

I Practice Farming While the Rest Cultivates

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1 Chapter 1 Tanaka's Fields That Shine Like Jade _1

Linyang Market.

The day had just dawned, with the mists not yet dissipated, the entire market was veiled beneath a layer of gauzy white fog.

A small courtyard was encircled by blue-gray stone walls, the yard spanning about thirty feet in length and twenty feet in width, with most of the area being gray-black soil. Only the middle had a narrow path paved with bluestone.

In the gray-black soil, some low-grade spiritual plants were planted, which after a silent night of moisture from the fog, were bursting with vitality, lazily stretching out their tender green leaves.

With a creaking sound, the stone house at the end of the bluestone path opened, and a young man walked out.

The teenager was about sixteen or seventeen years old, dressed in a gray shirt, tall and handsome, with lively and clear eyes.

It was Lu Xuan, who had been here for quite a while since he crossed over.

Originally, he was just an ordinary young man on Earth, but unexpectedly, when he woke up, he unknowingly inhabited this teenager's body and became an insignificant Spirit Plant Master among the many beings in the Cultivation World.

After overcoming the initial confusion and fear, Lu Xuan gradually adapted to his new identity.

With a standard start, no parents, alone, ordinary talent, and cultivation at the Qi Cultivation Second Layer, he relied on years of accumulation to rent a Spirit Field in the market, plant spiritual grass and spiritual medicine, and strive to survive in this dog-eat-dog, dangerous Cultivation World.

The thin layer of fog that came into the courtyard brought Lu Xuan, who had just woken up, a lot more alertness. He went around those spiritual plants, observing carefully.

There were about twenty or thirty spiritual plants, with a certain gap between each one, standing a foot tall, the thinned leaves shimmered with faint white fluorescent spots, decorating the white fog like stars.

These were the Spirit Firefly Grasses, a first-grade spiritual plant, which was relatively easy to cultivate. Once matured, they can be used as materials to refine several types of healing pills, and they have a wide range of applications in the Cultivation World.

Besides the Spirit Firefly Grass, there were two trees in the courtyard, both of which were Moon Erosion Trees.

Moon Erosion Tree was a first-grade spiritual plant, which under the careful nurturing of Lu Xuan, had grown well, even taller than his head. Hidden amongst its vibrant green leaves were dozens of silver hook-like fruits.

These fruits were called Moon Erosion Fruits, beginning like crescents when they formed and gradually growing larger until they turned into a full moon upon maturity.

Ripe Moon Erosion Fruits could be directly consumed, slightly enhancing the spiritual energy within a lower-rank Qi Cultivating Monk. They were also used to refine valuable pills like the Yuan Cultivating Pill.

The difficulty of cultivating the Moon Erosion Tree and its rarity were both slightly higher than that of the Spirit Firefly Grass, thus Lu Xuan invested the most into its cultivation.

The two types of spiritual plants were growing quite well, yet Lu Xuan's face revealed a hint of worry.

Quickly, he went to the western side of the courtyard, squatted down, using two fingers to hold the leaf of a Spirit Firefly Grass near the stone wall, carefully flipping it over.

As he anticipated, thin strands of faint black lines were on the back of the leaf, which would hardly be noticed if not for Lu Xuan's careful observation.

"Compared to yesterday, the amount of black lines has noticeably increased."

Lu Xuan secretly compared in his heart, looking at the Spirit Firefly Grass being eroded by the filament, he couldn't help but sigh.

He discovered the abnormal state of a Spirit Firefly Grass near the stone wall two days ago when caring for the spiritual plants. After a long search, he finally found these black lines on the back of the leaf.

The thin lines seemed to have fused with the Spirit Firefly Grass, sticking tightly together, making them extremely difficult to separate.

As a low-grade Spirit Plant Master of humble origin with inadequate knowledge, Lu Xuan had no idea about the origin of these black lines.

Unable to prescribe the right remedy, he had no choice but to use his inner spiritual energy to carefully separate the black lines from the back of the leaf.

Despite exhausting all his spiritual energy and mental power, he barely managed to clean it up, but when he inspected it the next day, the black lines appeared abruptly, and their numbers increased day by day.

“At this rate, in a day or two, this Spirit Firefly Grass will be overrun by the black lines, and it is very likely that they will spread to the nearby Spirit Firefly Grass.”

Thinking of this, Lu Xuan fretted, standing still in a daze.

