

I Practice Farming While the Rest Cultivates

15 Chapter 14: Return_1

"It's decided," Lu Xuanzhan stated decisively, leaving no room for Zhang Xiu Yuan to retort.

Since he did not want to spend a vast amount of time to look for No-Organization Spirit Plant Masters who have suffered from pest invasions, he assigned this task to Zhang Xiu Yuan, providing him with a bit of compensation.

With no other options available, Zhang Xiu Yuan had to accept the task.

The idea that he could earn thirty Broken Spirits every time he found a cultivator suffering from demon insect invasions brought a joyful grin on his face. His mind was filled with pleasant expectations.

"However, we must set some ground rules. The cultivators you find must be restricted to the North District. And I can only help out three No-Organization Spirit Plant Masters at most per day."

Lu Xuan added.

His main focus was cultivating the Spirit Plants in his own courtyard. Letting his Spirit Plants to grow under the best possible circumstances could not be compromised for the sake of making a few more Spirit Stones.

He was mindful of making that distinction.

Another factor he had to consider was that he was only showing the Second Layer of Qi Cultivation to others. If he frequently used the Golden Sword Technique, his true cultivation level might be revealed.

In the following ten days or so, Lu Xuan had to go out almost every day to help deal with the pest issue, thanks to Zhang Xiu Yuan's diligent efforts.

As the pests were becoming severe and could attack repeatedly, he had to use the Golden Sword Technique three times almost every time he went out.

He gave Zhang Xiu Yuan thirty Broken Spirits each time as a reward, and ended up with 4 Spirit Stones and seventy Broken Spirits for himself. All together, Lu Xuan had accumulated around two hundred Spirit Stones over the past ten days.

In the meantime, the landlord had come to collect the rent once, which cost him thirty Spirit Stones.

Furthermore, he harvested eleven more Moon Erosion Fruits, leaving nineteen still maturing on the tree.

All were of good quality, including five Slivered Silver Blade fragments, three First Grade Qi Cultivation Pills, and three First Grade Talismans.

With the addition of these five pieces, the broken Slivered Silver Blade seemed a bit more complete, with only a few small missing chunks.

As storing Moon Erosion Fruits was relatively simple, Lu Xuan did not rush to sell them. Instead, he decided to wait until all of the fruits had matured before selling them to Uncle He of BaiCaoTang.

In addition to the nearly fully mature Moon Erosion Tree, the growth status of the three other Spirit Plants in the Spirit Field was also excellent.

The Spirit Firefly Grass had passed half of its growing period, he expected to make another harvest in more than a month. The Red Cloud Pine didn't change much, just grew slightly taller.

As for the Sword Grass, after being nurtured daily with the Golden Sword Qi from the Golden Sword Technique, it began to sprout a blade-like black grass strand.

Standing straight up, with its tip pointing toward the sky, it gave faint traces of Sword Intent around the leaves.

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"Come, come, time to split the Spirit Stones. Here is your reward for today."

Lu Xuan pulled out ninety Broken Spirits on the cobblestone path and handed them to Zhang Xiu Yuan.

"Thank you, Little Uncle Lu!"

With a smile from ear to ear, Zhang Xiu Yuan skillfully received the Broken Spirits and carefully slipped them into his clothes.

The two had just visited three houses of loose cultivators, with Lu Xuan successfully solving each problem. It was now time to split the earnings.

"They're back! The first batch of cultivators who ventured into the secret land are back!"

A sudden uproar came from not far ahead. Lu Xuan heard bits and pieces of conversations, which seemed to be about the loose cultivators who participated in the Wang Family's expedition to the wilderness. The first batch had returned today.

Having not been there personally, Lu Xuan was somewhat curious about the new secret territory. And so, he followed the crowd with Zhang Xiu Yuan.

"I heard the secret territory is protected by several powerful formations. The Wang Family's Array Masters successfully broke two of the formations, and managed to find a lot of rare Spirit Plants, natural treasures, even high-grade Magical Instruments and Methods!"

"Damn, I'm really envious. I regret not signing up to go with them!"

"If I had gone, I might have been able to gain a huge fortune, instantly skyrocket to fame, and even possibly become a Foundation Establishment and Core Formation Major Cultivator!"

"Exactly, it's a pity we can't be there in person!"

Everybody was talking about it, clearly envious of the massive harvests returned by the cultivators from the secret realm.

However, Lu Xuan was not moved by the news of these enormous returns. It was obvious that there would be great gains in the secret realm, or else the Wang Family, a major clan of the Linyang Market, would not have organized so many cultivators to venture into it, with such an expenditure of resources.

However, the major portion of the gains would be taken by the Wang Family. The rest would be divided among some powerful cultivators. As for most loose cultivators who outnumbered the others, if they could get some leftover spoils, that would be considered lucky.

Some might not only end up empty-handed, but might also have lost their lives in the process.

