

THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

Chapter 11: Fire Chick

The meat in the bowl was a pale golden color, crystal clear, resembling chicken legs in appearance but the size of a pork hock that Mo Hua had eaten in his previous life.

The soup was clear with a thin layer of oil on the surface, glossy yet not greasy, garnished with some mushrooms and small chunks of bright green herbs.

Mo Hua had not eaten meat for a long time; the last was half a year ago during the Demonic Beast Hunting Festival.

In the cultivation world, meat is quite expensive, only affordable during festivals and celebrations, making it a rare treat for common cultivators.

There are two types of meat eaten by cultivators: one is the meat of spiritual beasts.

Spiritual beasts differ from demonic beasts; they are raised by cultivators who feed them spiritual herbs and other natural spirit substances. Their meat is tender, easy to cook, infused with spiritual energy, and hence very expensive, not something a solitary cultivator could afford.

The other type is the meat of herbivorous demonic beasts.

All demonic beasts are killers, but not all consume human flesh. Those that feed on various spiritual herbs may be ferocious and slaughter cultivators, but they do not consume the flesh of cultivators.

However, carnivorous demonic beasts usually have tasted human flesh, and if not, it is not because they do not eat humans, but because they have not yet encountered a cultivator to eat.

Thus, the meat of herbivorous demonic beasts, although it has an unusual taste, is still consumable by cultivators. In contrast, the meat of carnivorous demonic beasts is bloody and impure, difficult to consume, and can easily contaminate a cultivator's vital energy, leading to disordered meridians and, in some cases, insanity.

Herbivorous demonic beast meat, although not expensive, is still rarely consumed by average cultivators.

The bodies of demonic beasts are much stronger than those of cultivators, and the meat of herbivorous demonic beasts is too tough to chew. It requires long hours of cooking over a fire to be palatable.

Solitary cultivators cannot afford such an effort, and those who can, prefer the meat of spiritual beasts.

Thus, any kind of meat is rare on the table of a solitary cultivator.

The bowl of meat before them emitted a faint white mist, which, although slight, clearly contained a trace of spiritual energy.

Liu Ruhua waved Mo Hua over, "This is Fire chick meat, your father bought it to nourish you."

She couldn't help but pinch Mo Hua's pale little face, "Look at how thin you've become recently."

Mo Hua was a bit reluctant and asked, "This meat must be quite expensive, right?"

Mo Shan waved his hand, "We only bought half, it didn't cost many spirit stones. Plus, it was from a friend in the hunting team; next year we'll work together, so it's part gift, part purchase."

Mo Hua said, "Dad, are you planning to go deeper into the mountains next year?"

Mo Shan nodded, "It's tough on the outer mountain now, the gains from killing a demonic beast are too low, and if someone gets injured, the costs could outweigh the benefits. The beasts in the inner mountain are stronger, but they also yield better loot, so next year..."

Mo Shan suddenly stopped and chuckled, "Why am I telling you all this?"

Liu Ruhua gently chided Mo Shan with a spoonful of meat soup for Mo Hua, "Try it and see how it tastes."

Mo Hua tasted the soup and then a piece of meat; it was the most delicious meat he had ever eaten—fresh and fragrant, fatty but not oily, a feast for all senses.

Mo Hua squinted his eyes in delight, "Mom, it's really tasty!"

Liu Ruhua laughed, "If it's good, eat more. This whole bowl is yours; make sure to finish it," she said, heading to the kitchen, "There are more dishes to come..." ㄖAJNO·BĚs

Mo Shan stood up, "I'll help you..."

Seeing his parents heading to the kitchen, Mo Hua quickly put several pieces of the Fire chick meat into his own bowl and distributed the rest into his parents' bowls.

When Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua returned with the dishes, they found their bowls filled with meat.

Liu Ruhua smiled warmly yet humorously, "This meat was specially bought for you. At our age, we're not expecting any advancement in cultivation; eating this spirit-infused meat is just a waste..."