He had considered pulling out the Spirit Firefly Grass to prevent it from spreading the black lines to the others nearby.

However, after a brief consideration, he dismissed this idea.

After all, the origin of the black thin line was unknown, and Lu Xuan wasn't sure how it had infected the Spirit Firefly Grass. If pulling it out worked, it would be alright. But if the other Spirit Firefly Grass was still inevitably infected after it was removed, that would bring about a lot of regret.

“At present, the only solution is to find a professional, experienced Spirit Plant Master in the market to help resolve this.”

“The few Spirit Stones that I painstakingly saved, which I originally planned to use to pay the rent of the Spirit Field after two months, now...”

Lu Xuan, being only a Qi Cultivation Second Layer Loose Cultivator, could not completely own a Spirit Field of his own.

The small Spirit Field in the courtyard had been leased from a Qi Practitioner Intermediate Level cultivator in the Market. It needed a hefty amount of Spirit Stones as rent every month.

“I will have to tighten my belt and live frugally for the next period.”

He stood up, looking determined.

After the Spirit Plants had matured, they could be sold to shops and cultivators in the Market. The Spirit Stones acquired from the sale, apart from being used for rent and daily cultivation, would leave a bit spare.

However, if they were used to request for help from a senior Spirit Plant Master, Lu Xuan would need to pay a considerable amount.

Lu Xuan had made a decision. He looked around.

A black thorn fence surrounded the grey stone wall, filled with numerous sharp black thorns which provide some protection.

However, its defensive power was merely satisfactory and was only effective against honest persons. It wouldn't fend off villains let alone prevent those mysterious creatures that coveted Spirit Plants.

"After dealing with this matter, I will need to save some Spirit Stones to set up a protective array to prevent similar incidents from happening again."

"Relying on this Grass Puppet to guard the Spirit Field is utterly unrealistic."

Lu Xuan glanced at a Straw Man Puppet that was standing in the corner of the courtyard.

The Puppet was three feet tall and leaned against the courtyard wall. It was made of unknown dry straw. Its head was large and the body small, making it seem a bit deformed. On its big head, there was a tumor made of grey straw.

This Grass Puppet was a second-hand good that Lu Xuan bought from a stall in the Market. The vendor claimed that the Puppet, which originated from the Thousand Mechanism Sect in the Cultivation World, had a simple behavioural pattern and was often used to guard low-grade Spirit Fields.

If it felt the intrusion of cultivators or demonic beasts into the Spirit Field, the Grass Puppet would alert its owner. If it discovered anyone attempting to harm the Spirit Field and its Spirit Plants, it would also initiate an attack to restrain them.

However, the Puppet in the courtyard was not very reliable, possibly because it was second-hand. Its alert function worked intermittently, let alone launching an attack, which was not even to be considered.

Of course, this also had a lot to do with Lu Xuan himself. He rarely went out since his arrival here, had little contact with the outside world, and hence, no cultivators or demonic beasts entered the courtyard.

Lu Xuan, with irritation, glared at the Grass Puppet with the tumor. He stirred up his spiritual power, creating minor Spirit Rain above the Spirit Firefly Grass and the Moon Erosion Tree. The rain fell on their branches and leaves and drenched into them.

With the nourishment of Spirit Rain, Spirit Plants in the Spirit Field seemed to be more tender, clean, and totally dust-free. Their branches and leaves rocked lightly, displaying pure elegance.

This was the basic Spirit Rain Technique essential for all Spirit Plant Masters. It combined minuscule spiritual energy with water steam to interact with Spirit Plants, ensuring their smooth growth.

“Hmm? This Spirit Firefly Grass has entered its maturation period.”

After irrigating all Spirit Plants, Lu Xuan found that on one Spirit Firefly Grass, little sparkling lights were shimmering, as if they were about to fall off from the leaf.

He quickly went back to the room and fetched a White Jade Box, carefully plucked the Spirit Firefly Grass and put it in the box.

The Jade Box could slow down the loss of spiritual power in the Spirit Plant to some extent, safeguarding its medicinal potency.

“What is this?”

When Lu Xuan was about to leave after closing the Jade Box, he suddenly found that where the Spirit Firefly Grass had been planted, a white light cluster the size of a fist was left. The light cluster was shining slightly, scattering specks of spiritual light.

Having been intrigued, Lu Xuan stretched out his hand and touched the white light cluster lightly.

In an instant, countless light points from the cluster flooded into his palm. An involuntary thought flashed through his mind.”

