

M. Slaying 241

Chapter 241: As the wheel of karma turns, so does the heavenly law dictate: what one sows, one shall reap.

"You punk! Spit it out!"

Amidst the dense forest, Chu Liang carried the little butterfly upside down, shaking it forcefully as he attempted to retrieve the bead that it had just swallowed.

Seeing what he was doing, Luo Yao frowned and said, "It's just a little butterfly. Why are you doing this to it?"

"Amitabha." Monk Pushan shook his head in disapproval. "Even towards small creatures by the roadside, one should show compassion. Mistreating a spirit pet is not a virtuous act."

"It might have swallowed a Dragon Orb..." Chu Liang said. "The Blue Dragon's Dragon Orb."

While they were in front of him at this moment, it was too difficult to hide this. Hence, Chu Liang just straightforwardly told them.

"I'll help you pry open its mouth, you push hard!" Monk Pushan rolled up his sleeves and joined the fight.

"Eh?" When Luo Yao heard that, she took out her saber and asked, "Why don't we just cut it open?"

"That's a great idea," Monk Pushan immediately agreed with a nod.

Set kindness and compassion aside for now, and focus solely on the Dragon Orb.

After all, they knew what this Dragon Orb represented. By getting this Blue Dragon's Dragon Orb in this hidden realm, they would become the ruler of this hidden realm.

This was a hidden realm of a True Dragon during ancient times.

The already small eyes of Little Golden Butterfly widened like green peas, filled with innocence.

Why should I spit out the orb I swallowed with my own ability?

"I'm just a hungry little butterfly. I haven't provoked any of you! SobSobSob"

Chu Liang had to admit that this little thing was indeed extraordinary. It now looked completely defenseless, allowing him to do anything to it in his hands as he pleased.

The stone box on the Coiling-Dragon Pillar was so tough that even the Eminent Ones would likely be unable to forcefully dismantle it. Yet, somehow, it managed to extract the Dragon Orb from the stone box!

Even now, he wondered if Little Golden Butterfly could gnaw through any defense in the world as long as there was food inside.

Is this the belief of a foodie?

However, the Dragon Orb was not an ordinary object; this should be the first time Little Golden Butterfly ate something it couldn't digest. Even in its earliest form as a little maggot, it could instantly produce golden silk from whatever it ate.

"Good girl, let's spit it out. This is not easy to digest, we can't eat it." Chu Liang started coaxing and deceiving, "If you spit it out, I'll give you even tastier food when we get back."

After toiling away for half a day, the three of them finally managed to pat a fist-sized black-golden orb out of Little Golden Butterfly's mouth.

As soon as the orb was spat out, it immediately transformed into a golden light and whooshed into Chu Liang's chest!

Boom!

Suddenly, Chu Liang felt an immensely majestic and noble sensation enveloping his tiny body.

Thunderous roars echoed in his ears. It was the dragon chant of the ancient Blue Dragon!

After a while, he finally broke free from the trembling, awe-inspiring power. Inside his Sea of Qi, there existed an undulating black-golden star next to the sun-like ultimate-tier Golden Core.

Luo Yao and Monk Pushan naturally desired the Dragon Orb as well, but it had chosen Chu Liang outright, depriving them of any opportunity to compete for it.

It was likely due to the aura of True Dragon on his body.

They could only watch with envy.

"How did it go?" Monk Pushan asked, "Now that you have the Dragon Orb, can we reopen the hidden realm and leave?"

"Leave?" Chu Liang blinked, then suddenly smiled. "No rush."

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"Who did this?"

On the way out of the Dragon-Bone Palace, Master Mu's chest felt tight and heavy with pent-up frustration, as if every breath he took was weighed down by a burden of anger.

"Could it be those disciples from the White-Bone Hall?" Enchantress Liu speculated.

"That's unlikely," Master Mu said as he shook his head slowly. "While they may be acting a little strange, they can't possibly be this powerful... Otherwise, it won't be them fleeing everywhere. It would be us."

"True... Eh?" Enchantress Liu was about to nod in agreement when she suddenly exclaimed in surprise.

As she flew out from the Dragon-Bone Palace, Enchantress Liu caught sight of a young man in black robes waiting outside. His figure matched that of the most cunning of the three disciples from the White-Bone Hall.

In that moment, the figure lifted his hood, unveiling a youthful face that was both clear and remarkably attractive.

There was a harmless and gentle smile on his face.

"Why the sudden desire for death?" Enchantress Liu looked at him strangely, momentarily puzzled by his intentions.

Although she had wanted to kill this guy for a long time, she felt hesitant as he stood before her.

"I have something to show you," Chu Liang said in a warm tone.

"What? Trying to offer a treasure in exchange for your own life?" Enchantress Liu sneered. "You'll have to show it to us first so we can determine its worth."

"Are you sure you want me to simply reveal it like this?" Chu Liang blinked as he spoke.

"Or perhaps you'd prefer us to search for it after you're dead," Enchantress Liu said coldly.

"Alright, alright then," Chu Liang shook his head helplessly. As he raised his hand, he retrieved a dudou, holding it up and spreading it to reveal a black lotus on the dudou. "Evaluate its worth now."

Upon seeing it, Enchantress Liu froze momentarily, then flames immediately ignited in her eyes!

No one would recognize this dudou better than her.

This was her clothing.

Apart from her, only a few dozen people might have had their hands on this clothing! However, she had already killed most of these individuals, except for the Southern-Route Guider... who died in a foreign land even before she could kill him.

As Enchantress Liu thought of how Chu Liang had opened the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, she immediately guessed that this disciple of the White-Bone Hall had acquired the items of the Southern-Route Guider after he died.

Until this moment, she hadn't even considered the possibility that Chu Liang was the one who killed the Southern-Route Guider.

Seeing him flaunting her dudou, Enchantress Liu's rage surged uncontrollably. In a flash, she transformed into a streak of crimson light, charging towards him!

Chu Liang turned and fled.

In this very instant, the two monsters[1] chased after Chu Liang into the dense forest of the valley and were soon catching up to Chu Liang. However, Master Mu abruptly stopped Enchantress Liu, exclaiming, "Something's not right!"

Indeed, something was amiss.

The air was thick with a palpable sense of danger.

Enchantress Liu came back to her senses. As she looked around, she saw a massive head with half a wing sticking out at the end of the valley. Its scales were shattered, with traces of blood visible.

It was the Winged Draconic Beast that they had fought earlier.

Immediately, the second dragon head also emerged.

Then came the third, the fourth, the fifth... countless lurking draconic demonic beasts, descendants of dragons, revealed their fangs.

The valley was filled with a myriad of creatures, their forms clustered together like a dense forest.

The valley became surrounded from all sides by the creatures, forming an unbroken ring of encirclement

Chu Liang turned around, smiling at them with bright, shining eyes.

After obtaining the Dragon Orb, he gained control over this hidden realm. He issued commands to all the draconic demonic beasts, ordering them to come forth and slay the two monsters.

However, both diabolical cultivators were at the sixth realm and wielded sinister techniques from the diabolical sects. They were so cunning that even if all the draconic descendants encircled and pursued them, it wouldn't guarantee their capture and victory.

And so, Chu Liang commanded the draconic demonic beasts to set up an ambush while he personally led the enemy into the trap.

At this moment, Enchantress Liu and Master Mu found themselves encircled by numerous descendants of dragons, feeling the suffocating presence of death looming closer.

Master Mu's expression changed drastically. "So it was indeed you who retrieved the Dragon Orb. How did you do it?"

Chu Liang couldn't be bothered to speak another word to him as he simply waved his hand.

"Roar—"

The thunderous chants of the dragons blended into a single roar as a horde of scaled figures surged forward like a sea. The two monsters, with no desire to engage in combat, focused solely on fleeing in desperation.

But how could they possibly escape?

With a resounding cry, Enchantress Liu rallied, "To secure victory, we must first seize the king. Charge forward with me!"

Upon seeing the current situation, Master Mu knew as well that they had to capture the young man possessing the Dragon Orb. Otherwise, they would be subjected to relentless pursuit by the draconic demonic beasts.

As he quickly set up a formation diagram beneath his feet, he charged toward Chu Liang, prepared to fight to the death!

Whoosh!

In the blink of an eye, he closed in on Chu Liang. Twelve drawings of Shatterstrike Formation materialized in the air as he sought to crush Chu Liang to death then and there!

