

Carefree 91

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 91: Leveling up

"Yawn..."

Qinghe County, secluded valley, within the stone room Fang Yuan used for training.

Fang Yuan stood up, stretched and looked at his own hands and legs. He chuckled. "In the dream, I am an indestructible, immortal-killing demon, but in this world, I am nothing..."

"The difference between reality and dream is scary... I've heard that some dream masters were so deeply immersed in the dream world that they forgot their true selves, voluntarily staying in the dream world..."

Fang Yuan looked solemn.

In reality, who could say that the dream world was not a real one?

Compared to just existing in the real world, the dream masters who could achieve something in the dream world were better off.

"These types of reparation are a form of escape, and I will never accept it!"

Fang Yuan took a quick glance at his stats window:

"Name: Fang Yuan

Essence: 8.0

Spirit: 7.9

Magic: 4.5

Profession: Dream Disciple

Cultivation: [Martial Artist (11th Gate)]

Technique: [Black Sand Palm (Grade 5)], [Eagle Claw Iron Skin Technique (Grade 11) (Able to harness Elemental Force)]

Skill: [Medicine (Level 3)], [Botany (Level 3)]"

"Very good! This time after the dream, I was able to gain '0.4' in magical energy, and had quite a bit of dream disciple cultivation..."

He was pleased with the result. As he triggered the mechanism, the stone moved aside and sunlight poured into the room, making him squint his eyes.

"Young master!"

Outside the room stood a young servant, who approached Fang Yuan to pass him a towel.

"Little Pearl... How long have I been inside?"

Fang Yuan wiped his forehead and asked.

"One day and one night!"

Little Pearl had baby cheeks, white skin, a plump figure and looked flirtatious in her smile. He didn't know how Zhou Wenwu found this girl; she was rather thoughtful.

When Fang Yuan returned to the pavilion, a chef served a bowl of porridge made from spiritual rice and a few other dishes.

"One day and one night?"

Little Pearl scooped some soup and proceeded to feed him, while Fang Yuan remained in shock. 'It seems that time passes much faster in the dream world, and will change the rate of how fast time passes? This is a little advantage... Without reaching Wu Zong, I am able to let the elemental force nourish my body. Which martial artist would dare to isolate himself for more than three days?'

After sorting his thoughts out, Fang Yuan opened his mouth and a mouthful of porridge came.

He just had to look at the dish, and Little Pearl would get it for him; she was extremely thoughtful. Fang Yuan could enjoy the life like a master.

"Little Pearl, where are you from?"

He pinched her cheeks, which felt extremely smooth to the touch.

"I... I am from Lieyang County, and was sent by my aunt to Master Zhou's place..."

Little Pearl looked down and whispered softly.

"I see..."

Fang Yuan realised that Zhou Wenwu spent a lot of effort in selecting the servants for him, and as for how many families he destroyed, no one would know.

"Are you literate?"

"A little!"

"Very well, I will teach you a part of a magical technique, and you can pass it on to the other servants!"

Fang Yuan squinted his eyes. "The servants of the secluded valley must be different from the rest!"

With the resources he had, it was effortless for him to train and maintain a batch of martial artists. He had even prepared the Xuan Yin Heart Technique for them to learn!

This was a secret technique passed down within the Five Ghosts Sect, and could be used to cultivate up till Wu Zong, which was a testament to its potential.

Furthermore, after reaching a high grade, there might be consequences and therefore Fang Yuan was unwilling to try it out for himself; he only took parts of it to adapt, but now he finally found a use to it.

What would be the consequence?

Fang Yuan glanced at Little Pearl.

Seeing the potential of these servants, if they did not have his help, it would be lucky for them to train and harness inner force on their own; they wouldn't think about the Four Heavenly Gates.

If the Xuan Yin Heart Technique really had to potential to break through Wu Zong, then no one in the right mind would present it as a gift.

After his meal, Fang Yuan became energetic and walked around the secluded valley.

"Good day Young Master!"

"Good day Young Master!"

...

Amidst all the greetings, Zhang Sheng was sweeping the floor, undisturbed. Fang Yuan left him alone, nodded his head, and went to the spiritual farm.

"Master Fang!"

A few farmers who were farming came over. "The Vermilion Jade Rice is growing very well, and cannot be compared with the previous farmed I worked at. We are going to get a bountiful harvest soon!"

They were all sweating profusely and were jubilant at their efforts.

Of course, other than them, the guard of the spiritual farm, and the Flower Fox Ferret had their contributions too.

Although Fang Yuan did not put too much thought about these small things, he still had to guard against those who would secretly target the Vermilion Jade Rice.

Because of that, the Flower Fox Ferret stayed in the secluded valley. With it serving as a deterrence, and Zhang Sheng as a spy, no one could plot anything on the farm.

"Keke!"

Fang Yuan became speechless as he saw the Flower Fox Ferret sit at a side and instructed a servant in green to roast meat for him.

He noticed Fang Yuan and swiftly ran to his side, trying to please him.

Disregarding the spiritual tea and spiritual rice, in the heart of the Flower Fox Ferret, he preferred Fang Yuan's roast meat over the that of the servants.

He tapped his chest, as though he meant that he was hard at work making sure that nothing happened around the spiritual farm.

"You guys have worked hard!"

Fang Yuan stroked the Flower Fox Ferret's head and got everyone around the spiritual farm to gather.

"When the spiritual rice ripens, everyone will get their share!"

"Thank you, master!"

The servants were jubilant after hearing this and offered their thanks.

"Hmm!"

Fang Yang waved, turned a few rounds to appease the crowd, and left the secluded valley.

Behind the mountains, the Iron-tailed Black Eagle was waiting and stared at Fang Yuan as he approached.

"Let's go! To the Green Peak spiritual land!"

Fang Yuan leapt on the back of the Iron-tailed Black Eagle and was decisive.

The secluded valley was his connection to the outside world; his real base was the large Green Peak spiritual land.

"Chirp!"

The Iron-tailed Black Eagle shot into the sky and disappeared...

...

Green Peak spiritual land, middle of the mountains.

A few straw pavilions were made out of rough workmanship, and there was a simple garden in front, albeit not well-maintained.

"The riches of this world is like a passing cloud..."

After experiencing the world and how everyone wanted to bribe him with riches, he had a totally different feeling after arriving here.

His cultivation as a dream disciple made him appreciative of nature. He came down from the eagle's back and immediately went to check on the Questioning Heart Tea and Flame Jade Rice.

Loosening the soil, fertilizing, watering... Every move was real.

After doing everything, and looking at both spiritual plants growing well, Fang Yuan sighed. "We now have a steady supply of Questioning Heart Tea, but we will have to wait for a few more seasons for the Flame Jade Rice..."

One stalk of rice would obviously not be enough for consumption. Fang Yuan was also a generous person. He would not forget the Flower Fox Ferret's and the Iron-tailed Black Eagle's share.

"Simmering the spiritual rice could damage it. I've heard that some alchemy masters can directly produce spiritual pills from spiritual rice. One pill would be able to sustain one for days, and the nutritious value would be preserved in the pill, which makes it the most efficient way of using spiritual rice..."

With random thoughts in his head, he looked at the other spiritual objects and was surprised.

"This is..."

He approached the small platform which in it planted the spiritual bamboo. He noticed a few small shoots appearing from what was a flat ground, and one would not notice it if they did not look hard enough.

"The bamboo fruit has germinated?"

Fang Yuan was ecstatic.

In his view, a cloud of red-white smoke appeared and was absorbed by the stats window. The 'Level 3' behind [Botany] became blurred.

Under all his hard work, he had already filled the proficiency points for [Botany] to the brim and was just lacking in opportunity for him to break through.

The germination of the bamboo shoots fulfilled the criteria, like how he managed to plant the spiritual plants the previous time. The [Botany (Level 3)] jumped a little, and became '4'.

[Botany (Level 4)]!!!

Fang Yuan was filled with emotions and looked at the description:

"[Botany (Level 4)] - Your hands have now surpassed a mortal's, and through your cultivation of the spiritual plants, the chances of a special trait evolving have increased, and now there is some chance of awakening some special abilities."

"[Botany (Level 4)], indeed requires the experience of planting a high-level spiritual plant!"

Fang Yuan clenched his fist and had a rough plan to break through his [Medicine].

"Increasing in chances of special traits evolving. Does that mean that my spiritual plants now have a higher probability to be evolved?"

He thought through carefully about the description and focused on every word. "Chance of awakening some astonishing ability? What does that mean?"

The system on him was not sentient and had no mind of its own; he had to base on his own deductions, and the answer would not just appear.

The surprised Fang Yuan looked at other spiritual plants, hoping for another such thing to happen.

However, this time, only one of the many germinated.

"The growth of the spiritual bamboo may take hundreds of years... Even though I might have the spiritual fertilizer, there is only so much time I can expedite..."

Walking out of the garden, Fang Yuan sighed.

"Maybe... The only hope is to keep increasing my [Botany] Level!"

Since he could increase the chances of evolving a special trait, shortening the growth period of the plant could be a possibility?!

Fang Yuan's thoughts ran wild. If he could plant plants that require hundreds or thousands of years in a matter of years, then his [Botany] would be the top of the world!

Of course, the condition was that he had to keep his skill a secret, or cover and hide from spies.

With some motivation, Fang Yuan went to take a look at the red-eyed white kind bird.

It decided to not eat any food and became skinnier. It was pitiful, but Fang Yuan had no thoughts of releasing it. If it did not agree to be tamed, he would let it die here!

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Chapter 92: Harvest

Even though the Red-Eyed White King Bird did not want to eat, Fang Yuan still had his ways to deal with it.

He could use underhand means to ensure its survival and slowly deal with it.

After all, he had no time limit, and would not lose anything by dragging on.

But it seems that he did not have to go to such extremes; he had to use death to obliterate the king bird's pride.

...

Half a month later.

"Start harvesting!"

Zhou Wenwu personally led the people, and he was filled with emotions.

The spiritual farmers all agreed and began to harvest the ripened rice.

This batch of rice was about to mature; even though Fang Yuan guarded the secret of the spiritual fertilizer closely and did not use it this time, it only delayed the period of maturity by a little.

At this moment, the entire Vermilion Jade Rice farm was filled in red. All the farmers and servants rolled up their sleeves and started to cut the rice stalks; every single rice stalk was harvested.

After working for so long in this rice field, they all knew the value of this spiritual farm.

"The harvest from this spiritual farm is more than 1300 pounds! Congratulations, Doctor Fang!"

Outside the farm, Fang Yuan stood next to Elder Han, both witnessing the harvest. Elder Han chuckled.

The Spirit Returning Sect's entire spiritual farm could not match the amount of harvest that Fang Yuan had, which made Elder Han envious.

'However... Our sect grows not only spiritual rice, but other spiritual plants as well, and therefore the secluded valley cannot compare to it... A pity that Sect Master sacrificed half of our savings on Lin Leiyue...'

Thinking of this, the stingy Elder Han felt a pain in his heart.

After the pain, he looked at the bundles of harvest and began to worry.

Even though the secluded valley only produced spiritual rice, it was still a form of spiritual plant production!

Furthermore, on such a large scale, they could be a stronghold themselves. Thinking about how he could sense the Xuan Yin Heart Technique on all the servants made him even more worried.

'Techniques, spiritual rice... Even though he only rewards those who work hard, this doctor is rather generous. If they become more developed, they will surely affect the reputation of the Spirit Returning Sect...'

With spiritual plants, techniques and rewards, this was no different from a small sect!

Furthermore, from certain angles, it might even be better than a sect.

After all, with fewer things to worry, they could escape if they wanted to.

Elder Han thought to himself. Even the direct disciples of the Spirit Returning Sect might not be able to learn such a high-levelled technique like the Xuan Yin Heart Technique, even though they might only be at Grade 6.

Not to mention the reward of spiritual rice for hard work.

'With all these... I'm afraid that these servants will be extremely loyal, and even the spies might be pulled over as well!'

If the spies working undercover were not blackmailed or forced to carry out their duties and be loyal, how many of them would be able to resist such temptations?

Unless his family members were captured, or if he did not have common sense, then he might be able to.

Elder Han looked at Zhou Wenwu, who seemed more and more like a lackey and sighed. It was as though he could see the future of Qingye City.

"What are you thinking about, Elder Han?"

Fang Yuan seemed to have detected Elder Han's silence and asked cheerfully.

"Keke... I never thought that the secluded valley would have such abundance of supplies, and was just thinking about it!"