“Harvested one Spirit Firefly Grass, gained Three Months of Cultivation Level.”

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An idea flashes in his mind, and Lu Xuan feels something unusual within him.

His typically calm spiritual power suddenly surges, rampaging through his meridians.

After half a moment, the uncontrolled spiritual power gradually calms down.

Lu Xuan carefully senses the changes within him, not able to keep a trace of joy from his face.

His cultivation level has suddenly increased considerably, the equivalent of three months of hard cultivation, and he is just a hair's breadth away from breaking through to the Third Layer of Qi Cultivation.

"After so long since my transmigration, my golden finger has finally arrived."

Lu Xuan was overjoyed: in his previous life, he was quite ordinary in terms of mentality and physical condition. Without any external aid, he didn't know how he was going to survive in the Cultivation World.

Information flows into his mind, mysteriously revealing everything about the white light group to him.

Whenever he personally plants and cultivates a spirit plant or spirit grass, ripening and harvesting them will yield a white light group as a reward. Within the white light group, he can extract cultivation level, magic artifacts, cultivation techniques, elixirs, and other items.

The richness of the rewards is related to many factors, such as his involvement in the growth process of the spirit plant, the type and rank of the spirit plant, and the quality of the product at maturation. All of this will affect the size of the white light group's reward.

The light group is only visible and tangible to him, others can't see it. If it is not his personally planted spirit plant, he will not get the light group reward.

"So, what you're saying is, as long as I successfully cultivate a spirit plant, in addition to the spirit plant itself, I can also receive additional rewards from the light group?"

"Isn't that double the harvest and double the joy then?"

Lu Xuan looks at the Spirit Firefly Grass and the Moon Erosion Tree that are growing vigorously in the soil, as if he could see the white light groups flashing at him.

"I, Lu Xuan, have achieved what I have today thanks to my continuous hard cultivation and diligent care for spirit plants."

Lu Xuan can't help but think.

He feels that ever since the white light group appeared, the many spirit plants in the spirit field have also shown inexplicable changes.

Lu Xuan, sensing a stroke of luck, concentrates his attention on a stalk of Spirit Firefly Grass under his feet.

A barely noticeable progress bar appears above the Spirit Firefly Grass. The nearly full progress bar indicates that the Spirit Firefly Grass in front of him is about to be fully mature.

Another piece of information flashes through Lu Xuan's mind.

"Recently soaked by the Spirit Rain, content as can be, but feeling a little squeezed due to the neighbor's too long and large roots."

What, is this like a real-time status for spirit plants?

With a question in his mind, Lu Xuan focuses his spirit on another stalk of Spirit Firefly Grass next to him.

The progress bar is also more than halfway full, and similar information flashes through his mind.

The neighboring Spirit Firefly Grass seems to be growing quite well, but likewise feels that the neighboring roots are too long and large, occupying its growth space.

"In that case, there is no solution, the spirit field is only so big, so you guys have to bear with it, and get used to step over rejection."

Lu Xuan sighs.

Whether it's the progress bar or the real-time status, both are quite beneficial to him: they allow him to understand the growth needs of spirit plants, adjust the details, and make them mature faster and better.

Looking at the progress bar that is about to be filled, he can't wait to use the Spirit Rain Technique right away to speed up the maturation of the Spirit Firefly Grass.

But he knows full well the principle that excess is as bad as deficiency. Proper nourishment is very beneficial for spirit plants, but if he nourishes it frequently, it's like spoiling it by assisting growth prematurely.

Even if it matures, if its quality is poor, it will affect the reward of the white light group.

This thought soothes Lu Xuan's eagerness to harvest the Spirit Firefly Grass and receive the reward from the light group.

Just as he was about to go back to his room, a thought strikes him, and he goes to the western side of the yard.

Since he can know the real-time status of the spirit plants, wouldn't the Spirit Firefly Grass being affected by the black thread reveal its truth?

He concentrates, gathering his spiritual sense on the Spirit Firefly Grass tightly entwined with the black threads.

The progress bar is not too different from the previous two stalks, it's also about to be filled.

Information flows into Lu Xuan's mind.

"The Spirit Firefly Grass, being eroded by the Black Bud Worm Larva, is in a worrying state. If not treated in time, its life-force will be completely consumed by the Black Bud Worm, turning it into a withered stalk."

"Black Bud Worm Larva..."