However, Chu Liang suddenly vanished in a flash.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

His body suddenly shifted several zhang backward, and not just once, but several times in succession, instantly widening the distance between him and Master Mu.

It was the Dimension Compression!

Master Mu's eyes were overtaken by a sudden wave of despair.

The most powerful feature of this immortal art was its absence of trajectory, warning, or indication, coupled with its ability to teleport vast distances in an instant.

However, this was certainly not an immortal art that a disciple of the White-Bone Hall should master, let alone master with such proficiency. Moreover, even if he was skilled, the question remained: why was he able to utilize this immortal art three times in succession?

Did he not need time to replenish his foundational qi?

Now that Master Mu had missed the target, death loomed imminent. The draconic demonic beasts surrounding him seized the opportunity, pouncing upon him relentlessly. Even as he was ultimately crushed and torn apart by the countless draconic demonic beasts, he never figured out the answers to his own questions.

Enchantress Liu, who was in the lead, swiftly retreated as a cloud of blood erupted into the air.

Puff!

It was the Great Diabolical Shield of Blood!

This was a unique life-saving divine technique of the Scarlet-Robe Hall. By harming one's own body and causing severe injuries in exchange for an instant escape over a thousand li!

And that was how she escaped.

But even if she managed to escape then, she couldn't escape the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm.

She now faced the same dilemma that Chu Liang, Luo Yao, and Pushan had faced.

Seeing the countless draconic descendants gathered in front, Chu Liang waved his hand and commanded them to disperse. Then, he asked Luo Yao and Pushan to guard him while he adjusted his breathing and qi circulation.

He held the Dragon Orb in his hand, symbolizing his inheritance of the authority of the Blue Dragon.

However, this authority belonged to a True Dragon at the eighth realm. At this point, it was still too much for him to bear. Just one single use of this authority would exhaust a tremendous amount of his strength.

When he issued the command to all the draconic demonic beasts, it depleted almost all of his foundational qi. If the draconic demonic beasts were to perceive his weakness, some of the stronger ones might entertain the idea of killing him and seizing his authority.

This was the most basic authority. With a higher cultivation level, he could even place the entire hidden realm into the Dragon Orb and take it away, or casually alter the landscape of this world.

He was like a god.

But if he wanted to reach that level, every thought would require a tremendous exhaustion of cultivation energy.

Soon, he replenished his cultivation energy and opened his eyes.

The two who safeguarded him were also quite astonished. Chu Liang's ability to replenish his cultivation energy in such a short time was truly remarkable; he could go from having empty qi to being filled to maximum in just a moment. Anyone engaging in combat with him would likely struggle to avoid defeat unless they could swiftly secure victory.

Could this be the advantage of having an ultimate-tier Golden Core?

Without hesitation, Chu Liang immediately used his divine intent the moment he regained his cultivation energy. He channeled his foundational qi into the Dragon Orb, granting him the ability to perceive everything within the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm.

Enchantress Liu hid in a cave in the valley, regulating her breathing and facilitating her healing. She was shocked and terrified as she realized that things had evolved beyond her expectations.

How did that disciple of the White-Bone Hall get his hands on the items of the Southern-Route Guider and how did he get the Dragon Orb...

How did he, an insignificant lackey, end up with such a great fate?

This was beyond her comprehension.

While she still had countless questions, she heard footsteps coming from outside.

Oh no! She dashed out and saw the black-cloaked young man as she had expected.

He has taken control over the Dragon Orb. While she remained in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, she would never be able to hide!

Enchantress Liu gnashed her teeth as she questioned, "Why can't you just let me go?"

Chu Liang's gaze was indifferent. "When you were killing so many people, you probably didn't consider letting them off easy, did you?"

As the wheel of karma turns, so does the heavenly law dictate: what one sows, one shall reap.

As these sinister cultivators ruthlessly took the lives of innocents, they should have expected that such consequences would eventually befall them as well.

Enchantress Liu was taken aback, feeling somewhat strange to hear such words from a disciple of the diabolical sect. She forced a smile, trying to maintain composure, and said, "I understand. With your cultivation energy, it must have been exhausting to activate the Dragon Orb. The recent summoning of the draconic descendants must have consumed a significant amount of energy. It won't be easy for you to kill me now. Now that you have authority over this hidden realm, you will surely earn a place in our diabolical sect in the future. As long as you spare me, I will serve you faithfully, willingly becoming your servant... Isn't that a beautiful arrangement?"

Chu Liang merely smiled and said, "I don't need the Dragon Orb to kill you."

Chapter 242: Hush Money

Enchantress Liu departed this world peacefully.

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When she heard Chu Liang say that he wouldn't need to use the Dragon Orb to kill her, her first reaction was anger.

Even though she would usually seduce people with her beauty, she was still a powerful cultivator at the sixth realm. There was no doubt that she would have her own pride.

And when she heard that an insignificant being with lower cultivation level wouldn't need the Dragon Orb to kill her, she thought it was absurd.

If it wasn't because of the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, do you think you would even be qualified enough to boast in front of me? Enchantress Liu thought.

"Heh." Enchantress Liu sneered and said, "Give it a try then."

She had injured herself when she used the blood shield, but after a brief regulation of her breathing, she somewhat recovered.

At this moment, she activated all of her cultivation energy, and a radiant glow emanated from her body.

However, Enchantress Liu still retained some rationality. Through their first two interactions, she realized that the young man in front was extremely cunning, which was why she had not just launched a direct attack.

She was worried that it might be some trap awaiting her.

He claimed he didn't need the Dragon Orb, but would he truly stick to his words? What if this was just another ploy to lure her into a trap?

However, Chu Liang didn't move at all.

When someone makes you feel like they might have a trap, but they actually didn't have any trap at all, that in itself could be a trap.

Enchantress Liu found herself trapped between reality and deception. Chu Liang's boastful words deterred her from launching a direct attack, prompting her to await Chu Liang's next move.

As she directed her qi towards Chu Liang, another curse descended upon her.

Luo Yao was stealthily approaching from the peak of the hill.

While she was still afar, she pointed at Enchantress Liu.

She used the Immortal Art: Five Labors and Seven Injuries!

Bam!

There was no way to avoid this curse. Enchantress Liu immediately felt the effect of this immortal art. If this curse was to befall upon Luo Yao and the others at the same realm as her, it would be powerful enough to make them lose all their combat strength.

Yet, when the curse descended upon Enchantress Liu, it merely made her injuries more severe.

"Ugh...

" Enchantress Liu grumbled and detected Luo Yao's presence with her divine sense. She almost forgot that this dude had helpers.

But a lackey's helper is also a lackey. What significant difference would that make?

Enchantress Liu was intimidated by the Dragon Orb in Chu Liang's hand.

However, if it were Luo Yao, a cultivator at the fourth realm, there would be nothing to fear.

Immediately, she transformed into a radiant stream of blood, hurtling towards Luo Yao, who was halfway up the mountain! If she could capture Luo Yao, she could use her as leverage to force the young man into opening the hidden realm and allowing her to escape. That was her plan.

However, as she approached the area, she suddenly felt her cultivation energy being suppressed once again.

It was the Forbidden Ground!

This was one of Luo Yao's shamanic techniques.

Chu Liang had experienced this before and could only dodge with his physical strength back then. But when Enchantress Liu encountered this, she felt her cultivation energy being suppressed, but it did not entirely prevent her from using any techniques.

This was the advantage brought by the opponent's significantly higher cultivation level. In situations where there was a fundamental disparity in strength, the weaker cultivator's divine skills and techniques would greatly diminish in effect on their target.

But no matter how much the effect has been weakened, it would still exist.

At this moment, a huge fist slammed down from the sky! It wasn't affected by the Forbidden Ground. The punch landed on Enchantress Liu!

As Enchantress Liu effortlessly deflected the fist with a raise of her hand, an onslaught of negative emotions and thoughts bombarded her mind. Waves of sadness, bitterness, grief, and resentment crashed against her consciousness.

This strike was obviously done by Monk Pushan, who had been waiting at the side for a very long time. Using the Transcendent Dharma Mirror, he entered the Forbidden Ground. This was a coordinated effort between him and Luo Yao, each employing their respective techniques. Upon entering the Forbidden Ground, he unleashed a Forbidden Hand Technique of the Buddhist sect, a skill he had mastered for this mission.

It was the Maelstrom Misery Fist!

