritual fertilizer that was brought by the Flower Fox Ferret, and also his [Botany], which resulted in the speedy growth.

"Don't worry, Flower Fox Ferret! Once we harvest it, I will let you have your fill! After all, credit goes to you for finding the spiritual fertilizer!"

Fang Yuan caressed the head of the Flower Fox Ferret, and comforted it: "And also, as for the spiritual tea, it's the second harvest already..."

He smiled and felt happy from his bountiful harvest.

Every day while patrolling the farm, Fang Yuan would stop by a hut and flip the martial arts manual on the table.

"I have already memorised these three manuals, and already cross-referenced with my [Medicine], and nothing seems to be wrong with it... should I start practising?"

Fang Yuan imagined himself trying out the moves, but adamantly shook his head: "No way! This is not safe! I am such a coward! The only plan is to go to the town, spend some money and get another one of these manuals to refer to, or pass it on to someone else to practice..."

Martial arts was not a normal thing, and therefore Fang Yuan had no confidence to practise it.

"The small thief is inside!"

"Surround him, don't let him run away!"

"Faster!"

...

Suddenly, a lot of noise came from outside, which confused Fang Yuan.

"What is it?"

He opened the door and saw a large group of men, furiously entering his home. Zhou Wenxin stood in front of the pack, looking proud.

"You small thief!"

Zhou Wenxin's old and new hatred for Fang Yuan grew as she saw him. Her voice became sharper: "You insulted me, and now you used fake medicine on my father! I will not let you off today!"

With a wave of her hand, a few men rushed towards Fang Yuan, surrounding him.