Lu Xuan murmurs to himself, his anxiety easing up a bit.

Now that he knows where the black threads come from, it's a relief, at least he's no longer fumbling around without a solution.

He hurries back to his room, flips out a thick book.

"Common Harmful Demon Bugs and Their Solutions".

The book records hundreds of common demon insects that may harm spirit plants during cultivation, along with solutions suggested by the author of the book.

He flips through the pages quickly, soon locating the details about the Black Bud Worm.

"Black Bud Worm, adult worm as thick as a finger, moves like the wind, loves to ingest the leaves and branches of spirit plants."

"During laying, it will leave its eggs on the spirit plant. After hatching, the larvae grow by absorbing the life-force of the spirit plant. When the life-force of the spirit plant got exhausted, the larva will leave automatically, looking for the next target."

"The solution requires a cultivator of the Third Layer of Qi Cultivation, who is skilled in offensive spells."

"The eggs and larvae are extremely hard to detect for lower-rank Qi cultivating monks unless their spiritual sense is exceptionally sharp."

"As the larvae are too small and entangled with the spirit plant, they could easily harm the plant during treatment. Therefore, only those who are proficient in certain specific spells and can aptly control them can solve this problem."

Lu Xuan closes the book and starts meditating.

“To avoid harming the spirit plants affected by the larvae, the spell used must meet two conditions.”

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“One must have enough firepower, and the damage range should be controlled.”

Coming from humble beginnings and having only reached the Second Layer of Qi Cultivation, he had currently mastered only two low-level spells.

One was the Spirit Rain Technique, mainly used for nurturing spiritual plants, and the other was the defensive Fireball Technique.

However, for both these spells, his knowledge was shallow and he was completely unable to execute refined control.

Moreover, the two spells did not seem suited to deal with the specific task of exterminating Black Bud Worm Larva.

The Spirit Rain Technique, in its initial stages, only served to nourish the spiritual plants. Lu Xuan guessed that the Black Bud Worm Larva would not only be unharmed by the spell, but might even be reinvigorated by it...

As for the Fireball Technique, it did have enough firepower, but if employed, it would result in the mutual destruction of the Spirit Firefly Grass and the Black Bud Worm Larva.

“It seems I’ll have to seek help in the market and spend money to avoid disaster.”

“At least, knowing the problem will allow me to save some money.”

Lu Xuan touched the somewhat shriveled cloth bag at his waist and sighed deeply.

...

“Little Brother Lu, are you home?”

Knock, knock. accompanied by a loud and clear voice, echoed from outside the courtyard.

Immediately after, a grey-black rope of grass came slithering out from a corner of the courtyard, gently tapping Lu Xuan’s knee.

This was the Grass Puppet staying in the yard; sensing a person approaching and possibly intruding on the Spirit Field’s boundary, it warned Lu Xuan.

“The person has been standing outside the door for some time and has already called out, yet you choose to sound the alarm only now. If someone with ill intentions was present, my house would have been burglarized before you could even react.”

As Lu Xuan looked at the retracted grey-black grass rope, he couldn't help but rub his forehead.

The voice sounded familiar and belonged to one of the few cultivators Lu Xuan knew since he'd crossed over.

“I'm here, Brother Zhang!”

He replied, and then walked up to the courtyard gate, opening the door.

A tall, kind-looking cultivator walked in.

The visitor was Zhang Hong, a Third Level Qi Cultivator, who lived next to Lu Xuan. Zhang Hong had a Dao companion who had reached the Second Layer of Qi Cultivation and they were raising a six or seven-year-old child. When Lu Xuan had just arrived, Zhang had given him many pointers saving him from much trouble.

“Brother Zhang, please come inside for a cup of hot tea.”

Lu Xuan led Zhang Hong into the house.

Zhang Hong turned and looked at the Spirit Firefly Grass and the Moon Erosion Trees along the little stone path, nodding his head in approval.

“Little Brother Lu, you are taking good care of these two types of Spirit Plants. It seems like there will be a good harvest in the near future.”

“I wouldn't say so. Compared to the Spirit Plants in the Spirit Fields of your house, these do not match.”

Lu Xuan served a cup of hot tea to Zhang Hong after he sat down.

Two or three tender green tea leaves floated up and down in the teacup, spinning endlessly.

Zhang Hong didn't mind, he knew Lu Xuan's cultivation level and financial situation. Being able to have a cup of tea mixed with spiritual tea leaves was already quite hospitable.