In the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, these rather dark divine techniques were referred to as Forbidden Hand Techniques, not because they were weak, but because they were excessively powerful. Such techniques would unleash immense power and result in extensive injuries and fatalities, which contradicted Buddhist principles.

As Enchantress Liu felt the punch, she experienced a surge of anxiety and frustration that was difficult to suppress in the moment. Her mental state was profoundly affected.

Although not severely injured, she sensed a gradual weakening overtaking her.

Her gaze turned cold as she stared at the two in front of her. Suddenly, she raised both her hands.

She intended to use the renowned Blood-Controlling Technique of the Scarlet-Robe Hall.

She was confident that she could drain all their blood and transform them into dry corpses in the blink of an eye!

Puff!

With a deafening roar, bursts of blood-red blossoms erupted across the sky.

Yet Luo Yao and Monk Pushan weren't the ones that had exploded. It was Enchantress Liu.

Unlike the intricate divine skills previously witnessed, this technique incorporated layers of thunder talismans. As the attack emanated the sword qi of a golden dragon, it whistled through the air and instantly blasted Enchantress Liu to death.

It was simple and straightforward!

This was the disparity in power. Once the foundational qi reached a certain level, even the easiest method could achieve the desired effect.

It was an explosive kill!

The sword qi of the Crimson Executioner spread far and wide, nearly scraping the entire hill! Chu Liang understood why it was displaying such excitement. Since he joined the White-Bone Hall, the Crimson Executioner had been suppressing this urge, and now it finally had the chance to unleash it!

It was as though a volcano erupted!

The series of earlier attacks were just a part of the plan devised by the trio. While Luo Yao and Monk Pushan launched sudden attacks to distract Enchantress Liu, Chu Liang prepared to unleash the most powerful killing technique, aiming to strike down Enchantress Liu in a single blow!

For a figure like Enchantress Liu, if Chu Liang had directly used the Crimson Executioner, it naturally would not have achieved such a successful outcome.

While she was engaged in attacking someone else, she would still be in defensive mode. However, even if she had extended her divine sense outward at that very moment, she wouldn't have been able to react. The brief second of delay was just what was needed to defeat such a powerful expert using the Crimson Executioner.

When Luo Yao and Monk Pushan landed on the ground, they felt their qi and blood shifting and they were severely injured. Blood trickled from their eyes, mouth, ears, nose, and all meridians of their body, instantly transforming them into two terrifying figures soaked in blood.

Enchantress Liu had already activated her divine skill. Although the effect lasted for a brief moment, the effect already felt overwhelming. If Chu Liang had unleashed the strike a second slower, they would have died!

This showcased the terror of an Eminent One at the sixth realm of cultivation.

While your divine technique or immortal art might only have minimal effects on her, her divine skills would wreak havoc if you were to face them.

"Hurry, infuse this into your bloodstream. It will speed up your recovery," Chu Liang said urgently as he handed them two Dragon-Blood Crystals.

The two complied, immediately sitting cross-legged and regulating their breathing on the spot.

While this happened, Chu Liang extended his divine sense around and started searching. Eventually, he found a blood jade bracelet on the field.

This was a valuable item left behind by Enchantress Liu, most likely a high-grade enchanted tool capable of storing items. Inside, one could expect to find all of Enchantress Liu's life possessions.

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After some time, Luo Yao and Monk Pushan completed regulating their breathing. Though full recovery was impossible, they managed to stabilize their injuries. With no more enemies around, they could naturally take their time to recuperate.

As they opened their eyes, they found Chu Liang approaching them, pushing two enchanted tools their way.

In addition to the blood jade bracelet they had just picked up, there was also an old-fashioned black pendant, made of a material that appeared neither like wood nor jade, which belonged to Master Mu.

Chu Liang handed the pendant to Monk Pushan and the blood jade bracelet to Luo Yao, stating, "These items were left behind by members of the diabolical sects. Since I've benefited greatly from this journey, it's only fair to divide these among you."

He wasn't trying to be generous. Since their time at the Southern Bastion Mountain in the Southern Regions, Chu Liang had consistently claimed the lion's share of the loot from their undercover missions. Although he had put in the most effort, Luo Yao and Pushan's participation in this mission was absolutely necessary. Without Luo Yao and Pushan's combined effort in battling Enchantress Liu, he wouldn't have had the opportunity to deliver the decisive blow.

Chu Liang understood the principle well: hoarding wealth alone rarely leads to prosperity.

During this journey, he had already obtained the Blue Dragon's Orb, granting him control over the entire hidden realm—a substantial reward. If he were to monopolize these additional gains, no one would be interested in an adventure with him again. If he continued chasing after these small gains, he might not find anyone willing to go on adventures with him.

He also put some thought into distributing the spoils.

Luo Yao belonged to the Valley of the Three Absolutes, a sect neither strictly righteous nor wholly evil. There was a higher chance that she would find items from the diabolical sects useful, which was why Chu Liang gave her Enchantress Liu's bracelet.

Monk Pushan, being from the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, wouldn't find items from the diabolical sects particularly useful. Considering Master Mu's expertise in formations, there was a higher chance that his items would be useful to Pushan.

"I feel bad." Monk Pushan scratched his bald head as he spoke. "You were the one who killed all the enemies."

"It's not for free," Chu Liang said with a smile. "I hope you two can do me a favor."

"What?"

Chu Liang's tone turned serious as he said, "I hope that you two can keep my ownership of the Dragon Orb a secret."

Chapter 243: All of You, Kneel

When Chu Liang requested for Pushan and Luo Yao to keep the fact that he possessed the Blue Dragon's Orb a secret, he was, of course, not asking them to lie to their sect elders. That wasn't a realistic request.

Chu Liang just hoped that the people who would come to know about this matter would be limited to a small number among the higher-ups of their three sects. He didn't want this information about him to be spread any further than that.

The Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm was immensely significant to the world. Once the news of its discovery spread, The Seven Stars Gazette would surely release an article about it. Then the whole world would know about it too.

The situation would then become like the saying, "An ordinary man is innocent, but if they possessed a treasured jade ring, they would become a wanted criminal." [1]

Chu Liang's cultivation level wasn't that high. If news were to get out that he had obtained the Blue Dragon's Orb, it was likely that many people, with good and bad intentions, would try to get close to him in hopes of getting him to spit out the Dragon Orb.

Some might even force him to spit it out, just like how he'd forced the little golden butterfly to do it. The saying "You reap what you sow" might very well apply to Chu Liang in this case.

That's why Chu Liang made that request.

Luo Yao nodded and immediately agreed, "Sure."

She was fairly accustomed to witnessing others using shady methods, perhaps due to her background. From her perspective, if Chu Liang were worried that they would leak information about this matter, he could have silenced them by killing them while they were tending to their injuries earlier! That was what Enchantress Liu and Master Mu had tried to do, and it might even be the safest choice for Chu Liang.

Luo Yao was lost in her thoughts for a moment.

Noticing this, Chu Liang responded to her unsaid concerns. "Miss Luo, I've never been worried that you would leak the information."

Monk Pushan frowned. "Huh?"

Feeling a little like his righteous character was being doubted, Pushan's bald head moved up and down without the slightest hesitation. "Rest assured, Young Hero Chu. Since I've benefited from this, I will, of course, keep my mouth shut like a closed bottle."

Chu Liang nodded with a smile.

You'd better.

The trio had formed a deep bond after spending this short time undercover together. Chu Liang chose to trust that they would keep their promises.

Just as their negotiations ended, a booming crack rang out from the sky! It sounded as if the sky was being ripped open!

The Dragon Orb inside Chu Liang flashed, indicating that an enemy had charged into the hidden realm! The draconic descendants with keen senses let out terrified cries!

Boom—

A ball of fire descended from the sky and crashed into a nearby mountain, causing the mountain to crumble. The trio watched as the mountain disintegrated. Just like that, its existence was erased from the hidden realm.

Debris fell all over them like rain.

The ball of fire gradually subsided and transformed into wings of fire that spread open behind a tall woman. She was covered in flames and wore a fierce expression.

The woman shouted, "Where's my disciple?"

"Esteemed Teacher, I'm right here," Chu Liang was trembling as he stood up hurriedly. "You almost crushed me to death..."

"Hmm?"

Di Nufeng shifted her gaze to the front. Upon seeing that it was indeed Chu Liang and that he was unscathed, she gradually withdrew all the flames covering her body.