Elder Han never thought that the Doctor from the secluded valley was one that he could work with well, especially after the news of the death of Old Crane!

"I see!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head. "I've newly concocted a few medicines. Also, you are fit beyond my expectations, and just need to rest well after my treatment. After consuming the medicine that I have prescribed, after a hundred days, you will recover fully!"

This Earth Gate test subject was of little value to Fang Yuan now. After all, he himself was already a [Martial Artist (11th Gate)], and only being a [Martial Artist (12th Gate)] or Wu Zong could satisfy his needs.

Furthermore, after getting rid of Elder Yan, if Elder Han were to get into an accident here, he would draw unnecessary attention to the secluded valley.

Shi Yutong was not a fool, she did not need evidence to have her way!

"What... This is good news, thank you, doctor! Thank you, doctor!"

To Elder Han, this was exceptional news, and he continuously thanked Fang Yuan. "Don't worry, I will order for those spiritual objects to be sent here after I am back!"

"Mmm!"

Fang Yuan did not reply, but inside he was pleased.

There was a small plot of spiritual land within Spirit Returning Sect, and there were many more species of spiritual plants there than his own collection; furthermore, there were professionals taking care of it, which meant that it might even be of better quality than those at Green Peak spiritual land.

After levelling up his [Botany], he needed experience like this to fill up his experience bar.

Furthermore, there was the special ability of a [Botany (Level 4)], which he wanted to try out.

"Master!"

After completing acupuncture for Elder Han, it was his final use of him as a test subject. He made Elder Han suffer an immense amount of pain before letting him go. Afterwards, Zhou Wenwu happily reported, "The harvest for the spiritual valley is completed, and I have personally witnessed them stored the last bag of harvest into the storage room. We have a total of 1,500 pounds of harvest, rice stalks..."

"Mmm..."

Fang Yuan brewed a cup of tea, and as he drank it he was listening to Zhou Wenwu report, and from time to time nodded his head.

Zhou Wenwu swallowed his saliva, his tummy rumbling. He did not dare to ask for a cup of tea, which left a deep impression in him.

"We have these unshelled rice, and after shelling them we would get 1,300 pounds of spiritual rice... Take 130 pounds with you, be it keep it all for yourself, or distribute it to the rest, it's all up to you!"

"Also, keep the shells, for we can use it to feed chickens and ducks next time..."

Fang Yuan casually instructed him, like a landlord.

"Yes yes..."

Zhou Wenwu agreed, but inside he was confused. "The shell of the Vermilion Jade Rice is even more nutritious than normal rice... Yet master would not let humans eat it, but feed it to chickens and ducks? Gee... I wonder how would their meat taste like once they've grown up?"

After thinking, his mouth became dry.

"Also, the rules regarding reward and punishment for the servants must also be decided!"

Fang Yuan took Zhou Wenwu as a housekeeper. "Everyone in the secluded valley can learn and break through the first three Gates of the Xuan Yin Heart Technique. As for the 2 Peaceful Gates, 3 Perilous Gates, the 4 Heavenly Gates and even the method to break through to Wu Zong, these must be kept secret and only taught when one has made some significant contribution!"

"Of course!"

Zhou Wenwu nodded his head.

In fact, after finding out that Fang Yuan had no reservations in passing down the Xuan Yin Heart Technique to the servants, Zhou Wenwu abandoned his family martial art technique and converted to the Xuan Yin Heart Technique. Even when Fang Yuan mentioned to him the negative side effects that might be present, he still did not put that to mind.

After all, he knew his own martial arts and if he did not change to a higher-level technique, it was impossible for him to break through the Death Gate, into the 4 Heavenly Gates!

As for Wu Zong, he only dared to dream about it, and therefore was not worried about the possible side effects.

Zhou Wenwu was ultimately different from the rest of the servants; Fang Yuan did pass down to him the entire method of attaining the 4 Heavenly Gates. The spiritual rice was a great support to his intense training, and all these made him even more loyal to Fang Yuan.

After all, where could he find such a good boss?

...

After settling the minor stuff in the valley, Fang Yuan left the secluded valley, rode the Iron-tailed Black Eagle and arrived at the Green Peak spiritual land.

Other than the secluded valley, the garden here also had a supply of Vermilion Jade Rice, which he personally planted.

Based on logical sense, with the help of the spiritual land and spiritual fertilizer, it should have been matured and ready for harvest.

Only because he accidentally attained a higher level in [Botany] did he delay it until now.

As he arrived at the farm, his eyes were filled with a bright flame-colour.

He initially planted 5 sections of Vermilion Jade Rice here, and the initially healthy Vermilion Jade Rice was now withered and replaced by the Flame Jade Rice, as though it had sucked all the essence from the Vermilion Jade Rice.

"One, two, three... six, seven!"

Fang Yuan counted, and the smile on his face grew. "Seven stalks of Flame Jade Rice! Haha... [Botany (Level 4)] is indeed impressive, the chances of the special trait evolving are much higher than before!"

Without hesitation, he went up and harvested the 7 stalks of Flame Jade Rice and the remaining Vermilion Jade Rice. In a moment, Fang Yuan had a small bag of red and round spiritual rice the size of a spiritual pill.

"This is Flame Jade Rice?"

He picked up a handful and examined closely.

This rice was still unshelled, and although the bag was covering the spiritual rice, it seemed to be unable to cover its radiance.

"Although I have not seen a spiritual pill as described in the legends, I'm sure I could fool people if I bring this out!"

Dissipating his magical energy, Fang Yuan could sense the thick spiritual energy all around.

"However... I don't know about the qualities of this Flame Jade Rice. I can't feed this to the Flower Fox Ferret like how I did with the Vermilion Fruit, can I?"

Fang Yuan had mixed feelings. Food was of extreme importance to humans. He had plans to eat the Flame Jade Rice as a staple in the future and had to be more stringent in his checks and be clear of its medicinal properties in order to eat it safely.

"Other than this, I still have to investigate the properties of the spiritual wisteria and the Cracked Ice Fruit the found at the king bird's nest..."

How many spiritual objects were there in the world?

With the teachings of Master Wenxin, Fang Yuan still did not dare to claim that he had known all of it.

The spiritual plants found at the king bird's nest still did not germinate after a long time, which made Fang Yuan suspect his own [Botany] skills. He did not fulfil certain important criteria for the germination of spiritual plants and had to do some research on his own to find out on his own.

"Since the next batch of Vermilion fruits in the king bird's nest has ripened, why not take a trip there..."

Fang Yuan touched his chin.

Since the journey to Lieyang County, he had experienced the interesting world, especially the encounter with spiritual knights, which sparked interest in him.

Furthermore, the Blood Killer who died in his hands did not seem to be a simple guy Fang Yuan had to do more investigation on the Blood Killer.

"The spiritual knight who assisted Shi Yutong the other time... Who would've known that Shi Yutong could not only recruit the help of an alchemy master but also able to find such a helper?"

Fang Yuan shook his head and knew that his ability was far from those strong powers.

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Chapter 93: Secluded Mountain Prefecture

It was dawn.

The rain had stopped and the air was humid. The scenery was clear.

A group of carriages were moving steadily along the wet pathway. There was a youth dressed in green and his eyes were glittering. He seemed to be excited and was engrossed in a discussion. "We will be reaching the Secluded Mountain Prefecture soon!"

"Xia country is vast and geographically, it can be separated into 3 Prefectures..... Lieyang, Qinghe and Cangshui counties belong to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture and the Prefecture City is at the heart of it. This city is way more prosperous compared to other counties and the master of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture is the most powerful in the entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture! Legend has it that he is a spiritual knight who can harness nature's elements!"

His face was flushed with excitement, as though this was his first trip away from home. With a little pride, he added. "I have a small family business in the city..."

"Haha.....Master Yu, you are too humble! How can the scale of your family business be considered small?"

Fang Yuan was dressed in a thick clothing as he rode a green donkey by the side of the carriage. He was enjoying his chat with the youth in green.

Inside, he was still displeased. 'It looks like Elder Han is still being cautious of me.....Unfortunately, he thinks he can cheat me, but he doesn't know that he is actually helping me instead....'

After Elder Han had recovered, without hesitation, he sent a few spiritual objects as payment.

However, what made Fang Yuan speechless was that even though after Elder Han had seen him growing the Vermillion Jade Rice, it was obvious that he did not want Fang Yuan to grow stronger. However, the spiritual objects Fang Yuan received from him was not a common type like the Emerald Grass. It was a Thousand Year Frozen Fruit and similar other plants which required a few hundred to a thousand of years for the plants to grow to produce their effects!

Although such spiritual plants were considered precious, Fang Yuan would probably not have the chance to witness these plants to bear fruits. He had no choice but to accept them anyway.

The amount Elder Han paid for his treatment was considerably great in terms of the spiritual plants he gave.

Unfortunately, Elder Han didn't know that Fang Yuan would be satisfied with just the Vermillion Fruit as growing it successfully would aid Fang Yuan in strengthening his [Botany].

'Of course.....to reduce the time taken for the spiritual plants to grow, the spiritual fertiliser can only help to a certain limit. I will still have to improve my botany skills. Furthermore, there's no way for me to obtain any more spiritual plants from the Spirit Returning Sect. I hope there will be takeaways from the Prefecture City!'

With that thought, he left the Flower Fox Ferret back in the secluded valley and the Iron-tailed Black Eagle back in the Green Peak to guard these places. On the other hand, he was carefree as he rode a green donkey to the Secluded Mountain Prefecture.

The trip there was relaxing and smooth, although they encountered some troubles along the way. After doing a few good deeds, he was noticed by the hired master who was passing by in a caravan. They were impressed by Fang Yuan's martial arts skills and invited him to travel together.

This caravan, which was called White Cloud, was also heading towards the Secluded Mountain Prefecture and the youth named 'Yu Xinlou' was the hired master of the caravan. Fang Yuan hesitantly accepted their invitation under pressure and joined the caravan. Not long after, they struck up a conversation.

The Secluded Mountain Prefecture City was of a different level compared to the other counties. Disregarding everything else, the young people from the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City would be more well-informed as compared to those in the other counties.

'Even the disciple in the Spirit Returning Sect might not know about spiritual knights.....For myself, if I didn't read a few books about it, I would probably be ignorant now.....'

Fang Yuan felt slightly ashamed of himself before Yu Xinlou's voice was heard.

"Brother Fang, since you are able to achieve the 6th Gate by the age of 20, you are considered a talent in this Prefecture City. You might have the chance to get a glimpse of Wu Zong in future....."

To Yu Xinlou, being a [Martial Artist (6th Gate)] was very impressive to the point it was hard to put in words. In comparison, he himself was not even a [Martial artist (4th Gate)], which meant that Fang Yuan was way stronger than him.

"Brother Yu, you think too highly of me. There are many other powerful people in the Prefecture City. With my cultivation level, how am I considered powerful?"

Fang Yuan smiled and glanced at the old man who was riding the horse carriage.

This old man was a Martial Artist (9th Gate) and had the cultivation level of the 4 Heavenly Gates. He should be the secret bodyguard of this caravan.

As the conversation took place, the old man had been worriedly keeping an eye on him. However, he could neither tell how powerful Fang Yuan was nor could he tell that his own cultivation level had been exposed to Fang Yuan.

'It looks like.....Yu Xinlou doesn't know that this old man is the most highly skilled in the whole caravan, but the few inner force experts are all aware.....Hehe, was he raised by a pig?'

Fang Yuan laughed in his heart and pitied Yu Xinlou.

He was not entirely convinced that Yu Xinlou deserved to be the rightful heir to the caravan.

'With my magical energy, I can make use of the Blood Magic Manual and a small trick from my dream disciple cultivation to hide my cultivation level easily.....'

Seeing that it was effective even against a 4 Heavenly Gates martial artist, Fang Yuan was convinced that his trick to hide his cultivation level was worth it.

At least, without elemental force, no one could see through his concealment.

'What if I encounter Shi Yutong? The chance of my cover being blown will be 50%.....'

Fang Yuan squinted his eyes and was casually talking to Yu Xinlou. At the same time, in his mind, he was trying to figure out the secrets of his dream world. Suddenly, a cheer was heard. "We have reached the Prefecture City!"

"Oh! We are here already?"

Fang Yuan was surprised. He nudged his donkey to approach the front of the carriage.

After a turn, a gigantic city appeared right in front of Fang Yuan's eyes.

The first impression Fang Yuan had on the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City were the tall city walls!

