

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 7: Spiritual Beast

"Hmmm... from the footsteps this is an animal that is not too big not too small just like the size of a hunting dog..."

Fang Yuan knelt down and observed the distinct footprint, "It is not too deep into the ground so it shouldn't be too big in size. A wild wolf? Fox? Or a weasel or a badger?"

"What a clever animal it managed to destroy our trap..."

Since growing up from the mountains Fang Yuan was skillful in catching wild animals because he often had to catch wild chickens and rabbits for food.

And for a trap this meticulously set up even a wild wolf or boar should not have been able to escape.

But right now the trap was completely destroyed as though the animal had thoughts of provoking the one who set up the trap.

"Master once said in the deep mountains there might be unusual beasts. Even if they started out as normal animals given the right circumstances and conditions they will evolve and become smarter could it be one of those smart animal's doing here?"

By setting up the trap and attempting to 'steal' the animal Fang Yuan felt wiser as though he was not facing a normal animal but a human. This led him to have a heavy heart.

"Hmmm... our losses are not much..."

He scanned around the surroundings and suddenly jumped up. He urgently made his way back to the tea garden, "This isn't good... My spiritual plants!!!"

Since the thief was not a normal animal normal crops would not be able to attract them therefore the only possibility was the Questioning Heart Tea Tree and Vermillion Jade Rice that attracted it!

After sorting out his thoughts Fang Yuan felt very uneasy and could not calm himself down.

A moment had passed and Fang Yuan felt very angry. He shouted within the secluded valley, "Go and die... Don't let me catch you..."

Fang Yuan stood in front of the Questioning Heart Tea Tree with sorrow on his face.

What used to be emerald-green tea leaves was now empty branches with bite marks on where the branches were broken.

The entire tree looked worn-out. Fortunately, its roots remained undamaged otherwise Fang Yuan would have lost it forever.

"What is this?"

After a close inspection, Fang Yuan discovered more clues around the Questioning Heart Tea Tree.

He rubbed his right hand against the broken branches of the tree. A layer of fine crystal droplets covered his fingertips. He realized the fine crystal droplets were all over the tree not only at the surroundings of the broken branches but near the roots of the tree as well.

"I did not put this here could it be the thief that brought it here?"

Fang Yuan placed these droplets near his nose and immediately smelt a fragrance followed by a putrid smell.

"Fertilizer?"

He looked at the worn-out Questioning Heart Tea Tree made a conjecture and had mixed feelings about it.

This spiritual plant thief dared to treat the Questioning Heart Tea Tree as its own and even defecated on it to make sure it would grow again so it could have another meal.

"It surely must have left the place because if it saw me it would have approached me..."

Fang Yuan shook his head and rushed to where the Vermillion Jade Rice was planted at.

On the contrary, the Spirited Red Corn was left untouched and even grew a little taller than it was before. The surrounding plants around the Spirited Red Corn seemed like they had dried up.

"The Spirited Red Corn couldn't even attract its attention the thief must have quite high standards..."

Seeing that the entire garden was left untouched and that the thief only had the intention to damage the Questioning Heart Tea Tree Fang Yuan was left speechless, "I will immediately set up another trap and wait here day and night just to see who is the thief!"

When his anger had subsided Fang Yuan thought that the whole incident was quite interesting as he could not wait to see who was the one who stole his tea leaves.

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After calculating all his losses he had to carry on with his normal life.

Fang Yuan processed the Realgar Powder mixed it with the rest of the ingredients according to the correct ratio and placed it in the cellar for three days. He managed to produce a large amount of Still Fire Liquid.

This recipe was passed down from Master Wenxin and was a great fertilizer for many fire-type plants.

Since the Vermillion Jade Rice was a spiritual plant Fang Yuan had to water it thrice a day for it to grow and develop. It no longer had to compete and take the nutrients from surrounding plants to survive anymore and Fang Yuan felt relieved.

Days passed but the mysterious thief had not appeared. On the other hand, the constant lookout day and night took a toll on Fang Yuan.

Midnight with a clear moon.

Fang Yuan placed his trap and observed silently at a hidden spot.

Within the Tea Forest was silence and only occasional crickets which echoed within the secluded valley.

"Could it be that the thief saw me and is unwilling to approach?"

After keeping watch for a few hours Fang Yuan felt sleepy and a little disappointed, "I shall keep watch for another night and if the thief doesn't appear I will graft the Questioning Heart Tea Tree to somewhere safe... as for the crystal droplets it's a pity..."

Through the past few days of observation Fang Yuan became sure of his conjecture and true enough the crystal droplets was a fertilizer to spiritual plants.

Not only did the condition of the Questioning Heart Tea Tree improved its branches had healed and on the Spirited Red Corn which he scattered some of the crystal droplets they too began to grow larger than usual.