Di Nufeng sighed in relief and said, "I thought you were in a life-threatening crisis."

"Things did get pretty bad earlier, but fortunately, I had the help of my friends. We defeated the diabolical cultivators together."

Di Nufeng shifted her gaze to Luo Yao and Pushan and smiled. "We've met before, right? You're both really good kids."

Luo Yao and Monk Pushan quickly stood up. Their eyes were filled with alarm and fear as they bowed respectfully to Di Nufeng.

After seeing someone nearly crush three people to death just by landing, it would be hard for anyone not to revere her, especially if they're one of those three people.

Right then, something else appeared through the rip in the sky that Di Nufeng had made. A beam of light descended and landed swiftly. It then transformed into a young monk dressed in a white robe.

He appeared to be around the same age as Monk Pushan, but his profound and compassionate gaze proved that he definitely wasn't an ordinary monk.

When Monk Pushan saw this monk, he immediately walked over.

Monk Pushan called out, "Master."

It turned out that this young monk was actually Monk Pushan's teacher, Dhyana Master Shenyong[2]—a renowned high monk of the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, one of the sects in the Divine Nine.

He was considered an outlier in the Buddhist Cloud Monastery. The monastery was far removed from worldly affairs, and its disciples rarely ventured into the world. Yet, Dhyana Master Shenyou liked to travel the world under the guise of various identities, leaving behind many legends of a saint appearing in the mortal realm. However, those legends originated from over a century ago. It had been some decades since Dhyana Master Shenyou last appeared in public.

After landing, Dhyana Master Shenyou turned toward the people before him. He smiled and bowed in greeting.

"I have to say, you monks of the Buddhist Cloud Monastery sent someone to save lives but couldn't even send someone who can speak. Does your sect not treat your disciples as important?" Di Nufeng said with a frown. "If we had cooperated outside, we could have broken into this hidden realm a long time ago."

Di Nufeng had always been impatient, and encountering the unhurried Dhyana Master Shenyou had undoubtedly made her furious. She had used up a lot of energy ripping open the hidden realm alone.

"Hehe." Monk Pushan scratched his head and laughed sheepishly. "My esteemed teacher has been practicing silent meditation for thirty years."

Luo Yao watched her companions reunite with their teachers and then looked up at the crack in the sky. Right then, she saw an elderly man poke out of the crack, behaving rather furtively. He was an elder from the Valley of the Three Absolutes.

The elder gestured to Luo Yao, beckoning her over. Then he disappeared as abruptly as he'd appeared, not daring to enter the hidden realm.

Luo Yao glanced over at Di Nufeng and roughly figured out why her elder was behaving so timidly.

Di Nufeng had always been ruthless when she beat up old men.

In their last encounter, Di Nufeng had taken on three elders from the Valley of the Three Absolutes all by herself. Despite that, she had beaten them up so badly that they had cried out to the heavens and the earth about the great injustice they were facing.

This was why that elder had behaved like a mouse seeing a cat when he saw Di Nufeng again.

"Master, shall we get out of here?" Monk Pushan said.

Dhyana Master Shenyou gave a light nod. He turned to Chu Liang and smiled. There was a deep expression in his eyes. It was as if he had figured out what Chu Liang had experienced with just one glance.

Luo Yao and Pushan left the hidden realm with their teachers. However, the remaining teacher and disciple from Mount Shu were in no rush to leave.

Chu Liang needed some time alone with Di Nufeng so that he could tell her in detail the events that had occurred in this hidden realm. He proceeded to give her a rough account of the perilous adventure he'd been on. Once Di Nufeng heard that Chu Liang had obtained the Blue Dragon's Orb, she was extremely shocked.

"You killed those two powerful diabolical cultivators and even became the master of this hidden realm?!" Di Nufeng exclaimed. She paused and then added, "You've truly proven yourself to be my disciple!"

"Technically, I can't be considered its master yet," Chu Liang said with a chuckle. "I have to keep training until my cultivation prowess is strong enough that I can have complete control over this hidden realm."

"Well, doesn't that still mean it's yours? It's just that it will continue to exist here for now." Di Nufeng laughed jovially, patting Chu Liang on the shoulder. "This hidden realm is really valuable. Looks like I can rely on you to provide for me when I'm old and retired."

Chu Liang smiled along with her. However, he couldn't help but think that if she hadn't blasted that huge hole in the sky of the hidden realm, this place would have been even more valuable.

Fortunately, Dhyana Master Shenyou would help Chu Liang resolve this problem.

Chu Liang and Di Nufeng left the hidden realm and returned to the valley beneath the dragon's lair.

The vortex by the mountain rampart had disappeared quite a while ago. After Chu Liang took possession of the Blue Dragon's Orb, the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm wasn't supposed to have any

entrances or exits anymore, and Chu Liang was the only one with the authority to access the hidden realm. Yet, Di Nufeng had used her brute force to blast open the illusion barrier that had kept the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm concealed.

Once Dhyana Master Shenyong saw that Chu Liang and Di Nufeng were out, he gently waved his hands, and a white light slowly filled the crack in the hidden realm's barrier.

Di Nufeng was an expert at destruction, but for repairs, they had to rely on this Buddhist monk who was also an Eminent One.

All three pairs of teacher and disciple stood in the valley at a short distance from each other. Just as they were about to bid each other farewell, there was the rumble of thunder and faint waves of diabolical qi soaring into the sky.

The group of teachers and their disciples quickly concealed themselves. They then saw a dark cloud descend from the sky with over a hundred diabolical cultivators standing on top of it. At the forefront of these troops was a pale-faced General Hei Yu.

Earlier, Master Mu and Enchantress Liu hadn't forgotten to deal a fatal blow to General Hei Yu before they chased the three youngsters into the hidden realm. However, having spent many years in White-Bone Hall, General Hei Yu had acquired some life-saving divine skills.

He used those skills to feign his death, barely managing to survive and escape. The first thing he did upon returning to White-Bone Hall was gather troops to seek revenge for his brothers.

Arriving at the valley with his troops, General Hei Yu behaved blusterously, totally different from the pitiful man who had feigned his death and then fled.

General Hei Yu shouted, "Let's block them off here! That devious couple must not have emerged from the hidden realm yet! They dared to scheme against my Hall of Loyalty. This time, I've brought brothers from eight halls. Let's see if they can kill us all!"

It seemed that General Hei Yu had been worried that Enchantress Liu and Master Mu would run away once they'd gotten their hands on the hidden realm's treasures. So, he'd gathered some troops with great urgency and charged back over here. Every minute counted when it came to seeking revenge.

Unfortunately for General Hei Yu, he would never be able to meet the people he was waiting for.

The group of diabolical cultivators surrounded the valley. There was a gloomy, eerie, and chilling atmosphere like that of an area filled with ghosts.

A woman suddenly emerged from the valley.

She was tall and voluptuous with breasts that looked like full moons, followed by a slender waist and long legs. This beauty, who carried an air of languidness, had the face of a valiant yet charming woman.

Many pairs of eyes filled with wicked desires immediately locked onto her. Yet, this woman felt nothing.

Under the gazes of the many diabolical cultivators, she raised her head and shouted, "Hey! All of you... kneel."

Chapter 244: Trap and Annihilate

General Hei Yu knelt on the ground with impeccable posture—his back straight, chest puffed up. With eyes wide open, he attentively followed Di Nufeng's every movement as she paced back and forth.

He appeared very well-behaved.

It was no wonder he felt terrified. The woman in front of him had waddled out and nonchalantly ordered them to kneel.

Although the command carried a dominating presence, the diabolical cultivators of White-Bone Hall were fierce characters who would kill without hesitation. With their resilient and stubborn souls, they managed to hold their ground, resisting the overwhelming pressure with great effort.

Due to his severe injuries that had yet to heal, General Hei Yu's spirit was weaker than ever. He couldn't resist for even a second. In a fleeting moment, his knees gave way, and he knelt down on the ground.

As he fretted over the potential loss of respect among his men, the lady vanished.

She appeared among the group of diabolical cultivators.

Boom!

She resembled a phoenix spreading its wings amidst the blazing fire. The flames immediately consumed everyone, each touch of the fire accompanied by resounding booms.