Dark and tall, they were majestic structures stuck into the ground. The shortest wall was at least 35 yards in height!

What was the concept behind building such tall walls?

Even a martial artist who had inner force would find it impossible to climb over the tall wall to enter the city!

"This scene is majestic, isn't it?"

Yu Xinlou saw the scene and smiled wide. "This Secluded Mountains Prefecture City was personally designed and overseen by the first generation prefecture head. The old man was an array master, hence not only are these city walls touching the clouds, their foundations have spiritual arrays carved into them, making them extremely sturdy and without any weakness... There are 3 layers, namely the outer district, inner district, and central district. 10 thousand families live here, making it the most populated place in the northern area of Xia Country!"

"Hmm, this city does live up to its name!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head in agreement. It was the first time he had seen such an ancient majestic city, greatly shocking him.

Especially.....

'So this city was built by the first prefecture master, the array master? No wonder I could feel a mild pressure.....It seemed that the rumours of his doings are true too....'

"The current prefecture master is a spiritual knight, I wonder how powerful he is!"

Fang Yuan silently sighed.

A true spiritual knight would be different from him or Blood Killer. Having already consolidated his magical energy and obtained elemental energy, he would be able to produce powerful spells with a wave of his hand.

On one hand, an array master could build such big city. On the other hand, a spiritual knight could become powerful through the use of spiritual spells. Harnessing energy from heaven and earth, he could single-handedly match against thousand-men strong troops.

'If the chance of my cover being blown by a Wu Zong is 50%, then the chance of my cover being blown by a spiritual knight will be near to 100%. I have to be more careful...'

As they got closer to the city, the city wall loomed above them.

Outside the city entrance, the city gates were so huge that it looked like a mouth of a giant monster. The carriage was like an ant compared to the size of the city gate.

Around the city gate and above the city walls, there were many martial artists in black armour patrolling the area. All of them looked fierce and were sharp, making it obvious that they were all well trained.

"Inner power! The weakest martial artist here is probably at the 4th Gate!"

Fang Yuan saw this scene and his heart wavered.

The defence in this city was much stronger than that of in the Spirit Returning Sect.

"These are the soldiers of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture and they are under direct orders from the prefecture master. I strongly urge you all not to provoke them! In this city, you can provoke anyone but not any of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master's men, or else you will die terribly!"

Yu Xinlou reminded everyone in a soft voice.

"Don't worry, I will be mindful of this!"

Fang Yuan laughed and entered the city with the others after paying an entrance fee.

"Wow!"

After they entered the city, they were welcomed by the lively bustle of the city.

The main road was built with green rocks and was wide enough to fit a few carriages. There was bustling everywhere and there were many stalls on the two sides of the road. There were many street vendors selling different kinds of things; there were too many choices to choose from.

"This city is much more prosperous as compared to the other counties!"

Fang Yuan sighed.

"The Secluded Mountain Prefecture is usually not so busy. Looks like Brother Fang you came at the right time!"

Yu Xinlou laughed and said, "It will be the prefecture master's 300th birthday soon. There will be many guests who are coming from everywhere to give their well wishes. Also, the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Business Council would be taking this chance to hold a few large-scaled fairs to attract every other businessman from other parts of the country to come here. You can also find foreigners here.....This place will become the busiest in this country!"

"Oh? Really?"

Fang Yuan was surprised.

He lived in seclusion for many years and was clueless about such big events. It seemed that Zhou Wenwu did not know that the prefecture master's birthday banquet would be one of Fang Yuan's considerations.

After all, his level was still low and his experience was limited to Qingye City. He would probably not be able to escape the shackles of the Qinghe County.

'But... 300 years old?'

With Master Wenxin's inheritance and the Blood Magic Technique, Fang Yuan was rather familiar with spiritual knights.

A normal Wu Zong, even if he doesn't make any further breakthroughs, can basically live for 200 years, and it's even longer for spiritual knights, with a lifespan of about 300 years at the initial stages.

'According to the words of my master, it is extremely difficult for a spiritual knight to progress to the next level. It looks like this prefecture master does not have much progress in his cultivation. Otherwise, he would not be cooped here.....It seems like his life is about to end soon? Someone else is going to take over the position as the prefecture master soon?'

Thinking about this, he was shocked.

Seeing how packed the prefecture city was, it seemed that it would not be just a simple birthday celebration.

'Looks like there is going to be trouble brewing in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture....but how is this my business?'

After rejecting and thanking Yu Xinlou's invitations many times, Fang Yuan left on his own. Looking at the prosperous street, he smiled to himself.....

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 94: Business Centre

In the central of Prefecture City, there were many treasures, talents and potentials. The city master's birthday hyped up the entire place, making it busier than ever. People from all places came here, and treasures from around the world made their way here too.

Fang Yuan did not rush to trade for spiritual objects and plants, but rather, made a point to look for a hostel to stay for the night.

The Secluded Mountain Prefecture had a curfew. By midnight, the people who had not returned to their lodging, be it, tourists, residents or famous people, would be thrown in jail and become a slave!

It was only reasonable for him to worry about a place to stay for the night.

Due to the overwhelming response from people all around the world, every hostel was full, and the rental price went up a few folds due to the high demand.

After visiting a few other hostels, he realised that they were all full. Fang Yuan became irritated and wrecked a residence, took out money as compensation and booked the entire building.

The head of the household happily received the money and accompanied the entire family to the outskirts of the city to stay there temporarily and let the entire house out to Fang Yuan. While leaving, he explained the situation to the trooper on patrol.

"Hu..."

Fang Yuan walked in and closed the door. He felt a little bored.

"The Secluded Mountain Prefecture City will surely earn loads this time. Who knows if this might be the end of their bad luck or the last of their good luck..."

After a few days of investigation, Fang Yuan understood the happenings of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City.

"The role of the Prefecture Master was official yet private and is conferred by the Imperial Court. But if one is incapable, his placing would be threatened! The previous few Prefecture Masters fought their way there and were only confirmed after approval from the Xia Country. There was no room for rejection..."

After much thought, Fang Yuan pitied the Xia Country's royal family.

With such constraints over his power as compared to a constitutional monarchy in other countries, it only meant that they had jurisdiction over a few more areas.

Of course, it was none of his concern how the Xia Country's royal family was doing.

He was more concern over the happenings within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture. After all, the Prefecture Master was like a mini emperor over six counties.

If he had completed his cultivation, he might be tempted to run for it.

The current Secluded Mountains Prefecture's Head is a spiritual knight named Liu Yan. There's nothing his Scorching Sun Spell can't burn to a crisp, and his strength is number 1 in Secluded Mountains Prefecture..."

Rumours had it that there were hidden experts within the Prefecture, and therefore could not be just this one spiritual knight.

At the very least, from various traces left behind in Qinghe and Lieyang County, Fang Yuan had discovered three possible locations that held the inheritance of a spiritual knight.

"Blood Demon, and that alchemy master and spiritual knight that helped Shi Yutong.....That's not right, the alchemy master and spiritual knight might be the same person, otherwise, it would be a little unusual for Shi Yutong to have such a wide network."

He sighed, and his expression changed. "Shi Yutong would surely attend this event since it is such a major thing in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture!"

Fang Yuan did not have to care about anything; Shi Yutong was different. She was the head of a Sect, and any changes in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, albeit small, would surely affect her Sect, what more for this big change?

After clearing his thoughts, Fang Yuan stood up and went to the Secluded Mountain Court.

The entire vicinity was bustling, but everyone felt unwelcoming.

This place was similar to the Four Seas Court in Singhe County; they were the biggest business council in their areas, and both had strong backings.

"Not many places within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture would trade spiritual objects, but it was still the most convenient place to do so... And I'll have to visit the 'Elemental Gathering Court' one day, as it's renowned for cooking spiritual food!"

"Welcome, my lord!"

At the doorway, two rows of waiters were neatly spaced and offered their greetings to Fang Yuan, and none of them seemed to give him less respect for being young.

A female shopkeeper stood out of the row and asked, "My lord, would you like to do business?"

"I would like to buy spiritual plants!"

Fang Yuan was direct.

"The trading of spiritual plants is done at the Spiritual Food Court, follow me!"

The shopkeeper smiled and led the way. He arrived at a counter.

Many coolies were busy shifting and weighing bags of rice, like a normal rice shop.

Fang Yuan glanced and saw the labels of Vermilion Jade Rice and Emerald Grass, as though they were all on sale.

"Would you like to buy spiritual plants? This is the right season!"

The shopkeeper's round face glowed and continued. "We have just received a new batch of spiritual plants. Although it might seem like boasting, we have the complete selection of spiritual plants in the entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture, and also many other food types for you to choose from... Of course, planting of spiritual food would be rather troublesome, and if you would like to buy a large amount, I regret to inform you that we only have a limited supply..."

As he was speaking, a waiter served two cups of tea.

Fang Yuan sipped a small mouthful, and through the smell and taste of the tea on his taste buds, he realised that even though the tea was not brewed from spiritual leaves, the spiritual essence had spread to it, which was rather rare. He became excited and said, "Take out all your spiritual plants and let's take a look!"

"Alright!"

The shopkeeper chuckled and did not seem to despise him. he clapped his hands and a helper carried out a red sandalwood plate, and on it a jade bottle.

"Come, my lord, please take a look. This Vermillion Jade Rice, the most commonly planted in the county.....There's also Black Jade Rice from the north which can help one fight against the cold if consumed for long periods, and this is Green Striped Rice from the swamps, which increases one's resistance to poisons when consumed.....We also have Bone Quenching Flower, Three Star Fruit..."

Following his introduction of the spiritual plants, Fang Yuan grew irritated. "Why are all these plants the common ones? Are there no better plants?"

The Black Jade Rice was as common as the Vermilion Jade Rice and could not pique his interest; he could try it out just because it was a new species to him.

"Higher tiered spiritual plants?"

The shopkeeper smiled. "Every sect and every household have limited supply of spiritual food, and would not even let out one grain of rice seed. Other than these common goods, we really don't have anything else..."

'That's it!'

Fang Yuan patted his head, as though he had thought something through.

If one had a grain of spiritual rice, they could keep growing it and increase their supply, and from there increase their power and influence, they could strategically stock up food.

After all, no martial artist would eat spiritual flowers, spiritual grasses or spiritual pills every day, but they could eat spiritual rice every day, which highlighted the importance of rice.

Even the widely circulated Vermilion Jade Rice, when gone through generations of farming and storing, could become the foundation for a household, and therefore no one would want to bring it out to sell.

"It must be my imagination!"

Fang Yuan laughed but thought for a moment. He knew that the value of his Flame Jade Rice would rocket if he put it out for sale!

Even though hope was lost for a higher tiered spiritual rice, Fang Yuan still had interest for the other spiritual plants.

"I am interested in the Sickly Grass, Serrated Flower and the previous two Black Jade and Green Striped Rice. Name me a price!"

Fang Yuan knew that in these shops they would not have any real valuable spiritual plants, but their basic selection was rather wide and therefore started to make his purchase.

Sickly Grass and Serrated Flowers were spiritual flowers and grass, but they possessed no special abilities. They only had stalks and leaves as strong as iron, edges as sharp as knives, and a disposition for harming people. Fang Yuan bought them naturally out of consideration for the safety of the spiritual land.

And as for the other common spiritual plants, he decided to get it to increase his collection and to see if any of it would evolve special traits.

"Mmm, here are the seeds for the spiritual flower and spiritual grass, and the total will be..."

Fang Yuan bought all the spiritual plants which he did not encounter before. The price was rather substantial as the shopkeeper reported the total price.

He surely did not have enough money to pay.

"I did not bring enough money..."

Fang Yuan continued, and seeing no response from the shopkeeper, he retrieved a bamboo fruit and offered it. "To trade this for the rest, how's that?"

"This is?"

The shopkeeper looked at the green bamboo fruit, and his expressionless face changed. "A spiritual fruit?"

Although he sold spiritual plants seeds, the value of an actual spiritual plant was very much higher than that of a spiritual seed.

He was solemn for a moment, then took out a pair of glasses and placed it on his nose. He inspected the fruit. "Hmm... This is... The bamboo fruits from the legends?:

"Oh? You have a good eyesight!"

Fang Yuan praised him, and calmly took another sip of tea.

He was crafty in this. In most other spiritual fruits there would be seeds within the fruit, but the bamboo had to be planted by grafting and the formation of bamboo shoots, and not by fruits, and therefore there would be no seed being given away.