As Liu Ruhua tried to add more meat to Mo Hua's bowl, he covered it with his hands, shaking his head, "I've had enough, I can't eat any more."

Mo Hua covered his bowl, adamantly refusing to eat more.

Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua resigned themselves but then started insisting with each other.

Mo Shan added meat to his wife's bowl, softly saying, "You've been through a lot these years, eat more to nourish yourself..."

Liu Ruhua then transferred the meat back to her husband's bowl, softly replying, "You've been working hard outside, facing harsh conditions; you should eat more..."

Listening to this, Mo Hua's teeth ached with the sweetness, he couldn't help but say, "Dad, Mom, the meat will get cold if you don't eat now."

Mo Shan and Liu Ruhua, having momentarily forgotten their son was there, now noticed his watery big eyes watching them. Liu Ruhua blushed slightly, and Mo Shan coughed lightly, pretending nothing was amiss, and began eating.

Seeing his parents finish the meat in their bowls, Mo Hua nodded in satisfaction.

He then thought, although the Fire chick meat was delicious, it was too expensive.

Demonic beast meat, although devoid of spiritual energy, could replenish blood energy, definitely beneficial for cultivators. But the meat of demonic beasts was really tough to chew...

He wondered if there was a way for his parents to eat more meat?

Mo Hua shelved this thought for now, as the most important task was to finish the Blazing Fire Array, and then visit the trading house to exchange for spirit stones.

After dinner, Mo Hua returned to his room, meditated to digest the Fire chick meat—since it didn't contain much spiritual energy, it didn't take long.

Once the spiritual energy was refined, Mo Hua continued drawing the Blazing Fire Array, completing another diagram before falling asleep that night.

Later, he fell asleep, continuing to draw Array formations on the Dao Stele in his sea of consciousness, consolidating his memory of the formations, reflecting on issues with his brushwork.

In the morning, he meditated and then continued drawing Array formations; he managed one in the morning and another in the afternoon, both successful, but the consumption of his spiritual sense was significant. After dinner, he had to rest for a while, then resumed his dreams at night, continuing to draw Array formations on the Dao Stele.

On the fourth day, Mo Hua's brushwork had become much more proficient, and his spiritual sense seemed a bit more robust, perhaps because he understood the Blazing Fire Array better, so the consumption of his spiritual sense was reduced. After completing two formations in the daytime, he had enough energy left to draw another in the evening, but because he was a bit too hasty, he made a mistake with his brushwork, and the formation failed.

At night, after falling asleep, Mo Hua continued to reflect and summarize in his sea of consciousness, practicing drawing Array formations on the Dao Stele.

On the fifth day, Mo Hua spent the entire day completing three Blazing Fire Arrays, and although they were successful, the consumption of his spiritual sense was significant, causing some dizziness and headache, but not as

severe as the first time; a moment of closed-eye meditation was enough for recovery.

Thus, Mo Hua had used up all ten sets of Array materials entrusted by the trading house, successfully creating eight Blazing Fire Arrays.

Though there were some flaws and much room for improvement, overall, he was satisfied.

That evening, Mo Hua indulged a little, not continuing to practice Array formations on the Dao Stele but instead drawing several comic strips for leisure.

The next day, after breakfast, Mo Hua met up with Da Hu and the two others to go shopping.

Mo Hua carried the completed Array formations in a storage bag slung over his shoulder. Before heading out, Liu Ruhua gave him a spirit stone and five broken spirit stones, instructing him to buy anything tasty or fun he saw and to be careful.

Da Hu and the others patted their chests, promising to protect Mo Hua and not let anyone bully him.

Mo Hua and his mother waved goodbye, and he and his three friends set out.

Da Hu and the others were lively, hopping and skipping along the bustling stone-paved road, three tiger-headed young boys and a porcelain doll-like child, bouncing along...