“As expected from Clear Rain Tea, drinking it gives the feeling as if drizzling rain is nourishing the heart. Only at Lu Xuan's place would I have a chance to drink such a fine tea.”

“At home, my wife never allows me any of this, it’s so boring.”

Zhang Hong sipped the tea, savoring the effects it brought, and shook his head with his eyes closed. Thinking about the restraints at home, he couldn’t help but slap his thigh.

“No choice, your sister-in-law wants to prepare for Little Yuan’s future, so naturally, she has to be more careful in spending.”

“You’re right.”

Zhang Hong let out a sigh,

“Sometimes, I really envy you, Little Brother Lu. You are alone with no pressure to support a family.”

“You can lead the life you want without arguing over trivial matters, like where to buy groceries, or worrying about a child’s health or what cultivation technique they should learn, or which Sect they could enter in the future.”

“How carefree you are!”

“If Brother Zhang were in my shoes, I bet he would miss being with his wife and child. It would be such a joy.”

Lu Xuan said with a smile.

“You kid, you’re so young and already understand so much.”

Zhang Hong only casually sighed, then changed the subject with a laugh.

“The reason I came to see you this time is because I have something to tell you.”

“From various sources, I learned that the Wang family in our market town accidentally discovered the location of a Secret Land. But it is located far in the wild, so after some time, they will hire hundreds or thousands of cultivators at the Qi Cultivation Second Layer or higher to go and develop the Secret Land.”

“I thought you might be interested, and if you are, you should start preparing.”

“Develop a Secret Land?” Lu Xuan said thoughtfully, falling into contemplation.

“I’m planning to go and have a look. A new Secret Land is very risky, but the rewards are in proportion to the risks. Just by planting Spirit Plants in the market town, maintaining a normal family life is very difficult.”

“As for you, Little Brother Lu, I personally suggest you go and take a look. After all, the Wang family has cultivators at the Foundation Establishment stage leading the way, so it will be difficult for us to encounter any powerful Demon Beasts.”

“The most important thing is, Little Brother Lu, you are still young. Being a Spirit Plant Master is safe, but the resources you can acquire are limited and your strength increases slowly. After a long time of planting Spirit Plants, your vigour, too, will slowly diminish, and it would be hard for you to make further progress.”

Zhang Hong looked at Lu Xuan, who was deep in thought, and advised him.

Lu Xuan nodded lightly. Indeed, what Zhang Hong said made sense. Developing a Secret Land carries a certain amount of risk but is still within a manageable range. Moreover, the appearance of a new Secret Land often means huge earnings. Even if he only got the leftovers, it would take a long time to fully digest them.

If this had been earlier, he might have had a slight chance of agreeing.

But now, with the appearance of the White Light Group, this faint possibility had disappeared completely.

He would venture out to gain cultivation resources, and then exchange them for elixirs, cultivation techniques, magic artifacts – but he could get all of these by staying at home and growing Spirit Plants!

It is safer and earns more. Gardening is wonderful!

He pretended to ponder for a while, looking undecided. Eventually he raised his head, his eyes filled with regret as he said to Zhang Hong,

“I appreciate your kindness, Brother Zhang, but I am a cautious person, with low cultivation and no special spells. I’m afraid that if I went, I might never return.”

“Therefore, all I want to do is stay in the house, guarding this small Spirit Field, and quietly grow Spirit Plants.”

“As for the future, let’s see how it unfolds.”

Seeing that Lu Xuan was firm in his decision, Zhang Hong couldn’t help but sigh.

“Your idea is not wrong. Although there is not much danger in developing a Secret Land, it doesn’t mean there is none. Even the slightest negligence could be fatal for us Qi Practicing Little Cultivators.”

“However, I have no choice but to take a chance. Little Yuan shouldn’t have to follow my unconventional cultivation methods like I did.”

The two sat in silence for a while before Zhang Hong left, taking his leave and asking Lu Xuan to look after his young son when he left.

Lu Xuan nodded in agreement, watched Zhang Hong leave, and closed the courtyard door.

“With the advent of the White Light Group, I have to avoid putting myself in danger as much as possible in the future.”

“Unless I have 90% certainty... no, 90% certainty is as good as none. If I don't have 100% certainty, I won't casually take risks.”

Gazing at the Spirit Firefly Grass and Moon Erosion Fruit along the cobblestone path, Lu Xuan felt a surge of confidence.