If the shopkeeper knew that Fang Yuan decided to do this because of what he previously said, he would be so angry.

"You're right. This bamboo fruit is the food for phoenixes and can replenish one's magical energy. It will have an unbelievable effect on spiritual birds!"

After a long while, the shopkeeper put down his glasses and looked at Fang Yuan with much hospitality. "Three bamboo fruits will be able to exchange for all these spiritual seeds, and if you have any more, we would like to buy some more with a high price!"

He was rather smart not to inquire about the bamboo shoot and bamboo roots, as he knew that was the customer's privacy. If he asked, the deal would likely fall through.

"I happened to have these few by luck, and that's all I have!"

Fang Yuan lied through his teeth and took out another bamboo fruit with some taels. "Remember to deliver the spiritual seeds!"

"Of course!"

The shopkeeper nodded his head and felt that it was a pity. He carefully kept the two bamboo fruits and ordered for the spiritual seeds to be brought for Fang Yuan to inspect every single seed. There was a piece of paper with writings on it detailing on how he should care for the spiritual plants, which saved him a lot of trouble.

Fang Yuan was pleasantly surprised at their hospitality. He asked. "Shopkeeper, you have good eyesight. Do you provide any appraisal service?"

"Of course, of course!"

The shopkeeper nodded his head.

Even if the Secluded Mountain Court did not have this service to begin with, the shopkeeper would also do it for free to pull their relations closer, considering the bamboo fruit that Fang Yuan had.

'Mm? Is the bamboo fruit really that valuable?'

Fang Yuan was shocked at this scene.

The bamboo fruit could not be planted and the only usage of the fruit was to eat it.

It had the ability to replenish one's Essence, Spirit and Magical energy, and even amongst the spiritual knights, it would be popular.

'The backing of the Secluded Mountain Court would be the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master, and it seems like... My guess was correct.....'

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 95: Secret Meeting

The effect of the bamboo fruit was extraordinary, but to a spiritual knight, it was just a supplement.

Many spiritual pills, spiritual flowers and spiritual fruits also produced similar or greater effects.

If not, the shopkeeper would not be so polite and would use all means to obtain these special spiritual objects!

Fang Yuan thought about it before taking out the Cracked Ice Fruit which he found at the Red-eyed White King Bird's nest.

"Seed?"

When the shopkeeper saw what Fang Yuan took out, he let out a laugh.

"When I found it, it was already in this condition....."

Fang Yuan helplessly said, "However, I still remember how the actual fruit looked like. I can describe it in detail to you..."

.....

"According to what you said, this fruit seems to be the Icy Fire Jialan. This item would sprout in the first 15 years; its flowers would bloom in the next 15 years, and it would bear fruit 15 years after that. It

could calm one's heart, remove one's inner demons, and it had a combination of opposing elements: Yin and Yang. This made it very unique and mysterious, making it something martial artists at the 9th and 10th Gates could dream of but never have!

After a long while, the shopkeeper rubbed his eyes and said in a deep voice.

"Since this fruit is well sought after by 9th and 10th Gate martial artists, could this fruit have a similar effect as compared to the Yin Yang Jade, making breakthroughs easier?"

Fang Yuan's eyes glittered.

"You're correct. If a martial artist at the peak level of the 10th Gate consume this fruit, the chance of him being able to condense the Miniature Elemental Force and making a breakthrough to the 11th Gate will increase by 50%!"

The shopkeeper stroked his beard and said, "Unfortunately, this is just a seed! Also, the conditions for growing this seed are too demanding."

It would take 40 to 50 years for the seed to grow, which was too long for a normal human being. Of course, this was not the main point.

Even if with its seed, it would not germinate in any normal spiritual land.

"I see, thanks a lot!"

Fang Yuan thanked the shopkeeper. He did not feel regretful that the Flower Fox Ferret had actually took half a bite of the fruit.

After all, this fruit was useless to him and he was not in rush to make a breakthrough by taking this fruit.

"I have gotten a branch from the wisteria plant. If you can appraise that it is really from the wisteria, I will give you another spiritual fruit as a reward!"

Fang Yuan took out the branch with a serious look.

"Very well!"

The shopkeeper was very excited but when he saw the wisteria, he was in deep thoughts for quite a while and didn't say a word.

Fang Yuan was disappointed seeing that the shopkeeper couldn't answer. He didn't expect that this experienced shopkeeper in the Secluded Mountains Prefecture City couldn't appraise the spiritual object.

"This branch is really from the wisteria!"

Suddenly, a clear voice interrupted his thoughts. Fang Yuan lifted his head and saw a beautiful lady dressed in green.

She was wearing a golden bangle on her head and a emerald green belt at her waist. She also had a bamboo flute with her. Her face was smooth and beautiful and her eyes were clear like water.

"You are..."

Fang Yuan gave a doubtful look but was shocked.

This woman was the spiritual knight who helped Shi Yutong during the fight over the treasure map.

'No.....she is not a spiritual knight. She is just a spiritual disciple!'

Fang Yuan was much more experienced than before and was able to tell her cultivation level by just looking.

"My name is Ling Yin. I cannot help but interrupted when I saw you taking it out. My apologies!"

The young lady took a bow and stared at Fang Yuan with different look.

"There is no need for you to apologise. May I find out the effect of this wisteria branch?"

The shopkeeper stood up and return a humble bow. It was obvious that he wanted to know the answer to his question so badly. If he couldn't get the answer, he would probably not have the mood to eat or sleep for the next few days.

"There is no harm telling you. Wisteria is a rare plant but it does not have much benefits....."

Ling Yin's voice was soft and she looked at Fang Yuan playfully. Seeing him focused, she continued.

"However, wisteria is one of the main ingredient used in making Continuation Spiritual Pill!"

"Continuation Spiritual Pill?"

The shopkeeper exclaimed, "Isn't that the spiritual pill which is rumored to allow one to survive for another 10 days when consumed no matter how serious the person's injuries are?"

"Yes!"

Ling Yin then continued and said, "Unfortunately, the effect of this spiritual pill will be reduced by a lot when it is consumed by a spiritual knight. If not, this spiritual pill will be worth much more..."

"You must be kidding....."

Fang Yuan could not hold back further. "Since the wisteria is one the main ingredients, the other ingredients should be rare and hard to find.....Even if one is able to gather all the ingredients, I'm afraid one will still need a alchemy master's help to produce this spiritual pill. The chances of successfully making this pill shouldn't be that high!"

After hearing what Fang Yuan said, the shopkeeper became less excited and sat down in his chair. He then murmured, "I see.....I'm afraid there is only one person here in the Secluded Mountains Prefecture who is skillful enough to make such pill. However, how would that person be willing to make the pill easily? Previously, Shi Yutong, the sect head of Spirit Returning Sect had to come personally to ask for help. She expended a great amount of spiritual objects and favours before he barely agreed to help. No one else would be bold enough to ask him for help, unless it is the prefecture master himself....."

"Thank you for the explanation, young lady!"

Fang Yuan politely said and took out another bamboo fruit. "Please accept my small gift as a token of my appreciation for your help!"

"I should thank you instead!"

Ling Yin laughed and then continued saying, "If I hadn't seen you taking out this bamboo fruit, I wouldn't have said it. My apologies to you two!"

She was being direct because of the spiritual object, saving the shopkeeper from embarrassment. Hence, the shopkeeper could not blame Ling Yin for interrupting. Fang Yuan could not help himself but took another look at this lady.

"However, a piece of information in exchange for a spiritual fruit is too much. I shall not take advantage of this and I want you to accept this gift!"

Before Ling Yin left, she took out a emerald green jade with a different expression.

"Oh? This jade is so cooling and it makes it a good toy. Thank you!"

Fang Yuan said without changing his facial expression.

"A toy?"

Ling Yin couldn't help but said, "This jade has something hidden in it. It will be fate if you can uncover its secrets! I shall take my leave!"

Within seconds, she disappeared into thin air.

"Hey, shopkeeper....."

Fang Yuan was playing with the jade in his fingers as he mockingly smiled. "Do you know that lady?"

"You are kidding....."

The shopkeeper shook his hands randomly and said, "She looked like an immortal from heaven. How could I have the honour to know her?"

"An immortal from heaven? Great description of her!"

Fang Yuan kept the spiritual plants and the seed safely in a small package and parted with the shopkeeper. He then left the Secluded Mountains Court without looking back.

'This Ling Yin, she must have doubted me...'

After he turned into a small alley, he hid himself well before taking a look at the jade as thoughts ran through his mind.

What Ling Yin gave him was a piece of jade!

'It seems like she could detect my martial arts skill or my high magical energy.....But, what kind of attitude is this?'

His magical energy was above average and he see the inscriptions within the jade.

'Those who can see this message have magical energy that is above the average person. I invite you to go to a place called Three Elemental Views within the prefecture city to make a sincere wish, and you might have the chance to catch an opportunity!'

The inscriptions appeared gentle but it sounded arrogant to Fang Yuan, making him unhappy.

'However, this also proved that she did not detect any abnormality from me and only felt that my magical energy was beyond normal. Or maybe she was just hoping that I could read the inscriptions in the jade?'

'If I chose to go and seek for opportunities, won't I have to give out all my spiritual objects as gifts?'

Since Fang Yuan had the inheritance from a dream master, he wouldn't need these opportunities.

He laughed and threw the piece of jade into the air. As it glittered, it landed into the drain.

He laughed softly and left without looking back.

.....

At the same time, back in the Secluded Mountains Court.

Ling Yin went to another hall, as if she had arrived into another land.

A door opened in front of the hall and revealed a person with a bright smile. It was the Sect Head of Spirit Returning Sect, Shi Yutong!

"I'm late again!"

She gently held Ling Yin's hand and sat down.

The surroundings was quiet. There was a bridge with water flowing under it and the occasional bird chirps and cicada noises. There was a Guqin hanged on the wall. The place was separated from the outside world by a tunnel pathway and it was an entirely different world here.

Shi Yutong was a regular here. As the door closed, she personally made a pot of floral tea for Ling Yin. A few golden-veined flower petals were suspended in the tea, as it emitted an orchid fragrance.

"Sister, please forgive me. I should have been able to reach here earlier. Something interesting happened while I was on my way and I encountered an interesting person, which was why I was late....."

Ling Yin smiled while she explained.

"Oh? How interesting was it? Tell me now!"

Shi Yutong seemed to be very interested. After all, she knew that her sister was one who was full of pride.

She was not only born in a family with a rich background, but was also gifted. Her gifts were recognised by many famous teachers as they took care of her, making her slightly arrogant.

Such a person would already be enjoying all the good things in life. What matter would even interest her?

"This thing started from a bamboo fruit....."

Ling Yin's lip had a slight curve. "I had discovered that the young man were not just a normal person. He had an exceptional amount of magical energy and it was sufficient enough for him to become a spiritual servant!"

Such people with such an amount of magical energy would have the potential to become a alchemy master or a spiritual knight.

But for many years, or perhaps even for the rest of one's life, one would remain at the level of a spiritual disciple - the lowest cultivation level amongst spiritual knights. For the rest of one's life, one would only be able to run errands for spiritual knights, and would be referred to as spiritual servants.

In fact, these spiritual servants were actually brought in by spiritual knights as the spiritual knights were claiming to be recruiting new spiritual disciples but the recruited ones ended up being servants for free.

"From what you said, this young man had inner force, his magical energy was twice as much as a normal person and he also had a rich background. It looks like he is a suitable candidate!"

Shi Yutong nodded in agreement after hearing what Ling Yin said.

Even though spiritual knights and alchemy masters were powerful and skillful, they needed much more resources as compared to Wu Zongs.

In Xia Country, in order to train under these spiritual knights, a large capital is needed. Otherwise, it would be almost impossible for one to become a spiritual knight.

Of course, she wasn't bothered by such matters.

Shi Yutong sighed and suddenly appeared serious. "Sister Ling Yin, that rumour is real.....The Secluded Mountains Prefecture Master Liu Yan is nearing his death. Is your master considering to take over him?"

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 96: Pharmacist

"A Wu Zong can live up to 200 years old, while a spiritual knight can live up to 300 years old. These are fixed figures!"

Ling Yin said in a clear voice. "The master of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture, Liu Yan, is highly skilled in fire-type spiritual spells. His ability to kill is shocking, but he did not have any achievements with respect to cultivation. Furthermore, he endured a serious injury in his younger days, and from then on recuperated and rarely used his ability. He is reaching his end now... Would Sister like to fill up the vacancy of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master?"