General Hei Yu had gathered this group of people to fight against the two sixth-realm cultivators, which meant that this group of people wouldn't be too weak. Of the eight chamber masters he had called over for help, four of them were at the sixth realm. Additionally, these chamber masters had brought along their most skilled subordinates.

The collective strength of these people was enough to challenge a small immortal sect.

But how long did they last in Di Nufeng's hands?

A second.

The moment Di Nufeng's purple-golden flames emerged and engulfed everyone, resistance became futile. It was an onslaught that lasted only a second.

Anyone who touched the fire died.

Not only were the diabolical cultivators affected, but even members of the righteous path, including Chu Liang, felt such shock that their brows trembled in fear.

This was no ordinary fire.

This was the Samahdi True Fire!

Even the Eminent ones who were of the same cultivation level as Di Nufeng felt themselves retreating, not to mention these diabolical cultivators. It wasn't strange that these lackeys faced their death within an instant.

The use of such divine fire would exhaust a great deal of foundational qi, hence why they would usually appear as a wisp or a spark. Rarely would people just unleash this fire so extravagantly as if it costs nothing.

Chu Liang had never seen Di Nufeng exert her full strength in a fight. As far back as he could remember, she had never lost a battle. During the few times she had protected him, she had only used simple punches and kicks without applying much force[1]

Therefore, he was amazed at this moment as well.

Although it might be accurate to say that she has exerted full strength, it was his first time witnessing her fighting with a divine skill.

At the same time, Chu Liang felt somewhat lucky. Thankfully, killing these evil diabolical cultivators wouldn't increase one's bloodstained aura and negative karma. In fact, it even counted as a meritorious deed. If not, with how fast his teacher burned people to death, the sight of her would have driven the Crimson Executioner mad.

Regardless, it all happened in the blink of an eye.

Di Nufeng single-handedly dispelled the sinister aura that filled the sky. In an instant, the sky cleared, and the sun shone brightly.

General Hei Yu remained kneeling on the ground, feeling a delayed surge of fear rush into his mind. If his knees had been a little stronger, he couldn't imagine what might have happened.

Earlier, he was concerned about losing face.

And now, he was just glad that he at least still had a face.

"Hmm..." Di Nufeng landed on the ground and strode towards the only obedient diabolical cultivator. She fell into silence, seemingly contemplating how to deal with this man.

Chu Liang didn't reveal himself. While he remained hidden, he said to his teacher with the use of Voice Transmission, "Esteemed Teacher, we have left the White-Bone Hall for a while. The location we remembered previously might have changed. Ask him to give you the new location."

"Oh, right." When Di Nufeng heard this, she nodded and said nonchalantly to General Hei Yu, "Give me the location of the White-Bone Hall and I might consider sparing your life."

"Ah?" General Hei Yu's expression changed drastically. Panicking, he said, "I can't do that! The Hall Master has a mysterious Soul Tormentor that seems to know everything in the world. Anyone who reveals the secrets of the White-Bone Hall will never get to live!"

"Oh, then you don't get to live." Di Nufeng said as she rolled up her sleeves.

"It's not that I don't want to tell you, but this... No matter what, it would mean my death. Just spare my life!" General Hei Yu begged, kowtowing repeatedly as he spoke.

At that moment, Dhyana Master Shenyong fluttered as he moved in front of General Hei Yu with a smile. Suddenly, he locked gaze with General Hei Yu's gaze.

Whoosh!

Just then, a flash of white light appeared in Dhyana Master Shenyong's eyes as he gently placed a hand on General Hei Yu's forehead.

General Hei Yu's expression immediately relaxed, and he slowly closed his eyes before speaking, "The White-Bone Hall's next destination is in the Southern Regions..."

Chu Liang observed the scene and nodded in silent acknowledgment.

"It appears that Buddhist divine abilities do have their merits after all," Chu Liang remarked.

...

At a certain location in the Southern Regions...

The sky was cloaked in dark clouds, yet it was not raining. Gradually, the dense mass of dark clouds drifted away from the area.

From the ground, it appeared so. However, from an aerial perspective, one would witness a golden dragon entwined with purple lightning streaking through the dark mass of clouds at high speed.

The skull that formed the White-Bone Mountain was hidden within the dark mass of clouds.

Just then, from afar, a sharp, piercing sound tore through the air as a massive sword beam cleaved through the white clouds, hurtling towards them! Upon the swordlight were numerous figures.

It was a massive sword carrying countless cultivators!

Ahead of the dark clouds, a sudden shower of golden Buddha light descended, revealing a multitude of figures descending from the sky!

From another direction emerged a large enchanted tool resembling a beehive. Instead of bees within each dark orifice, there were cultivators.

They were members of the Mount Shu Sect, the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, and the Valley of the Three Absolutes.

The forces of the three factions simultaneously appeared, surrounding White-Bone Mountain in the center, assuming a flanking position!

It all happened so suddenly. Many of the diabolical cultivators on the White-Bone Mountain within the black cloud had no idea what was happening.

However, the original form of the White-Bone Mountain reacted intensely. Suddenly, divine light shot up from within the empty eye sockets of the skull, and white radiance emanated from its mouth. The black clouds surrounding it were instantly sucked into the skull's mouth, leaving everything around it exposed!

When the diabolical cultivators of the White-Bone Hall, who had been moving amidst the shadow of the black cloud, were exposed to daylight, they were extremely shocked and started to panic.

In the next second, the divine light within the eye sockets of the skull pierced through the void, illuminating the entire sky. Then, the skull attempted to force itself into that curtain of light, emitting a series of explosive sounds.

It wanted to break through the void and teleport away!

Boom!

At that moment, a massive sword beam from Mount Shu swept downward, sending a shudder through everyone above. The sword beam then erupted with dazzling brilliance, transforming into countless ribbons of light that pierced through the air!

In the instant the skull squeezed into the void, the sword beam thrust into it, resulting in a deafening thunderous roar that reverberated for a thousand li!

Because both the skull and the sword were extremely massive, they appeared to be of normal proportion in contrast.

The immortal art: Heaven-Raising Sword!

It pierced through the White-Bone Mountain.

Bang!

The White-Bone Mountain still disappeared in the void and the sword light flew back.

...

This news story was reported in the Chronicles of the Nine Provinces in the Seven Stars Gazette for this month.

For the first time, the righteous heroes discovered the location of the White-Bone Hall belonging to the Dark King Sect. The Buddhist Cloud Monastery, Mount Shu Sect, and the Valley of the Three Absolutes worked together to trap and annihilate the evil force.

In the end, the White-Bone Mountain broke through the void and fled. However, Daoist Yan from the Mount Shu Sect pierced it with a sword, causing unknown damage.

There was another piece of news.

The Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm had reappeared in the Ancient Dragon Lair. Enchantress Liu of the Scarlet-Robe Hall and Master Mu, a formation specialist of the diabolical sect, had seized control of this hidden realm. The two killed numerous members of the White-Bone Hall and made their escape.

In this world, only the White-Bone Hall had suffered.

Chapter 245: Unboxing Again

It has been two days since Chu Liang returned to the Mount Shu Sect. Since then, he had been trying to familiarize himself with the mystical ability of the Blue Dragon's Dragon Orb.

He had expected that the plan to trap and obliterate the White-Bone Hall would fail. With its eight hundred chambers and ten thousand members, keeping the location secret despite the most stringent efforts was nearly impossible.

There would definitely be countermeasures in place for dealing with such external threats.

The massive White-Bone Mountain was like an enchanted tool that had been refined. It actually had the power to break through the void, which meant that it had the potential to be classified in the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures.

Clearly, the White-Bone Hall had always kept this trump card hidden.

The encirclement and attack mission by the three immortal sects couldn't be considered a complete failure, as they succeeded in uncovering this life-saving measure of the White-Bone Hall. In any future attacks on the White-Bone Hall, they would be able to devise more suitable tactics.

In battles involving such large-scale forces, delivering a fatal strike was exceedingly challenging. It often necessitated repeated struggles, with each side pressuring the other to reveal a trump card or tactic. This exchange would continue back and forth until the final outcome was determined.

The ongoing conflict between the righteous path and the diabolical sect has lasted for so many years, so it was nothing strange.

The White-Bone Hall hadn't retreated without receiving any damage. The Heaven-Raising Sword unleashed by Daoist Yan had undoubtedly dealt severe damage to the White-Bone Mountain.