Zhang Xiu Yuan stood by him, his mood tense and eager as he listened to the cultivators' discussions. Thinking about his long-absent father, he excused himself from Lu Xuan and hurried back home.

Lu Xuan walked back home leisurely.

The news of cultivators returning from the newly discovered secret realm spread like fire, stirring up the entire North District. The air was filled with a sense of unrest.

As he walked past one of the Loose Cultivator households, he heard a few cries of deep sorrow.

Looking through the open courtyard door, he saw a weary-looking, unkempt cultivator clutching a bone-white urn. A woman in front who was crying heartbreakingly with intense grief.

Lu Xuan knew this cultivator. He was a middle-aged man with the surname Xiong who was at the Third Level Qi Cultivation. He had signed up to participate in the secret realm expedition this time.

The outcome was self-evident.

Scenes just like this, he had already seen or heard it countless times along the way.

“The path to cultivation is difficult and long. Ordinary cultivators need to grasp at every opportunity if they want to ascend to greater heights. Despite the risk of losing their lives with a single misstep, they still try to seize every opportunity.”,

“The path to cultivation is indeed hard.”

“Fortunately, I have that Special Spirit Field. I don’t have to risk my neck for a thread of hope. I just need to calmly cultivate the field.”

Lu Xuan felt even more grateful that he possessed that special white Light Cluster, which strengthened his resolve to avoid unnecessary risks.

During the following days, he stayed quietly within his home, cultivating his Spirit Plants.

Zhang Xiu Yuan didn’t seek him out. Lu Xuan knew that he was worried about his father. The few times that he did see him, Zhang Xiu Yuan seemed dispirited. Xu Wan also seemed composed on the surface, but her visibly thinner face revealed her internal struggle.

“Father!”

One afternoon, while using the Spirit Rain Technique to water the Spirit Plants in his yard, Lu Xuan heard an exclamation of joy.

He smiled, opening the gate.

As expected, Zhang Hong returned to his home with dirt-streaked clothes. His arms were bulging with bags of spoils from his expedition and his face was lit with a radiant, joyful smile.

Seeing Lu Xuan, he gave a distant nod, a friendly smile on his face.

Lu Xuan returned the smile, watching as Zhang Hong embraced his wife and child, finally going into his home with a bright and cheery smile on his face.

Lu Xuan didn't join the excited crowd. Zhang Hong had just returned from the wilderness bearing spoils from the secret land – now was a highly sensitive time. Any unnecessary stir might trigger a wave of suspicion and resistance.

Half a day later, Zhang Hong came to visit him himself.

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“Little Brother Lu, it's been a long time. How have you been?”

Zhang Hong greeted Lu Xuan with a hearty laugh.

“Thanks for your concern, Brother Zhang. Everything's fine. Instead, congratulations on your safe return from the wilderness.”

Lu Xuan said with a smile.

“Haha, I got lucky, suffered only minor injuries, and luckily found some treasures.”

“I came here to thank you, Little Brother Lu.”

“My wife told me that you helped eradicate the pests that infested our spirit fields.”

“And that little rascal, ever since he came back, he's been bragging about how he can now earn spirit stones and even plans to support the family with them!”

Thinking of Zhang Xiu Yuan's proud face, Zhang Hong laughed heartily.

“There's no need for formalities, Brother Zhang. You've helped me so much before, what I did is nothing in comparison.”

“As for Little Yuan, he has saved me a lot of time and unnecessary troubles, so a little reward should be given.”

“What can a child like him do!”

“To my surprise, Little Brother Lu, I thought you would just peacefully cultivate your spirit fields, but I didn't expect you to possess such swordsmanship skills.”

“With it, you can beat many cultivators of the Third Layer of Qi Cultivation.”

Zhang Hong exclaimed.

With the concealment method covering him, Lu Xuan was not worried that Zhang Hong would detect his true cultivation level.

“Our spirit field was among the first affected by the pest infestation, it almost cost me seven spirit stones to hire a Middle-Stage Qi Practitioner to solve it.”

“In order to prevent this from happening again, I bit the bullet and purchased a first-grade sword technique. I didn’t expect to progress so slowly in my spiritual power cultivation, but I found some talent in mastering the sword technique.”

“I progressed quickly with the sword technique, and even reached a point where I could help others get rid of pests, so I thought of making some spirit stones by using it to cover its costs.”

Lu Xuan made up a reason to explain how he used the Golden Sword Technique to solve the pest problem.

Zhang Hong believed him without any doubts.

The two chatted for a while, and naturally the conversation turned to Zhang Hong’s experience of exploring the wilderness mystery this time.

“The Wang Clan’s Array Mage broke two formations, according to the Middle-Stage Qi Practitioners who entered deeper into the secret land, this new secret land is not smaller than Linyang Market, and there are countless spirit plants and spirit medicines inside.”

“We Loose Cultivators at the second and third stages of Qi cultivation only operated on the periphery, lacking the ability or qualification to enter the deeper parts of the wilderness.”