Shi Yutong became shocked from her cheeky expression. "Sister, you are mistaken! If I can improve my martial arts further, then maybe I would think about it, but now I can only hope for peace within Secluded Mountain Prefecture!"

"That's great!"

Ling Yin smiled innocently, as though she was very happy. "Master is also interested in the appointment, and since Sister has given up, I won't be troubled anymore..."

“Another news for Sister! I previously came in contact with Sect masters from two counties, and they were both supportive of my master taking up the appointment. With Sister’s support, it is likely to be settled!”

The Secluded Mountain Prefecture was made up of only six counties. With the support from three and Lieyang County in ruins, they would have gotten the support from the majority.

“Sister, do not worry! Why would I oppose your master?! The Spirit Returning Sect will be behind Master Lu!”

Shi Yutong was a smart woman and clarified her stand.

“Very well, with Sister’s support, this is settled!”

Ling Yin smiled, and although she was discussing an important matter, she still had a cheerful disposition.

...

“There is chaos in the Prefecture City!”

It was dawn the next day. Fang Yuan opened the door looked at the sky and thought to himself.

Liu Yan’s birthday celebration and the appointment of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master would be the cause for trouble!

‘A gentleman will not stand under a collapsing wall. Regardless if Liu Yan dies or not, and who would be the newly appointed Prefecture Master, all these are not my business, and it’s not worth the risk to be part of it!’

Fang Yuan walked down the street and appeared relaxed. “After a few more trips, and getting everything that I need, I must leave before the birthday dinner begins!”

The Secluded Mountain Prefecture City was huge; there were two large streets stretching to the North and the South, and in the middle was the City Master’s Residence.

“Sanyuan Guan is a famous building along the South Street, it seems that it housed a few impressive people here...”

Thinking about the jade that Ling Yin gave him, he flinched and continued on the North Street.

Fang Yuan’s objective was simple. He wanted to explore all the shops which sold spiritual seeds, and afterwards walk about the streets to see what he could find.

‘I need luck for this, and it cannot be rushed... I can have lunch at Elemental Gathering Court, I’ve heard that the spiritual feast there is amazing...’

With a happy heart, Fang Yuan dressed up lightly and arrived at the North Street.

As the date of the birthday celebration drew nearer, the streets became increasingly lively. Many strange items arrived from all over the world, and even though these items did not have many uses, they were still able to pique Fang Yuan’s interest and opened his eyes to the world.

“Antiques from the ancient times, every piece is exquisite!”

“Spiritual flower and spiritual fruit, we have everything!”

Knife, spears, swords and halberds, every single one is perfectly designed, don’t miss it!”

“Talent show, a martial artist expert in inner force is going to demonstrate it!”

...

Both sides of the street were bustling with life. Fang Yuan was speechless after seeing a few stalls which sold spiritual materials.

‘Everything is fake, and once in awhile you would see the Vermilion Jade Rice, and yet they can claim that these are all treasures. All are fakes!’

“Indeed, in the stories, they always talk about scavenging the streets for good stuff, but now I know they are all fake!”

After seeing countless fake goods, Fang Yuan was rather disappointed at not finding anything that he wanted.

“Forget about it, I shall have a feast and change to another location in the afternoon!”

He looked up to the sun and decided.

“Can everyone be my judge! This ill-hearted stall owner is trying to cheat people with fake medicine!!!”

Suddenly, a rough and loud voice was heard; it was from an inner force expert.

Fang Yuan felt interested and squeezed into the crowd to join in the commotion.

In the centre of the crowd, there was a small medicine stall. It had quite a number of pills and medicinal herbs displayed on the table, including a jade bottle, a wooden box, and a plasticine seal. Everything looked normal for a medicine stall.

The stall owner was around 20 years old and was a gentlemanly young man. However, at that moment, he was grabbed at the collar by a rough and burly man. His fist was about to land on his face.

“You immoral fake pharmacist, asking for 10 pieces of gold leaves for one bottle of ‘Breath Condensing Powder’. After eating more than half the bottle, my child still couldn’t break through the 4th Gate! If you don’t explain yourself, I shall let you die here!”

Although he was brute, he had already harnessed inner force and was a [Martial Artist (6th Gate)], which was rather skilled. No wonder no one stepped up to stop him.

“Brother, I have told you before, the Breath Condensing Powder can only improve your chances, but at the end of the day, it is really up to his foundation and cultivation to see if he can break through...”

He continued to explain. “Furthermore, only alchemy masters can produce a sure-hit pill, and the price of it would surely be not as cheap as 10 gold leaves...”

“How dare you talk back!”

The burly man raged and focused his inner force to his palms. He wanted to show this absurd young man what he was capable of.

Although he was reckless, he was not a fool. He knew that in front of such a large crowd, it would not be too nice to rough it out, and opted to directly use his inner force to harm him internally.

“Wait!”

At this moment, a palm landed on his arm.

The reckless and unstoppable inner force was suddenly met with an immovable palm and he was stopped.

“Who are you? Are you standing up for this immoral pharmacist?”

The burly man turned his head around and saw a calm Fang Yuan.

“It is not important as to who I am. I only want to take a look at the Breath Condensing Powder, and I hope you’ll let me!”

Fang Yuan chuckled and used a little force. The burly man’s hand unknowingly released the collar of the young pharmacist.

‘An expert in inner force, and of higher skill than me!’

Looking at the cheeky Fang Yuan, the burly man was shocked and said, “Alright, I shall let you be the judge!”

He delivered a jade bottle to Fang Yuan.

Fang Yuan picked open the cork, poured a little and smelt it. He nodded his head and said, “This is indeed an authentic Breath Condensing Powder!”

He glanced at the burly man who was not convinced and smiled. “The only problem is that the Breath Condensing Powder can only increase your chances. You child could only blame on his luck that he did not break through...”

Seeing that the burly man was continuing to pester the stall owner, he turned serious and whipped out a few pieces of gold leaves. “Here are 5 pieces of gold leaves, take it that I’m buying this bottle of Breath Condensing Powder. Do you really think that the Secluded Mountain Prefecture’s troops will not do anything to you if you want to keep this up?”

Seeing how Fang Yuan was stronger than him and even offered compensation, the burly man was appeased and stared at the stall keeper. “Count your blessings!”

He squeezed out of the crowd and left, embarrassed

Seeing that the action was all over, the crowd dispersed.

“My name is Huang Fu Renhe, and I thank you for your assistance!”

The young man thanked Fang Yuan and bowed. “Give me a period of grace, I will return the money to you!”

“It’s alright!”

Fang Yuan waved generously. He only did that because he wanted to help out, so why would he expect him to pay back?

He looked at Huang Fu Renhe’s stall and shook his head. “You are..... A pharmacist? These medicinal powders are not bad, the only thing is that the price is too low, and you are likely to be losing money!”

Fang Yuan could not detect any elemental force or miniature elemental force from Huang Fu Renhe, and knew that he wasn’t cut out to be an alchemy master or disciple; he had to be a normal pharmacist.

“Without any reputation or backing, if I don’t sell it cheaper than the Secluded Mountain Court, who would buy from me?”

Huang Fu Renhe laughed. “Benefactor, I shall not hide from you. That business which involved the 10 pieces of golden leaves was my biggest business. I used it all up to get medicinal herbs to make more medical powder...”

“Don’t call me benefactor, just Fang Yuan will do!”

Fang Yuan smiled. “It’s about lunchtime now. Pack your stall up and follow me to Elemental Gathering Court, my treat!”

“Why would I let you do that?”

Huang Fu Renhe waved his hands in rejection, but could not fight Fang Yuan’s hospitality. He was pulled along to Elemental Gathering Court, and they opened a room.

This person was inexperienced in the outside world and seemed innocent, and Fang Yuan could see through him.

‘Mm, he is indeed a pharmacist. Who would’ve known that he would have such an experience... Hehe, to become a spiritual servant?’

Listening to him talking, Fang Yuan filled his cup of wine and heartily drank it.

Based on Huang Fu Renhe, he was born with a silver spoon and had a good life. However, he was identified by a mystery person who accepted him as a disciple. As he left his own home, he became increasingly poor and knew what his outcome would be if he stayed on. In the end, he secretly ran away.

“I am such a fool...”

After two cups of wine, Huang Fu Renhe became tipsy and laid on the table. “Based on my potential and spiritual knowledge, how can I become an alchemy master? The most I could hope for is to become a disciple. Master took me in because he wanted another servant, and he very quickly used up all our resources. When my household became broke, his attitude towards me changed and in the end, he even wanted me to test out medicine for him. I had no choice but to run away, to the ends of the world...”

“So that’s how it is!”

Fang Yuan encouraged him to drink more, and not long after, Huang Fu Renhe became drunk and slept.

Looking at the snoring Huang Fu Renhe, he was excited. He wasted so much effort not because he noticed anything that he had, but he noticed him!

Even though this person could not become an alchemy master in the future, he could still be a lowly pharmacist, able to mix herbs to produce medicine, and was familiar with medicine. This was what he was lacking in.

Although Fang Yuan was interested in alchemy, he had limited [Essence] and therefore did not want to get involved too much in it.

He uncovered this piece of gem and wanted to bring him back to the secluded valley.

Anyway, the produce from the secluded valley was enough for Huang Fu Renhe to consume and he could groom him.

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 97: Aid

"Ouch.....my head hurts!"

Huang Fu Renhe opened his eyes and held his head as though it was about to blow up.

At that moment, he recalled vividly what happened yesterday and was very surprised. "This is strange. Even though I owe a stranger a favour, why should I treat him so nicely?"

He didn't know that Fang Yuan was not only a skilful speaker but could also use his magical energy to affect others. As such, he landed into a trap set by Fang Yuan, allowing Fang Yuan to know everything about him.

"Brother Huang Fu, you have woken up. Come and have some soup to sober yourself up!"

Fang Yuan open the door and served a big bowl of hot soup.

"Thank you for your help. This place is....."

Huang Fu Renhe asked as the walls around him looked unfamiliar.

"This is a temporary place that I'm living in. Brother Huang Fu, you don't have to worry, I have brought your stall back along with your medicinal pellets and powder and nothing has been lost.....I admire the medicinal powder that you have made as they are really good!"

Fang Yuan gave a light smile and said.

In reality, this world had a rather traditional view towards pills and medicine. An ordinary pharmacist like Huang Fu Renhe could at most dispense or concoct a few types of medicine. On the other hand, alchemy disciples and alchemy masters could use spiritual fire to concoct higher grade spiritual pills and medicines.

However, through Fang Yuan's thorough investigation, he found out that Huang Fu Renhe's skills in making pills were of a similar standard to that of a spiritual disciple. If his success rate of making pills was higher, he would have been cultivated by other sects long ago. Of course, Fang Yuan would not let go of this chance.

"Hmm.....Brother Fang, you think too highly of me....."

Huang Fu Renhe blushed slightly.

He aimed for perfection when producing pills and medicine and hence he had incurred much losses. If it was not for his low success rate, he would not have been so poor.

"I shall tell you the truth!"

Fang Yuan revealed. "I am from Qingye City in the Qinghe County. I am actually living in the secluded valley, which is a well known for producing spiritual rice. I am inviting you to have a visit there. Will you accept my invitation?"

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"The Qingye Secluded Valley?!"

Huang Fu Renhe squinted his eyes and was surprised. "Are you the famous doctor from the secluded valley?"

"I have to say that is me since there is only one secluded valley in Qingye City!"

Fang Yuan touched his nose and didn't expect that he would be that famous.

"Pardon me for the disrespectfulness!"

Huang Fu Renhe immediately bowed and was still in shock.

He could feel that Fang Yuan was willing to establish a relationship with him. If he were to go to the secluded valley, with Fang Yuan's assistance, his skills in producing pills and medicine would definitely improve tremendously.

However, even though Fang Yuan produces his own spiritual objects, Huang Fu Renhe's experiments required a vast amount of resources. Could Fang Yuan supply his needs?

Also.....

"Even though my secluded valley is not that big, I should be able to handle and support all your experiments' needs!"

Fang Yuan seemed to know what was on Huang Fu Renhe's mind and assured him.

Fang Yuan was not lying. Even if the secluded valley was not big enough, he had another piece of spiritual land in the Green Peak. If he had not seen Huang Fu Renhe's strong foundations, he could easily spend large amounts of money to invite any other pharmacists.