Through the bond between the three spies, the Mount Shu Sect, the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, and the Valley of the Three Absolutes also formed a peculiar connection. Despite not having interacted much before, working together on this operation helped them understand each other better. It was as if they were forming alliances.

Of course, there was no formal alliance, just mutual goodwill being exchanged. For example, regarding the matter of the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, both the Buddhist Cloud Monastery and the Valley of the Three Absolutes cooperated by remaining silent.

However, someone had anonymously leaked the information to the news, and now rumors were spreading that Enchantress Liu and Master Mu had escaped with the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm.

As for General Hei Yu, who was held captive, he suddenly died a day later.

General Hei Yu's claim about the Soul Tormentor that belonged to the Elder of the White-Bone Mountain was probably true.

The Elder of the White-Bone Mountain had likely identified the subordinate that leaked the secret location and used some unknown methods to kill General Hei Yu.

General Hei Yu suddenly died as his flesh and blood corroded away, leaving behind only a skeleton.

But when this happened, Chu Liang couldn't help but feel worried. If the Elder of the White-Bone Mountain had such terrifying abilities, would he be able to find a way to locate him, Luo Yao, and Pushan?

Di Nufeng, however, waved her hand nonchalantly, telling him not to worry. For high-ranking figures like General Hei Yu, who held the position of chamber master, the Elder of White-Bone Mountain surely had something planted in their bodies. This way, upon discovering their betrayal, he could punish them regardless of the distance.

The Elder of White-Bone Mountain couldn't possibly do this to everyone.

Chu Liang thought about it and agreed. With this reassurance, he stopped worrying unnecessarily.

As he gradually became more familiar with the mystical abilities of the Dragon Orb, he grew increasingly eager to see what its power would be like at a higher cultivation level. The Blue Dragon's Orb was like a key that could unlock the door to the divine power of the dragons. However, he would need the strength to push this door open.

If he could tap into all the mystical abilities of the dragons, it would mean that he had fully inherited the powers of the Blue Dragon. At that stage, summoning storms, moving mountains, and controlling the seas would no longer be a dream.

While he was studying the Blue Dragon's Orb, he didn't forget the major contributor who helped him obtain the Blue Dragon's Orb.

"Want some?" Chu Liang teased, holding the Golden Vein Berry in his hand. "The Blue Dragon's Orb is round, and this fruit is round too, so they're practically the same thing," he remarked playfully to the little golden butterfly.

Yet, the little golden butterfly hid its face with its shiny wings, refusing to look at Chu Liang.

She was very angry.

"Oh, you are still holding a grudge. How many days has it been?" Chu Liang said as he poked the butterfly with his finger.

It turned around, emitting some fluttering sounds, and faced Chu Liang with its rear end.

It was as if it was saying, I am holding a grudge indeed.

"Hehe." Chu Liang could only chuckle awkwardly.

The little thing had quite the temper.

The little golden butterfly wasn't easily fooled. Despite the deliciousness of the Golden Vein Berry, it lacked significant spiritual energy. Regarding this fruit, it felt nothing but disdain. Its taste was simple. All it desired to consume was something powerful in spiritual energy.

From its perspective, anything chewable was considered edible regardless of its actual edibility.

Even if it couldn't bite into it, it could simply swallow it and digest it slowly.

But very few people could afford items with powerful spiritual energy. Although Chu Liang had more than enough money, he wasn't extravagant enough to feed his pets with items that contained spiritual energy.

Even some discarded enchanted tools, if recycled for their materials, wouldn't be cheap at all.

Clearly, he needed to take it out and let it find its own food.

Just when he was in a dilemma facing this little golden butterfly, Wen Yulong's flying-crane letter arrived.

...

When he had previously gone for that formal attestation of abilities, Chu Liang killed an alchemist who had been secretly refining diabolical pills. When he killed that alchemist, he obtained a storage enchanted tool, which he handed over to Wen Yulong after he had returned to Mount Shu, requesting for him to open it.

Chu Liang then made his way to the Hall of Weapons. Upon arriving, he greeted Wen Yulong with a smile and said, "You are quite fast this time, huh?"

"There are no tricks here. It's just a matter of practice; the more you do it, the better you become," Wen Yulong responded with a chuckle.

Indeed. Whenever Chu Liang returned from an adventure, Wen Yulong would have to unlock items for him. He successfully opened the Evil Ksitigarbha, which was even more difficult to unlock, as well as the skull of the Eminent One. In comparison to those items, this enchanted tool was child's play.

The tiny jade gourd was placed on the table.

"Let's see what we've got." Chu Liang opened it eagerly.

This time, instead of blindly taking out each item one by one, he took everything and laid them out in the open.

The most conspicuous item was a green alchemical furnace the size of half a human and coated in gold, engraved with a map of mountains and seas, shining with a warm and lively luster. As one observed closer, they would hear the surging waves inside the furnace.

"This should be an alchemical furnace," Wen Yulong said as he felt around and lifted the lid to take a look inside. He then confirmed, "It's a good item. High-quality alchemical furnaces have always been in demand, and this one is definitely worth a good price."

"So this is an alchemical furnace," Chu Liang remarked, unsurprised considering the original owner was an alchemist.

Next to it was a small jade puppet, about the size of a palm. There was no clear indication of whether this was a boy or girl, but this puppet looked very smooth and was crafted with exquisite detail.

Wen Yulong picked up the puppet again. As he took another glance at it, he smiled and said, "Thankfully, I used to study alchemy. If not, I wouldn't have recognized this. This is a Pill-Testing Puppet. You can use it to test any pills you refine. If the pill is harmful to the human body, the puppet will turn black."

"I see." Chu Liang learned something new.

Then, they looked at this jade slip. As Chu Liang scanned it with his divine sense, he saw that this jade slip stored several hundred complicated alchemical recipes.

Wen Yulong took the jade slip and scanned it as well and remarked, "Most of these are widely circulated alchemical recipes, with a small portion being less common. There are also some

diabolical pills. If you take this to the Hall of Conservation, you should be able to exchange it for some rewards.

The remaining items consisted of gourds, pills, and materials. As Wen Yulong examined each one, he commented, "This is the Eternal-Youth Pill, a diabolical pill that should be destroyed. Here we have the Qi-Restoring Pill, which could be considered a miraculous healing medicine in battle... And this is the Dragon-Head Raising Pill, a remedy for men struggling in bed..."

"These few treasures of nature are alchemical materials and should be worth quite a bit altogether. Congratulations, Senior Brother," Wen Yulong said with a smile. "They say alchemists are the wealthiest, and it seems to be true. Selling these items together could definitely bring in a tidy sum."

In the world of immortal cultivators, alchemists were renowned for their wealth. While there might be Eminent Ones at the Dao Attainment Realm who were impoverished, there were never any poor alchemists.

At this point, Chu Liang had clearly met both the impoverished Eminent One and the wealthy alchemist.

In response to Wen Yulong's congratulations, he shook his head slightly and replied, "Sell? Not so fast. I may have a use for some of the items in here."

Chapter 246: First Attempt At Concocting

It was said that in ancient times, immortality cultivators of all cultivation levels needed to be proficient in making tools, concocting pills, making talismans, and drawing enchanted formations. Otherwise, they wouldn't be considered proper cultivators.

However, as the world of immortality cultivators evolved, this model standard for cultivators was gradually phased out. Cultivators realized that they would need to exhaust a considerable amount of time and resources to study any one of those fields deeply.

Ultimately, being proficient in everything really meant being mediocre in everything.[1]

A cultivator might not be able to achieve a high level of mastery in alchemy even if they spent a lot of time studying it. Moreover, most people would only need to concoct pills a few times in their lifetime. It made more sense for cultivators to pay a master alchemist for their services, which would be much more reliable and convenient than doing it themselves.

Alchemists, artificers[2], formation specialists, talisman specialists, and beast tamers eventually emerged in the world of immortality cultivators... and were now considered mainstream professions. Among them, alchemists were the highest earners.

Like alchemists, having a high level of precision and skill was necessary for those who wanted to become artificers. However, artificers earned significantly less than alchemists.

The reason for that... was probably simply because concocting pills was more difficult than making tools. Seeing as concocting pills was more difficult, that meant there were fewer alchemists, and because there were fewer alchemists, they were paid more.

There was probably just one reason that made concocting pills more difficult than making tools. If a cultivator failed to concoct a pill successfully, then their efforts and the ingredients they used would all go to waste. They wouldn't be able to salvage much from the failed pill. Whereas, if a cultivator's attempt to make an enchanted tool failed, the materials could usually be salvaged for the next attempt. They would just need to put in the effort to engrave the enchanted formations again.