“I followed a group of Loose Cultivators, collecting spirit plants and clearing out some low-level demon beasts.”

“Even though there were senior cultivators from the Wang family defending at the front, it was said that the casualties were still considerable, about one-third.”

“Our little squad was relatively lucky. We only encountered two dangerous situations. One time, while collecting spirit plants, we encountered a mutated plant. It was extremely aggressive and good at disguising itself, and two cultivators were unwittingly sacrificed.”

“On another occasion, we encountered a peculiar demon beast, a spider with a human face. It was incredibly fast, and we couldn’t see it clearly. One of the Loose Cultivators was cut in half by it. Thankfully, a high-tier Qi Cultivator arrived in time to eliminate it.”

Thinking of these two encounters, Zhang Hong turned pale, showing a lingering fear. The shadow left by these events was not small.

Lu Xuan on one side listened with interest. After all, he didn't have to experience it personally, hearing the stories was quite entertaining.

"So, Little Brother Lu, are you interested in going? The opening of the new secret land has the biggest rewards and risks. After that, both will lessen."

"Of course, this is only known for the periphery of the wilderness, what's happening inside, I couldn't tell."

Seeing Lu Xuan's interested expression, Zhang Hong laughed and invited.

"No, thank you. With my low cultivation level and my lack of proficiency in combat, and without any magical talismans on hand, I'd better stay and continue being a Spirit Plant Master."

He said with a smile.

The spiritual power cultivation from the white light cluster was poorly accumulated, and the magical talismans and elixir brought by the light cluster were scant, so they were practically 'non-existent'.

Zhang Hong just casually mentioned it and then dropped the subject.

"By the way, Brother Zhang, did you acquire any unknown wild spiritual seeds during your trip to the Wilderness Mystery? If so, I can buy them with spirit stones,"

Lu Xuan deflected the topic and asked.

"Unknown wild spiritual seeds? Wild spiritual seeds are rare to begin with, let alone unknown species."

"I didn't come across any myself, but I heard that a loose cultivator discovered a wild spiritual seed in a desolate part of the Secret Land. I will check it out for you."

"Just keep in mind that the type of this spiritual seed is unknown, as is the cultivation method. If you want to cultivate it, Little Brother Lu, you might be taking on a significant risk. You could just be wasting your time and spirit stones."

Zhang Hong couldn't help but advise after hearing Lu Xuan's inquiry.

"I just want to try it out, not betting on a slim chance of success."

“If I fail, I can still gather some experience growing spiritual plants and widen my horizons.”

Lu Xuan found an excuse to dodge the subject.

“All right! I will ask around for you!”

Zhang Hong nodded and said.

He was very efficient, and brought some good news two days later.

In the Zhang Family Courtyard.

He introduced Lu Xuan to a bald monk who was at the Third Layer of Qi Cultivation.

“This is Friend Long, very strong.”

“This is Little Brother Lu. He has some talent in cultivating spirit plants. He would like to know more about the unknown spiritual seed in your possession.”

Zhang Hong introduced Lu Xuan and the bald monk to each other, and quickly got to the point.

“This spiritual seed, I found it in a desolate area on the periphery of the Secret Land. At the time, I found more than ten wild spiritual seeds, and a deacon from the Wang Family rewarded me with one.”

“I still haven’t figured out exactly what species it is, but judging by the location where it was found, it should at least be First Grade.”

“If Brother Lu wants it, you can take it for five spirit stones.”

The bald monk spoke directly.

Lu Xuan took the spiritual seed from him and examined it closely.

The spiritual seed was shaped like a small fungus, dark red in color, with something resembling blood vessels visible on the surface. A viscous substance was slowly flowing through those vessels.

“Five spirit stones, that is not expensive. The price was the same when I obtained the Red Cloud Pine.”

“However, by looking at the strange and peculiar spiritual seed, its rank and rarity definitely do not fall short of the Red Cloud Pine. If the exact species was known, the price would definitely have been much higher than the Red Cloud Pine.”

Lu Xuan thought to himself and quickly made a decision.

“Friend Long, I’ll take this spiritual seed.”

“Brother Lu is very straightforward.”

One handed over the spirit stones and the other gave the spiritual seed. Both showed faint smiles.

The bald monk was delighted that the unknown wild spiritual seed could bring him five spirit stones. Lu Xuan was glad to have another rare spirit plant in his spirit field.

And the white light clusters that come when the spiritual plant matures were even more important.

Back at home, he activated the Earth Pulling Technique, clearing a small spot in the spirit field and planting this dark red fungus.

Focusing his mind, detailed information about the spirit plant flashed through his brain.

“Dark Marrow Mushroom, a Second-Level spiritual plant. After maturing, it can be used to refine some body refinement elixirs or can be directly consumed to strengthen a cultivator’s physique.”

“It’s a plant that grows in dark places. It doesn’t need light or spirit rain, it only wants to stay in the dark, accompanied by rotting spirit wood.”