As for alchemy masters, they not only needed to be talented but also needed a master to pass down skills to them. At the moment, Fang Yuan wasn't thinking about this as this was impossible for him.

"Since you have invited me, I shall gladly accept your invitation. However, I will have to pick my sister up!"

Huang Fu Renhe's reply was swift and decisive. Fang Yuan was not expecting such a quick response.

'Wow.....he answered so quickly although I had already prepared a few other methods to convince him just in case!'

Fang Yuan looked at Huang Fu Renhe and had a feeling that Huang Fu Renhe was not stupid at all. It seemed like Huang Fu Renhe had tricked him instead of the other way round.

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'On top of that martial artist previously, could he have provoked many others and is looking for means to get out of the prefecture?'

"Good, since you still have another family member, I shall bring her back as well!"

With a slight doubt, he followed Huang Fu Renhe to the south district outside the city.

As compared to the prosperity inside the city, the south district here felt like a slum. The houses here were built side by side and did not look stable, as though a breeze could blow the houses down. There were piles of rubbish along the road which gave a horrible stench.

"You used to live in such places?"

Fang Yuan scrutinised the place, embarrassing Huang Fu Renhe in the process. Fang Yuan added, "The people here are really poor."

"My house is just right in front, the one below the small bridge!"

He quickened his footsteps as he approached the entrance of his house. "I was drunk and didn't return home. My younger sister should be very worried."

"Brother Renhe, why are you only back now?"

At the roadside, there were a few people in tears as they called out to him. "Something bad happened at your house. A few fierce people went into your house!"

"What?"

Huang Fu Renhe was shocked and quickly ran under the bridge.

Along the river, there was a straw cottage and covered with mud outside. There were many people gathering outside his house and a middle-aged lady exclaimed as she saw Huang Fu Renhe coming.

"Mister Huang Fu, hurry up! Your sister is being taken away by a few bad guys!"

"Lanruo! Lanruo!"

After hearing what the lady said, Huang Fu Renhe became very anxious and squeezed through the crowd, and saw a few strong men trying to her sister away.

"What are you all doing? Let go of my sister now!"

Huang Fu Renhe immediately pounced forward, his eyes welled with tears.

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"Bang!"

One of the men laughed and pushed him away, as he fell to the ground.

"Brother!"

Even though her sister was young and her face was covered with dirt, her voice was sweet and clear and her eyes were glittering.

"So you are her brother! Hehe.....your sister is pretty. I want her for 5 taels of silver!"

A man with a small beard walked out from the straw cottages. He rubbed his small beard and threw out a silver piece with a cold laugh

"Get out of here now!"

Huang Fu Renhe was infuriated.

If not for spending a huge capital for the resources in producing pills and medicine, how would he become so poor? No matter how poor his family was, they were surely not worth just a few taels of silver.

"Looks like....you are in big trouble!"

Fang Yuan had realised that this group of men were not simple.

'If they wanted her just because she was pretty, what was the use of having a young girl? Wouldn't they have to support her for another few years?'

'If they wanted to sell her away for money, there were other choices as there were many other families outside the city who were also selling their children....'

Fang Yuan carefully looked at the young girl. She was dirty and it didn't seem like she had anything special.

'Eh?'

However, after looking at her for a few times, he realised something.

'This girl's magical energy is very strong..... almost 3 times as much as a normal person! Her magical energy has reached the threshold of a spiritual knight's!'

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Magical energy was mysterious and could not be otherwise detected without special means.

For example, Fang Yuan could conceal much of his real power and managed to deceive Ling Yin.

However, this young girl had not been trained and was born with such overflowing magical energy. Hence, she did not know how to conceal her real power. With Fang Yuan's dream master cultivation, even though he was just a dream disciple with limited offensive capabilities, his skills in detection was superb and could sense the difference in that young girl.

'This means that.....this group of men are not simple. They are most likely to be puppets to some powerful person!'

'But to kidnap my sister?'

Fang Yuan let out a cold laughter and went to Huang Fu Renhe's side. "Do you need my help?"

"Yes, please. I will remember this!"

Huang Fu Renhe was in a dire situation and needed any help he could get.

"Very well!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head and blocked the group of them.

"Hey kid, go mind your own business and don't interrupt us!"

The man with the small beard was startled at first and then gave a warning with a wicked smile. He was wearing a shirt with the sign of a wolf's head.

"Aahh....the imprint of the Wild Wolves Gang?"

A few screams were heard and the crowd began to disperse. Many of them retreated as they were afraid.

The Wild Wolves Gang was the gang that controlled this poor district. It was rumoured that the gang leader was a 4 Heavenly Gates martial artist. The people in the gang were violent and rude. Their reckless nature allowed them to earn money through extortion.

"How? Do you still want to interfere?"

The man with the small beard replied with a cocky face, deriving happiness from threatening Fang Yuan.

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His gang had real influence in the area. Even though he was just a small pawn in the gang, he became rich ever since he took up private jobs.

He was even happier seeing Lanruo struggling.

The glowing talisman he had showed that she was a suitable person. If he could turn Lanruo in, he would be able to get 100 golden leaves as a reward!

"Brother Fang, what should we do?"

Huang Fu Renhe's feeling was dampened.

He clearly knew the intentions of the Wild Wolves Gang.

"What do you mean what should we do? How could you not do anything and look at your sister being taken away?"

Fang Yuan looked at Huang Fu Renhe.

"How can I do that?"

Huang Fu Renhe shook his head.

"Then things are easy!"

Fang Yuan went forward and said, "Do you all want to break your arms on your own and kowtow to apologise or do you all need me to help you?"

"What an arrogant kid, break his limbs!"

The man with the small beard was furious and saw a silhouette moving quickly.

"Kacha! Kacha!"

Sounds of bone fractures were heard. He wanted to retreat quickly, but it was too late.

"Aahh! My hand!"

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"Spare me!"

"A martial artist!"

.....

Among the screams, Fang Yuan easily broke the arms of a few gangsters and brought the young girl to safety. He then stood in front of the man with the small beard and smiled at him.

"Aahh....you better not come near me! My uncle is the protector of the Wild Wolves Gang. He.....he..."

The man with the small beard retreated and was crying in pain silently.

"Oh!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head. He then grabbed the man's right arm and twisted it. "So what?"

"Karak!"

A fracture sound came and the man immediately knelt on the ground with tears and mucus dripping down.

"Hmm?"

Looking at the talisman that fell out of clothing, a puzzled expression appeared on his face: "This is.....spiritual inscriptions. This spells trouble!

"Leave now!"

He turned his head without looking back at the man and called out to Huang Fu Renhe.

"Okay!"

Seeing what had happened, Huang Fu Renhe knew that he couldn't stay here any longer, and quickly entered the straw cottage. Not long after, he came out cursing while carrying a big baggage. He then kicked a few of the gangsters as they once destroyed his stuff.

"You bring your sister and leave now! Remember to wait for me at the house!"

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Fang Yuan handed Lanruo back over to Huang Fu Renhe and reminded him.

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 98: Wild Wolves Gang

"I can't thank you enough with words!"

Huang Fu Renhe bowed before leaving with Lanruo.

Fang Yuan went beside the man with the beard and held the spiritual talisman. He then asked, "Who gave you this spiritual talisman?"

"Aahh...you are dead! I will not let you off....."

The man was rolling on the ground in pain and shouted. There was no way for the both of them to have a conversation.

"Sigh.....I knew it....."

Fang Yuan shook his head and helplessly stared at the incoming reinforcement.

The group of reinforcement looked much more elite. All of them were wearing long robes with the same big wolf's head imprint on their chests. They were indeed fierce and could bring silence in the village by striking fear.

"Kacha! Bang!"

Seeing them coming, the crowd instantly dispersed and everyone went back into their houses. They locked their doors and windows as they were afraid of them.

"You are the one who injured my gang members?"

Among all the men from the gang, there was a middle-aged man who took a step forward and asked. His face seemed to be glowing and resembled to the man with the beard.

"Who are you?"

Fang Yuan asked, even though he already knew the answer.

"I'm Du Feng, the protector of the Wild Wolves Gang!"

He was extremely composed and his eyes looked fierce, evident of a Martial Artist (7th Gate). Fang Yuan was quite surprised that even a small gang leader here in the Secluded Mountains Prefecture would be so well trained in martial arts.

"Very well, your gang has been taking innocent people from their families forcefully. What crime should you all be guilty?"

Fang Yuan said loudly with a sense of justice, as though he represented justice.

"We take away innocent people forcefully?"

Du Feng was a little doubtful at first but then realised that it was likely that his nephew, the man with the small beard, could either be lustful, or this could be part of his private job.

However, he was certain he should help his nephew, but he didn't know Fang Yuan's background, explaining his hesitation.

"It looked like you have no idea"

Fang Yuan stepped on the leg of the man with the beard and slowly added pressure. "Speak now, or else I will break all your limbs and cripple for life!"

"Aahh....I will speak! I will speak!"

The man with the beard cried out loud.

To him, being dead was way better than living a crippled life. His biggest fear was to be crippled for his life.

"I was instructed by a lady. She will ask me to source for suitable children whenever she comes to trade with me. I don't know where she lives....Also, I remember that she has a nice voice!"

This man was a weakling. He did not hesitate to speak the truth under pressure, while his uncle remained speechless.

"I see!"

Fang Yuan nodded his head, turned his back and left.

Such arrogance from Fang Yuan made Du Feng furious.

This was his first time seeing a person looking down at the Wild Wolves Gang!

"How dare you!"

Seeing Fang Yuan taking his leave, Du Feng could not resist and grabbed Fang Yuan's back.

"Ha!"

Without looking back, Fang Yuan struck his palm backwards.

"Bang!"

With Fang Yuan's palm, Du Feng's body flew and he spat out a mouthful of blood in mid-air. He was left in shock. "4 Heavenly Gates!"

He didn't expect such a young martial artist to have achieved the 4 Heavenly Gates!

Also, Fang Yuan was not just a normal Martial Artist of the 9th or 10th Gate. The feeling of resistance Du Feng felt from Fang Yuan was beyond the level of his own gang leader. He started to draw similarities to the famous experts who had achieved the peak level of the 4 Heavenly Gates long ago!

"What now? Do you want to continue?"

Fang Yuan observed his surroundings. After such a commotion, there was still no presence of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers rushing here. It was probably because this was a poor district and the fact that the Wild Wolves Gang were involved.

"No! I wouldn't dare!"

Du Feng forced himself to get on his feet and broke into cold sweat.

Such an expert like Fang Yuan could wipe out their whole gang overnight!

Upon reaching this thought, Du Feng immediately bowed and apologised. "This man is ignorant and is rude to you. You can do whatever you want to him. Don't be angry!"

"What?"

The man with the beard was surprised by his uncle's reaction. He didn't expect his highly skilled and capable uncle to be defeated in one palm, and to give himself up without hesitation.

The rest of the men in the gang were extremely adaptable and knew how to react to the situation for fear of death. Without hesitation, they kowtowed and apologised, with their foreheads bleeding. "Sir please spare us! Sir, please spare us!"

"I will spare you all!"

Fang Yuan waved his hand. He knew that he would still have to find out the source of the spiritual talisman from the man with the beard.

"Young hero, our gang leader likes to meet new capable young people. If you don't mind, would you like to come along?"

Du Feng realised that Fang Yuan could be negotiated easily and offered him.

"I'm not that skilful!"

Fang Yuan was shocked. He was not that foolish to enter the base of his enemy, which would give them a good opportunity to attack him. Even though they were not enemies now, he still would not go.

He then left and disappeared within seconds.

.....

Du Feng stared at Fang Yuan's back and was speechless for quite a while.

"Uncle....uncle!"

The man with the beard then managed to get up now. He held his broken arm and worriedly exclaimed.

"Hmm!"

Du Feng stood with both of his hand behind his back and gave a cold look. "Look what you have done.....You better start telling me what happened in detail.....and when have you started doing dirty jobs for other people?"

He asked with much disappointment and anger.

Ever since the situation outside had become unstable, the whole gang had been keeping a low profile under the instructions of their gang leader. After all, they would get into big troubles easily if they were to be in high profile.

However, Du Feng didn't expect his own nephew to attract so much attention. Was he tired of living?

"Uncle, please spare me....."

What more could the man with the beard say? Say that he was greedy and lustful? He could only ask for forgiveness now.

"We shall talk again when we get back!"

Even though Du Feng felt like killing his useless nephew, he held back his anger.

The group of them left hurriedly. After they had disappeared into the next corner of the street, only then did the residents dared to open their doors and windows.