That's why extremely talented young cultivators interested in these two professions usually started studying alchemy. If they couldn't succeed in concocting pills, they would then study how to make enchanted tools instead.

That was, for example, what a certain Mount Shu Sect disciple with the surname Wen had done. Of course, Wen Yulong's failure with alchemy wasn't because he lacked talent for alchemy. Rather, it was simply the wrong path for him.

And now, Chu Liang was sitting in front of an alchemical furnace.

...

"A branch of Jade-Green Flowers that's one chi and two cun long[3], a section of Brightly-Lit Bamboo, three drops of fluid from a Blue-Eyed Centipede, one chunk of crystallized wood spiritual qi... these are the four main ingredients."

"Three White-Lake Narcissus petals, five Qi-Condensing Lotus petals, three qian[4] of spirit sand, five qian of Water-Ink Alchemical Sand, and a pinch of Light-Circulating Powder... these are the five auxiliary ingredients."

Chu Liang was reading the alchemical recipe for the Green Pill that he'd asked from Chen Su.

He had been interested in alchemy for a long time. Well, he was interested in all potential avenues of income.

Facing the obstacle of needing a high-grade Green Pill just gave him greater motivation to kickstart his self-study of alchemy.

After all, if he didn't have skills in alchemy, he would ultimately be subjected to the whims of others who did.

Coincidentally, Chu Liang had picked up some ingredients suitable for alchemy from that alchemist he'd killed. So, Chu Liang decided to just try them out.

The alchemical recipe for the Green Pill wasn't considered particularly precious, and Chu Liang had even prepared some gifts to give to Chen Su. So, Chen Su ended up secretly giving Chu Liang the alchemical recipe.

It didn't matter that much anyway. The alchemical recipe was considered exclusive to their sect, but the fact was that only the Alchemy Master and a few of his disciples were capable of concocting a high-grade Green Pill.

Chu Liang didn't think he would be able to concoct a high-grade pill on the first try. He just happened to have inexpensive ingredients suitable for beginners in alchemy, so he decided to use them for his first attempt at concocting a pill.

First, Chu Liang placed the captured cyan alchemical furnace with a gold overlay. Then he placed four blocks of Divine Fire Gel underneath the alchemical furnace and used them to ignite a Five-Spirit Divine Fire.

The Five-Spirit Divine Fire Seal was a fairly easy one to learn. Chu Liang had mastered it after only practicing for a short while.

Whoosh.

The moment the five-colored flames of the divine fire burst into existence, they emitted bright but hazy rays of divine light. The paintings of mountains and seas on the alchemical furnace seemed to come alive. There was even the sound of sea waves rolling ashore!

Chen Su had previously explained to Chu Liang that the divine-light enchanted formations engraved on the alchemical furnace were not just to make it look good or cool... Well, perhaps that might be part of the intended purpose.

The main purpose of the divine light was to provide a visual indication of the fire's intensity, allowing alchemists to have better control over the temperature of the fire.

After all, alchemists couldn't use their hands to accurately gauge how hot the fire was. An alternative was to use the intensity of the foundational qi they had poured into the fire as the gauge, but it wasn't a beginner-friendly method.

Ultimately, the light show was the best option for beginners. It served as a system to separate the intensity of the fire into different levels for ease of use.

Chu Liang let the fire grow for a while before putting the first ingredient into the alchemical furnace—three drops of fluid from a Blue-Eyed Centipede.

The three drops of turquoise fluid fell into the alchemical furnace, evaporating immediately in the heat. However, instead of rising out of the alchemical furnace as steam, the evaporated drops transformed into a cloud of green qi that stuck to the bottom of the alchemical furnace.

This was the mystical property of the fluid from the Blue-Eyed Centipede; it became adhesive when heated.

The green qi at the bottom of the alchemical furnace was akin to having another layer of partitioning at the bottom of the furnace. With that, the other ingredients wouldn't have direct exposure with the intense flames of the divine fire.

Chu Liang then placed the chunk of crystallized wood spiritual qi.

The wood attribute of the crystal was in conflict with the fire, so direct exposure would cause a loss in the ingredient's quality and effects, which was why a buffer was necessary.

Shrouded in the green qi, the crystal gradually melted into a liquid, and droplets of it dripped down.

Chu Liang then added the Brightly-Lit Bamboo. The translucent green bamboo absorbed the wood spiritual qi as it was heated, becoming increasingly transparent until it nearly disappeared. That was when Chu Liang added the final main ingredient, a branch of Jade-Green Flowers.

This ingredient was added last because it was the least heat-resistant of all the main ingredients. It was now the perfect time to combine it with the other ingredients.

After adding all four main ingredients, Chu Liang slightly stirred up his foundational qi in the furnace a little to increase the intensity of the fire.

Whoosh.

Chu Liang had trained a lot in exercising fine control over his foundational qi, and it was not at all inferior to the average alchemical apprentice. He was able to make even minute changes to the intensity of the fire.

Every action Chu Liang had taken so far had been done meticulously according to Chen Su's instructions. This was his first attempt at concocting a pill, but he had yet to make even the slightest error. If Chen Su were present to guide him, she would surely exclaim in admiration that Chu Liang was astonishingly talented.

In the short time of just a few breaths, the main ingredients in the alchemical furnace broke down one by one, combining into a dense and intensely fragrant cloud of green spiritual qi.

Chu Liang then began adding the auxiliary ingredients. As soon as the three White-Lake Narcissus petals were added to the mixture in the alchemical furnace, they turned into white qi amid the green qi.

He used his foundational qi to manipulate the white qi, stirring it gently to evenly distribute the medicinal properties contained within the green qi. This was the purpose of adding the White-Lake Narcissus petals. They acted as a catalyst that agitated the spiritual qi without causing damage to the medicinal properties.

After that, Chu Liang threw in a substantial amount of spirit sand, the most commonly used type of alchemical sand. The alchemical sand hung in midair, surrounded by the green qi inside the alchemical furnace.

Next, Chu Liang put in the Qi-Condensing Lotus petals. As they fell into the furnace, they immediately absorbed the surrounding green qi and started condensing it. The alchemical sand acted as a binder, and the spiritual qi was slowly condensed with it.

Once all of the spiritual qi had integrated with the alchemical sand, Chu Liang threw in the Water-Ink Alchemical Sand—a substance that was as pliable as water. He controlled it with his foundational qi and instantly enveloped the spirit sand, forming a protective layer.

The next step was the most important one.

Chu Liang could form a pill at this stage without doing anything else, but it would be an ordinary medium to low-grade Green Pill. To produce a high-grade Green Pill, he needed to move swiftly at this moment and add a small amount of Light-Circulating Powder, ensuring that it was evenly dispersed in the Water-Ink Alchemical Sand.

If a cultivator were to consume a medium to low-grade Green Pill, they would be able to blend in with plants, hiding amid their spiritual qi. If they were to consume a high-grade Green Pill that had Light-Circulating Powder, they would be able to connect with the spiritual qi of the surrounding plants, which was a truly impeccable result.

The thing that made it difficult to produce a high-grade Green Pill was that the Light-Circulating Powder was an extremely unstable ingredient. The slightest exposure to light could cause it to explode.

Ultimately, the key to successfully concocting a high-grade Green Pill was to have fine control over their hands, working swiftly and precisely.

Just as Chu Liang was preparing to put his fine control to good use with his hands, he felt something vibrate inside his storage enchanted tool. It was the Soul Subjugator Token.

Crap.

Chu Liang got a little distracted.

It was just for a moment. Under normal circumstances, it wouldn't matter, but when it came to adding ingredients to concoct a pill, it was absolutely crucial to add the ingredients at the right time.

Boom!

...

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "The White-Bone Hall was besieged by three immortal sects. Are you all okay?"

[Sixtieth]: "I'm fine."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Thank you for your concern, sir. The three of us weren't on White-Bone Mountain at the time, so we're relatively safe. However, our chamber master, General Hei Yu, is dead. We're now stranded outside and don't know how to return to the White-Bone Hall. Although we've only been with the White-Bone Hall for a short time, we've acquired some useful information. It turns out that Enchantress Liu of the Scarlet-Robe Hall and the Southern-Route Guide were lovers! They were initially going to explore the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm together, but the Southern-Route Guide died, so Enchantress Liu worked with Master Mu instead."