This unique fertilizer for the spiritual plants immediately aroused Fang Yuan's interest. He even considered letting the thief go if the thief was willing to share where it obtained the fertilizer from.

"Ahhhchooo..."

The next midnight had arrived and Fang Yuan's eyelids were heavier than before; he was ready to sleep anytime.

"It seems that it will not come tonight and since I have to wake up tomorrow morning to loosen the soil for the Spirited Red Corn I shall go... eh?"

At the moment when Fang Yuan stood up, a white flash caught his eye.

"It's coming!"

Fang Yuan became more energetic and in a moment did not feel sleepy anymore.

The white flash rushed towards the garden and saw the trap left by Fang Yuan. It appeared undisturbed as it gingerly made its way around the trap used its paws to grab the tree branch and pulled it out. This action triggered the trap but it couldn't catch anything as the beast was already out of its way.

"Wow! What a big and clever White Ferret!"

Fang Yuan heaved a huge sigh.

There was no mistake that right in front of him was a large White Ferret. It had large eyes long fur and a pair of extremely agile paws. Its ears would twitch from time to time as though it was listening to the surroundings and its white fur was extremely reflective under the moonlight.

A normal ferret would be about the size of a cat but this one grew a metre long like a small leopard.

"Oh boy! What a large White Ferret..."

Seeing how the ferret moved about freely within the tea garden Fang Yuan took another look at his inadequate equipment and thought, "Why not... I let it do whatever it wants today and the next time it comes I shall get more backup!"

He was not a professional hunter to begin with and even though he prepared a comprehensive list of equipment to catch it but looking at the 'demonic' White Ferret he did not dare to catch it.

"Keke!"

The moment the White Ferret entered the Tea Forest his jet-black eyes focused at Fang Yuan's hiding spot as though it had noticed him!

"How dare you! You beast!"

Fang Yuan had no choice but to reveal himself, "You destroyed my tea tree for the first time and now you're back for the second time do you really treat me as non-existent?"

Simultaneously while jumping out Fang Yuan lit a fire torch.

Under the illumination of the torch, Fang Yuan could see the expression of the White Ferret as though Fang Yuan was a joke. It did not run but instead made eye contact with Fang Yuan.

'Oh no, shouldn't these wild animals be afraid of fire and humans? Why doesn't it seem so now?'

Deep down Fang Yuan was regretting his actions.

Seeing that the White Ferret did not treat him seriously and continued to munch on the branches of the Questioning Heart Tea Tree. Fang Yuan flared up, "How dare you!"

He grabbed his fire torch in one hand and his machete in another rushing towards the White Ferret, "Don't touch what is mine!"

"Sssss!"

In the next moment, he saw the White Ferret turned around its fur standing and it was making a hissing noise. Fang Yuan knew that this was bad but proceeded to lunge forward with his machete.

'Sou!'

The white shadow flashed by as Fang Yuan felt a strong force on his wrists forcing him to take a few steps back. His wrists weakened and he dropped both the machete and the fire torch, "This beast is too quick too strong!"

"Keke!"

Seeing how Fang Yuan was unable to withstand his first attack the White Ferret looked away and stroked his tummy as though he was mimicking a human laughing.

He was a spiritual being. He waved his little paws at Fang Yuan and pointed to the Questioning Heart Tree as though he was saying, 'This spiritual plant from today onwards will be mine!'

"No.....I cannot take this!"

Being mocked at by the beast Fang Yuan felt unjust. He did a flip from the ground and exclaimed, "Look out for my hidden weapon!"

With a flick of his wrist, a few small paper packets flew out from his hand.

'Peng peng!'

Smoke and fog exploded in mid-air bringing with it a pungent smell.

Fang Yuan appeared calm but without thought turned around and ran!

Even though a fight might be lost one should naturally look for a way to escape and in the future come back to deal with the white ferret. There was no rush for a gentleman to take his revenge.

"Sssss..."

Within the smoke came a shrill from the white ferret. Fang Yuan stopped in his footsteps.

He turned around and saw the white ferret pacing around the white smoke as though it was very afraid of it.

"Eh?"

Fang Yuan felt relieved.

He only meant for the smoke to help him escape because within the paper packets were normal non-spiritual items.

"I placed plenty of beast-repelling powder and if it is of use how can the beast enter? It seems like it also isn't about the pepper... It must be... the Realgar Powder! Haha... Just wait and see!"

Fang Yuan ran back to the valley and in no time brought along many bags of powder, "So you're scared of Realgar? Hahahaha... let's see!"

'Peng peng!'

With the flick of his right wrist, large amounts of Realgar Powder scattered into smoke covering the entire place.

Although the white ferret seemed determined it appeared that he was really afraid of Realgar and did not dare to move.

When the Realgar smoke settled it was gone.