However, there was a silhouette following the group of them. It was a curious Fang Yuan. "Another mysterious spiritual knight.....The situation here in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture is getting more complicated!"

He didn't want to announce his arrival as he headed towards their headquarters but felt that it would be harmless for him to follow the gang stealthily.

.....

The headquarters of the Wild Wolves Gang was not far from the previous place. It was a big house and was well guarded by a few men of the gang.

Back in the hall of the headquarters.

"Pa!"

A loud slap was heard. Du Feng looked at his nephew who was crying out loud. He felt like killing to prevent him more troubles. "Speak now....who are you working for!"

"Uncle, please spare me....."

The man with the beard teared and mucus was dripping down. He revealed the truth.

"What? A spiritual talisman? Which will appear different as it detects suitable children?"

Du Feng was an experienced man. He went up and kicked his nephew. "You are willing to do what others have told you to do. Why don't you die when I asked you to do so?!"

Du Feng was scared and shocked.

such means were definitely those of spiritual knights or spiritual disciples. Moreover, the person did things so sneakily, which made him most likely a foreigner cultivating with evil arts. The consequences would be unimaginable if the soldiers of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture would find out his involvement in such doings.

However, he could not suddenly stop. What if they suspect that there was something wrong? Would they take it out on the Wild Wolves Gang?

It was not a difficult task for the weakest spiritual disciple to wipe out the entire Wild Wolves Gang.

Thinking about this, Du Feng kicked his nephew once more, causing him to spit out another mouth of blood.

"This matter is too serious. I will have to report to the gang leader!"

Just as Du Feng was hesitating, a young man dressed in purple entered the main hall. "What happened, Du Feng?"

The young man looked calm and his eyes were glowing. Unknowingly, he had a creepy look.

"Gang leader!"

Du Feng bit his teeth and informed the gang leader about the incident.

"A suspected evil spiritual disciple and a martial artist who has achieved the 4 Heavenly Gates..."

The creepy looking young man was the gang leader of the Wild Wolves Gang. His name was Diao Guangdou. He had already developed inner force and could extend his lifespan. His actual age was much

higher than that of Du Feng's. Also, what he had experienced was a miracle. He was only a humble waiter in the past. It only took him a short period of time to become the leader of a gang.

"This matter is indeed complicated!"

At that moment, the inspiring Gang Leader Diao was troubled after hearing Du Feng.

"Gang leader, should I?"

Du Feng looked at his nephew and gave a ferocious look.

In order to keep his position as the protector of the gang and to show his loyalty, he wouldn't mind killing his own nephew.

"You shall keep an eye on him!"

Diao Guangdou waved his hand and two men came to drag the man with the beard out.

"I have failed you!"

After the cry from the man with the beard had faded away, Du Feng then knelt on the ground and asked for forgiveness from Diao Guangdou.

"Sigh....."

Diao Guangdou heaved a long sigh and said, "I didn't expect to meet such troubles after settling the big plan!"

Du Feng was surprised. He already knew that the gang leader had been planning something big but didn't expect him to take action now. Keeping a low profile previously was just a coverup. He suddenly felt that the gang leader was too profound to be understood.

"I deserve to die!"

Du Feng had no choice but to ask for forgiveness.

"Forget it. Since you have made a mistake, I will still have to punish you..."

Diao Guangdou tucked his lips and said, "Well, since there is a new prisoner in the prison, you shall serve your punishment by guarding the prison. Don't make any more mistakes, do you understand?"

"A prisoner? Is the prisoner from the White Cloud Business Council....."

Du Feng's eyes suddenly brightened up. He bowed and dismissed himself. "Understood, sir. I shall not make any more mistakes."

After Du Feng had left, Diao Guangdou touched his chin and was in deep thoughts. "Unfortunately.....if we had gotten hold of that girl, we would have a chance to be on good terms with the spiritual disciple. Compared to the spiritual knight, it is not worth to sacrifice the relationship with the spiritual knight to be on good terms with the 4 Heavenly Gates martial artist.....Hehe, thinking of having good terms with that two of them? I'm afraid the outcome would be disastrous!"

He was in disdain of Du Feng's choice as Du Feng did not want to choose a side during the fight. What was he thinking?

Carefree Path of Dreams

Chapter 99: A Rescue Mission

"Tsk tsk...Chief Diao is indeed introverted! At the same time, he is also straightforward and decisive!"

Amidst the chatter and laughter, Fang Yuan suddenly emerged.

"How did you get in?"

Diao Guangdou was taken by surprise.

This was the headquarters of the Wild Wolves Gang! The very core of the sect! Apart from the constant patrols along the perimeters, within the compound there were minimally two inner force experts protecting the area.

Furthermore, Diao Guangdou, the most powerful member of the gang, was present today.

Despite all these, Fang Yuan was still able to intrude without being spotted. What did this represent?

"Even though this person is young, his powers are extremely advanced and powerful. Could he be an ancient entity from some unknown godforsaken land?"

Diao Guangdou visually assessed Fang Yuan for a moment before bursting into laughter, "Hello senior, what may I do for you?"

"You are indeed quite good at bootlicking! What a pity... Nothing can save you today!"

Fang Yuan shook his head as he replied.

With the help of Du Feng's 'informant', Fang Yuan was crystal clear about the defences of the Wild Wolves Gang.

Furthermore, with Fang Yuan's magical powers, he heard Chief Diao's earlier conversation with his closest subordinates loud and clear. This created a desire to kill in Fang Yuan.

Anyway, for a lowly sect like that, all of its members definitely had blood on their hands. Even if Fang Yuan wiped out the entire sect he would not have an ounce of regret.

Of course, Fang Yuan would not admit the true reason for the attack. He waited and eavesdropped on their conversation to pick out what they had to say about him.

"Shut up, die!"

He glanced at Diao Guangdou who looked like he still wanted to beg for mercy and scoffed.

"Voom!"

After attaining Gui Wusheng's Paralysing Scream and combining it with the techniques in the Blood Magic Manual, the effects were even more extraordinary.

It was almost as if right after Fang Yuan shouted, Diao Guangdou, who had broken through the 9th gate and was also an expert of the 4 Heavenly Gates, was rooted to the spot.

"Slash!"

Fang Yuan moved forward and nonchalantly stretched out his right arm, baring his razor-sharp nails. The thrusting force from this move cut through the air like a knife.

With the combination of the Paralysing Scream and his advance, even a martial artist who has broken through the 12th gate would minimally suffer a major injury from this.

For a martial artist in the 4 Heavenly Gates who had not broken through the Earth Gate, it was almost certain such a move would kill him.

"Ah! Nine Snake Rodent Strikes!"

However, Diao Guangdou's reaction caused a slight surprise in Fang Yuan.

Diao Guangdou who was momentarily stunned suddenly opened his eyes and flew backwards. All the bones in his body suddenly softened and his body crumbled to the floor. Like a boneless snake, he dodged Fang Yuan's fatal claw with extreme agility.

"Who are you? Guards!!!"

In a flash, Diao Guangdou retreated backwards a few metres and shouted out for help.

Blood flowed from the conspicuous claw wounds on his chest. During Fang Yuan's surprise attack, Diao Guangdou did not escape fully unharmed.

"It's the chief!"

"There's a crisis in the main hall!"

"Send reinforcements now!"

...

There was the commotion of the shouting of commands and hurried footsteps.

"Erm?"

Fang Yuan frowned as he was also surprised, "Interesting. Judging by your martial prowess, you should have lost your head by now..."

Just now, Fang Yuan remembered clearly seeing a flash of red light on Diao Guangdou's body. Diao Guangdou blocked out his Paralysing Scream, rendering it almost ineffective.

It seemed that Diao Guangdou was clear that his magical powers were no match against Fang Yuan's. The only possibility for what happened was there was external intervention.

"Hahaha...I could not have imagined that you are actually quite impressive. Looks like I have to use my full powers!"

Fang Yuan burst out laughing and stepped forward. The muscles on his body swelled out piece by piece and took on a bluish-black colour. It enlarged to the extent it looked as though Fang Yuan was wearing a layer of metal armour.

"He is too strong, retreat!"

Diao Guangdou grabbed on his chest and fled hastily.

He was only able to survive earlier as he relied on a unique treasure to protect his mind. But he knew that this object had its limitations and to fight against Fang Yuan whose powers were much more superior than his was suicidal. His only chance of survival was to retreat and regroup with the rest of the sect and attempt to fight Fang Yuan through the advantage of numbers.

However, Fang Yuan was too fast for him.

In what seemed to be a gust of strong wind, Fang Yuan sent a punch flying at Diao Guangdou just as he stepped out of the main hall.

"Hoo hoo!"

In the midst of the strong wind, Diao Guangdou felt that he was no longer chased by a person, but a wild beast.

After the strong wind subsided, Fang Yuan's punch hit him like a missile, knocking the air out of his lungs.

"Even for a 12th gate martial artists, your powers are considered very impressive!"

Diao Guangdou widened his eyes with rage. At this point, he knew that the only chance for him to live was to fight back. Mustering up the final bits of his courage and will, he turned around to face his enemy. With a loud noise exploding from his waist, he right arm turned into the claw of an eagle and his left arm turned into a serpent. Both shot out like arrows as Diao Guangdou shouted, "Dual Eagle Snake Killing Technique!"

"Snap!"

"Shoo!"

The force behind this technique erupted. This was Chief Diao's signature move and several martial artists had died under it.

However, as his fist and claw landed on Fang Yuan's body, it felt as though they contacted a sheet of strong iron. Even the force which he channelled into the move rebounded back and hit him. The colour drained from Diao Guangdou's face.

"Iron Skin...How is it that its power is so strong?"

In that split second, an idea popped into Diao Guangdou's mind. It was also his last idea.

This was because after his failed attack, Fang Yuan was already now right in front of him.

"Die!!!"

Fang Yuan was ready this time. He responded with everything he had. Apart from using the Paralysing Scream again, he stretched out his arms and cut off Diao Guangdou's paths of escape and with immense force, he struck the target in the centre.

At that moment, he had little care for whatever technique he used. He purely depended on his superior martial arts prowess to overpower Diao Guangdou.

Diao Guangdou was rooted to the ground, petrified. He bore the full force of Fang Yuan's attack as Fang Yuan's arms smashed on both sides of his head.

"Bang!"

With a loud bang, his head exploded. The blood and brains from his head became a gruesome mess and blood flowed out from his nostrils and eyes. Then he slumped to the ground.

"Erm...this move worked again. Maybe the amulet on him only had a one-off protective function?"

Out of curiosity, Fang Yuan got down and searched Diao Guangdou's body. Then he stood up and glared at the rest of the Wild Wolves Gang.

"Why? Who else has a death wish?"

With this roar and his almost demonic appearance combined with how he killed Diao Guangdou in lightning speed, he looked very intimidating.

"Chief...chief is dead..."

"This person is unbeatable...."

After all, Wild Wolves Gang was a rowdy bunch of undisciplined rascals. Upon seeing the gruesome death of their chief, chaos ensued as they instantly abandoned their posts and weapons and fled desperately for their lives.

"They can go, but you cannot!"

Fang Yuan looked around and stepped forward, like a tiger entering a flock of sheep. Before long he carried out a skinny inner force martial artist out of the chaos.

Seeing that this person was well-clothed and well-endowed with jewellery, Fang Yuan deduced that this person held an important position in the sect and asked, "Did your chief take action against the White Cloud Business Council before? The one where Yu Xinlou was a young lord at?"

Fang Yuan found him worth saving and helping. Had it been anyone else, Fang Yuan would not have even bothered.

"Correct!"

Even though the skinny man was an inner force expert and one of the protectors, he behaved timidly in front of Fang Yuan. He said, "Our chief launched a surprise attack and exterminated the White Cloud Business Council and their possessions. He also kidnapped the young lord to wait for the right moment to seize the inheritance and possessions of the Yu Family...All these were the ideas of the chief, it has nothing to do with me!"

"Take me to the prison and I shall spare your life!"

Fang Yuan commanded coldly.

"Yes...yes sir!"

Shaking in fear, the skinny man led Fang Yuan to the place.

When the news of Diao Guangdou's death spread out, the entire prefecture ensued in chaos. People were busy fighting with each other, fleeing or looting the prefecture. Nobody bothered to avenge their dead chief. The foolish few who stood in the way were easily killed and pushed aside by Fang Yuan as he easily arrived at the back yard.

As this was a private prison by the Wild Wolves Gang, it was naturally not too conspicuous. It was well camouflaged under an artificial hill.

"Ah...Protector Zhang, what happened to you?"

Arriving inside, the disciples who were incognisant of what just happened looked on in disbelief and shock as they saw Elder Zhang behaving so obediently next to Fang Yuan.

"Hmm, seeing that you have been obedient, I shall spare your life!"

Fang Yuan waved his hand. With this, Elder Zhang was sent flying out of the prison and he crashed with a few of the prison guards, causing them to vomit blood and pass out.

"Who dares to offend...eh, it's you..."

After entering the corridor, a figure appeared. It was Du Feng. Upon seeing Fang Yuan, the colour drained from his face.

"Get lost!"

Fang Yuan shouted. He sprinted forward with lightning speed and pressed his palm on Du Feng's Dantian.

"Ah...you...removed all my martial arts abilities?"

Du Feng fell to the ground momentarily as blood trickled out from the corner of his mouth. He had an excruciating expression on his face.

"You should count yourself lucky that you can even live like a normal human being..."

Fang Yuan took away a bunch of keys from his waist and opened the metal gate at the end of the corridor.

"Whooo!"

A gust of stale and repugnant air gushed onto his face instantly.

In the prison, the air circulation was expected to be poor, but the atmosphere stank of a noxious odour.

"Ah...what have you done to my uncle?"

Furthermore, in an adjacent cell, Fang Yuan caught sight of a familiar person. It was the man with the mouse-like beard who offended him earlier.

"Haha, I gave you a chance, but you refused it. You are indeed looking for trouble!"

Without looking, he flicked a small rock which hit the man, causing him to gently fall to the ground.

"Ah...Someone is breaking into the prison!"

"Save me, I have a lot of wealth and I can also pass on to you very formidable martial arts techniques!"

"Save me!"

...

A huge commotion erupted as several prisoners stuck their black and filthy arms through the window grills and they tried to catch Fang Yuan's attention. However, behind the grills, many pairs of menacing eyes shone in the pitch darkness.

"I am not the saviour, do not expect me to save you!"

Fang Yuan rolled his eyes. If they were innocent civilians, there was no reason for them to be locked up in here. As for whether this punishment for whatever crime they committed was justified, it was not worth his time to ascertain.

Fang Yuan walked further down into the basement of the prison and he saw a few cells that looked especially impregnable. Looking through the small window, he saw a man lying on the ground.

"Yu Xinlou!"

Fang Yuan smiled.

You are...Brother Fang?"

Hearing a familiar voice, Yu Xinlou climbed up instantly. Upon seeing Fang Yuan, his mouth widened slowly and he asked, "What are you doing here?"

[Carefree Path of Dreams](#)

Chapter 100: Birthday Dinner

"Whoosh... Piak!"

Fireworks exploded in the skies of Secluded Mountain Prefecture City, like a shower of meteors; they fell towards the ground with their colourful flaming tails.

In the blink of an eye, it was the day of the birthday dinner. The entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture City was celebrating.

Even though there were more conflicts on the streets and a few gangs being destroyed due to the influx of people from all around the nation, it was all neglected due to the joyous occasion of the birthday dinner.

Prefecture Master's mansion.

"As Qinghe City's Spirit Returning Sect Sect Head, I offer my greetings to you, Prefecture Master!"

Amongst the loud discussions, Shi Yutong wore a cloth over her face and entered the Prefecture Master's mansion under the escort of a few Spirit Returning Sect disciples.

Spirit Returning Sect was a stronghold in the entire county, and therefore Shi Yutong's arrival was quite a big affair. She was directed to the heart of the hall.

'The troops of Secluded Mountain Prefecture are impressive, indeed impressive...'

She appeared friendly and greeted a few people whom she personally knew, but deep inside she was surprised.

At the gate of the mansion, there were two rows of Martial Artists (6th Gate and above) to guard it. There were emotionless and had metal armour, and were able to strike fear in anyone who looked at them.

At this point, all the guards were martial artists who broke through the 4 Heavenly Gates!

These highly skilled martial artists were able to lead a few hundred troops among the Secluded Mountain Prefecture.

After all, the weakest soldier within the Secluded Mountain Prefecture armed forces was a Martial Artist (4th Gate). A few capital leaders were at the Wu Zong level and were comparable to Shi Yutong!

If they didn't have such power, they wouldn't be able to ensure peace in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture!

At the seat of the hall master sat a cheerful old man, wearing a spiritual robe with a hundred 'longevity' sewn onto it. He was skinny and it was as though he would fall from a strong breeze. However, he had fire in his eyes and seemed unpredictable.

This was the Secluded Mountain Prefecture Master, who had controlled over 6 counties and the Secluded Mountain Prefecture armed forces - Liu Yan.

"Spirit Returning Sect's Shi Yutong congratulates my lord, prefecture head, and specially presents 3 stalks of spiritual ginseng and 10,000 gold coins. Here's wishing you longevity!"

Shi Yutong looked at Liu Yan and paid her greetings. Her loud and clear voice travelled throughout the entire hall, and her pricey gifts made a commotion.

"Haha..... Yutong, you are too kind, please recover!"

Liu Yan laughed heartily, and even his beard began to float up; it was evident that he was pleased with Shi Yutong. "Please have a seat, and promise me you'll drink with me a few cups tonight!"

"Of course!"

Shi Yutong laughed, got seated and scanned the surroundings.

She was Wu Zong and the master of a county, she was seated at a special table with everyone at the same level as her. A few of them were the capital leaders, and there was one seat empty. He was under Liu Yan and was not present.

"Sect Head Shi, I've heard that you have just taken in a highly capable disciple. There is someone to take over your place now, and I am so envious of you!"

At the other table across, a muscular man offered a drink.

He was wearing the armour of the Secluded Mountain Prefecture City and did not bother to take it off. He used a large bowl for his wine and was extremely forthright.

"Niu capital had a good reputation..."

Shi Yutong downed one bowl of wine. "My disciple is playful. Even though she might have potential, how could she compare to the talents here in the Prefecture City?"

"We cannot compare! Not at all!"

The capital leader of Niu County shook his head and pointed at the empty seat. "After all, you recruited Master Lu's help to make a spiritual pill for her. With that to aid her, no matter how talented our people are, how can we compare to your disciple?"

Shi Yutong froze and was deep in thought for a moment. A voice came from the side. "Master Lu is the only alchemy master in Secluded Mountain Prefecture and has many friends in many counties... Isn't that right, Sect Head Shi?"

His eyes were extremely sharp and whoever he gazed at felt uncomfortable.

Shi Yutong felt even more unbearable and almost wanted to run for the door!

The few people that he stared at were those who supported Master Lu to take over the appointment!

Liu Yan had mixed feelings, raised his wine bowl and scanned the surroundings as though he did not hear the previous exchange.

At the moment, the entire atmosphere changed, and there was an uncomfortable silence as though someone died.

Under such a huge stress, a few Wu Zong martial artists broke into cold sweat.

Just before Shi Yutong decided to start the fight, a few high pitched voices travelled from outside, albeit fearful. "Lu Renjia, Master Lu, brings my disciple Ling Yin to offer our greetings to Prefecture Master!!!"

...

"It's so lively within the Prefecture City!"

At this moment, there was a group of people observing from outside the Prefecture City.

Fang Yuan stood on a little hill and observed everything. He then looked at Huang Fu Renhe and Yu Xinlou by his side. "What? Are you still wondering why I retreated?"

"Why would we?"

Huang Fu Renhe waved his hand. "Benefactor saved my life and my sister's life, and we will never forget this favour. Regardless, I will always obey you!"

Fang Yuan smiled and looked at the small girl beside him.

Lanruo was washed up and wore a robe. Other than being slightly malnutrition, she had no difference as compared to a normal child, but Fang Yuan could sense her unimaginable magical energy; she was a perfect candidate to become a spiritual knight.

If there could be another miracle, she might even be able to become a dream master.

'This kid is not Huang Fu Renhe's blood-related sister, but her stepsister... stepsister... Why did I not have such luck?'

As Fang Yuan stared at Lanruo, she could feel his gaze and shrugged her neck.

Fang Yuan was impressed and how she could sense his gaze and then turned his attention to Yu Xinlou.

The young proprietor of the White Cloud Business Council went through an ordeal of losing his entire family and even went to jail. After everything, he became much more mature, and the bloody wounds on his face gave him a resolute look.

"The ordeal that the White Cloud Business Council went through was a heavy blow to me, and it seems that we have lost footing in the Prefecture City... We should leave to another place, and as early as possible. I am looking forward to Master's Qingye City! If you have any favour next time, my business council will help to our fullest ability!"

He was a smart person and turned the entire business council to Fang Yuan's service, in exchange for protection.

"Don't worry, I still have some influence in Qingye City!"

Fang Yuan smiled and said.

Even though the White Cloud Business Council was damaged, it was still rather influential in Qingye City and could strengthen his influence outside the city. With their alliance, even the Spirit Returning Sect would find it hard to try and interfere with them.

"I still have to thank Master for saving my life!"

Yu Xinlou bowed and gave his thanks to Fang Yuan, as he solemnly said.

"It was casual... And I did gain from it too, so you don't have to thank me..."

Fang Yuan looked at Yu Xinlou and felt a little pitiful for him.

The conflict in his family and the betrayal from a blood-related family member completely uprooted the entire White Cloud Business Council. The old proprietor of White Cloud Business Council and the 4 Heavenly Gate Martial Artist sacrificed and paid their lives, which strongly affected Yu Xinlou.

Of course, he was considered a strong man for being able to deal with it and grow from it.

Fang Yuan fiddled around with a blood-coloured jade in his hand, and his smile grew.

He did not lie.

He did gain from the destruction of the Wild Wolves Gang. The most important takeaway was the blood-coloured piece of jade.

'This piece of jade seems to be a treasure. Fiddling around with it for prolonged periods of time can help to improve one's health and absorb the impurities in one's body, which could be considered as improving one's physique. This was the reason why Diao Guangdou could accelerate his progress from a small waiter to a gang leader, to what he had achieved...'

He was a waiter and was middle-aged. Therefore, to be able to rise so quickly, he had to have a good potential.

Who would've known that he could become a 4 Heavenly Gate Martial Artist? This piece of jade played a big part in it and was a treasure of Diao Guangdou which he kept dearly. It seemed to also have a calming effect for him.

However, it was not enough to match Fang Yuan, which led to his death and his treasure landing into someone else's hands.

'This thing is not simple...'

At Fang Yuan's current cultivation level, this jade's ability was rather insignificant. As Fang Yuan placed it under the sun, he noticed fine red lines within the jade, like the arteries and veins in a human. He was shocked at the way Diao Guangdou used it, as it was simply squandering the item.

'There's blood hidden in the jade, forming structures similar to human meridians, and it can also protect one's divine spirit.....I'll name you Blood Spirit Jade!'

Fang Yuan named it and promptly kept the Blood Spirit Jade properly. He appeared rushed. "Let's go... The Prefecture City is now trouble, and the further we go the better!"

"Yes, master!"

Huang Fu Renhe and Yu Xinlou both felt that he was overreacting, but still bowed and followed anyway; they did not dare to disobey.

At this moment, a large pounding was heard from the city gates, which made their expression change.

In front of the 35-yard tall city wall was two large metal doors, which under the force of machinery and human force, slowly closed up, like a beast closing its big mouth.

Hundreds of citizens were screaming just behind the doors, like ants.

"Rumble!"

In the end, the entire door was shut, and in three other directions, the same sound was heard.

On the city walls, rows of Secluded Mountain Prefecture soldiers walked out in armour. All of them wielded knives and swords and loaded their bows, as though they were facing a big threat.

The entire Secluded Mountain Prefecture City seemed like a beast ready for war.

"Closing all four doors?"

Yu Xinlou observed the scene and was shocked. "Even the previous few wars did not escalate to this intensity? What is happening in the Secluded Mountain Prefecture?"

"Regardless of what is happening, it is of no concern to any of us. The Prefecture Master and the higher-ups will settle it. If they cannot deal with it then neither can we, so let's go!"

Fang Yuan waved his sleeve, turned around and left.

It was always good to be an opportunist, but the risks this time were too high and it was unjustified to go for the rewards.

'It seems that the Secluded Mountain Prefecture made the first move, this Liu Yan is not simple...'

He thought about it, jumped on a carriage, and neglected the two behind; both of which looked at him in awe.