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "What? That's unexpected..."

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "That reminds me... Before all this, only a few of the Marquess' and the White Silver King's subordinates knew about their locations. If what you're telling me is true, then it's very likely that the Southern-Route Guider was the one that leaked the information about their locations to the Fog-Hidden Mountain of Immortals! I never expected him to collude with the Scarlet-Robe Hall!"

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Heavens! The Marquess held him in such high regard, yet he betrayed the Marquess? What a despicable person!"

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "I'll report this matter to the Marquess. You've done well. Since your true identities haven't been discovered, I'll find a way to arrange for you to join another chamber soon."

[Eastern-Route Guider]: "What about Fifty-Eighth? Why hasn't he sent any messages? Could it be that something has happened to him?"

A short time passed by before the Guider finally received a response.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "I'm fine..."

Chapter 247: A Smack On the Head

Time passed by slowly in the mountains.

In the blink of an eye, it was already August. Chu Liang arrived at Treasured Pagoda Peak to meet with Jiang Yuebai.

Recently, a new hidden realm[1] emerged. Nearly ten major immortal sects sent their disciples to explore it, and Jiang Yuebai, as a representative of the Mount Shu Sect, also entered this hidden realm.

This was a rule established in the world of immortality cultivators. Besides extremely important resources, the competition for most hidden realms and valuable items usually happened between the representative disciples of the immortal sects.

In this way, it would not only train disciples but also allowed conflicts to be resolved in a manageable manner. No matter how intense the competition became, it would not result in a huge conflict between immortal sects.

At this point, the Mount Shu Sect had not yet selected their head disciple. Therefore, Jiang Yuebai or Xu Ziyang were typically the ones dispatched to participate in such competitions. They served as the temporary representatives chosen by the higher-ups.

Jiang Yuebai had been away for several days, and Chu Liang hadn't seen her during that time.

As he beheld Jiang Yuebai at that moment, Chu Liang could faintly discern that she had made progress in her cultivation. She wore a plain blue blouse and a long skirt, her slender waist and long legs accentuating her radiant beauty. In her gaze, a divine light flickered, adding to her refined aura of strength.

It wasn't unusual for Senior Sister Jiang to achieve a breakthrough every once in a while.

Although Chu Liang had made rapid progress in his cultivation recently, he never dared to be proud as he knew how terrifying these talented figures blessed by the heavens were. If he didn't have the Large-Headed Doll toiling day and night, he would never actually be talented enough to compete with them.

"It's been a while. I've missed you so much," he said with a smile as he approached. "Senior Sister, you've finally returned."

"I've missed Mount Shu very much as well," Jiang Yuebai brushed her hair back, revealing her delicate-looking face, and smiled. "It feels really good to be back home."

"Oh, it seems like you've achieved something during this time?" Chu Liang asked.

"I did gain something from this adventure in the hidden realm," Jiang Yuebai explained concisely. "Although I didn't get the biggest opportunity, the trip wasn't a waste of time."

The Mount Shu Summit was about to commence, which might be why Jiang Yuebai decided to keep some things a secret.

It was the same for Chu Liang. He couldn't be honest with Jiang Yuebai about his actual cultivation level. All his hidden strength would reveal itself as a trump card on the day of the Mount Shu Summit.

He didn't think there was anything wrong with being cautious of each other. Even though they shared a relationship, it was still a competition. Besides, this meant that Jiang Yuebai considered him an opponent on her level, which was a form of mutual respect.

This would be showing respect to each other.

If his opponent were Lin Bei, he wouldn't need to hide anything.

"I am already looking forward to seeing Senior Sister Jiang's performance at the Mount Shu Summit," Chu Liang said with an unabashed smile.

"I am really looking forward to yours as well," Jiang Yuebai replied with a wink. "I know you'll be drawing a lot of attention."

"Oh? Really?" Chu Liang was surprised.

Jiang Yuebai retrieved a pill box from inside her robes and nudged it towards Chu Liang. When he opened the pill box, he saw a green pill shimmering with spiritual energy inside.

This was a high-grade Green Pill!

"Senior Sister Jiang, this..." Chu Liang was astonished.

"You deserve this," Jiang Yuebai said with a hint of humor. "Last month, I discovered that the answer to the third clue of the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony was on the Azure Falling Peak. I sought out my teacher, and she told me about you."

"You were already way ahead of everyone in solving the mysteries, yet the elders used this high-grade Green Pill to prevent you from winning first place. I was furious about it. When I returned from exploring the hidden realm this time, I asked the Alchemy Master for one."

Chu Liang held the pill in his hand, touched by Jiang Yuebai's intention.

She is clearly trying to protect me...

Chu Liang thought to himself.

Senior Sister Jiang has already solved three puzzles. She could have taken this Green Pill and completed the final stage. Yet, because she thought I was being unfairly treated, she gave me this item.

The Alchemy Master probably never expected Jiang Yuebai to give Chu Liang this pill. Otherwise, he wouldn't have given it out so easily.

The higher-ups of Mount Shu likely intended to trap him at this stage with this pill and force him to surrender a significant portion of his undeserved gains. From the elders' perspective, such actions weren't unjust; this was their method of maintaining control.

In actuality, the elders of Mount Shu did not expect Chu Liang to be this stubborn. They did not expect that he would rather forfeit first place in the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony than lose money.

The sum of ten thousand sword coins was substantial, but it was uncertain whether the prize for first place would be even more valuable.

If other disciples had requested the high-grade Green Pill, the Alchemy Master would have been more cautious, wondering if they were acting on behalf of Chu Liang. But when it was Jiang Yuebai, he showed no caution. After all, she was a leading contender to win first place.

As of now, besides the detective Xu Ziqing, no one on Mount Shu knew that Chu Liang and Jiang Yuebai were secretly on very good terms. Of course, Xu Ziqing had wandered off in her imagination.

"I don't need it," Chu Liang declared after the surge of emotions, pushing the pill box back to Jiang Yuebai. "The elders intend to punish me. If you stand up for me, it will only reflect negatively on you."

"You don't have to worry about that," Jiang Yuebai said, trying to persuade Chu Liang. "This belongs to you anyway."

Chu Liang grinned at her and replied, "Senior Sister Jiang, you don't have to worry. They can't stump me."

...

When Chu Liang went back to the Silver Sword Peak, he sensed something amiss.

As he passed by the hill, he saw what he had expected. A ruckus lay before him!

Half of the flower field was in disarray, seemingly trampled by someone... Trees in the mountain forest had toppled, leaving holes in the ground... Several houses also showed varying degrees of damage...

He frowned.

An enemy attacked? This was his first reaction?

That's not possible! Who would come to the Silver Sword Peak just to trample around?

Did my teacher tear the house apart again? This was his second reaction.

Impossible! She would only be ruthless when she's tearing apart someone else's house! She treats her own possession with great care.

Perhaps...

He flew over to the wooden shed of the Golden-Furred Hou and saw that the entire shed had collapsed, and the Golden-Furred Hou, who had been constantly sleeping, was nowhere to be seen.

Chu Liang was about to rise and search when he heard cheerful "hreeeorhhh" sounds.

As he looked up, he saw the Baize youngling flying ahead, followed by a massive golden-colored creature. The two spirit beasts streaked through the sky like lightning as they headed towards the Silver Sword Peak.

This massive creature had golden fur and a ferocious face. Its mouth was always open, revealing a sycophantic smile. If it wasn't Big Head from the Silver Sword Peak, who else could it be?

At this moment, its body exuded a powerful aura, shrouded in fierceness. The strength it displayed showed that it was already at the sixth realm!

If Chu Liang guessed correctly, this Big Head had just woken up from its slumber and realized it had achieved a breakthrough. Immediately, it burst into joy and started wreaking havoc. Suddenly, it recalled that it hadn't eaten much in the past few days and felt hungry. And so, it rushed to the Guardian Peak to see its friend Xiao Bai.

Chu Liang had correctly guessed the Golden-Furred Hou's entire thought process.

When it saw Chu Liang, it displayed immense joy. It flew and pounced toward Chu Liang, eager to show some affection.

When Chu Liang saw this spirit beast that had just achieved a breakthrough into the sixth realm, he smiled with pride. Filled with affection, he raised his right hand and gave it a loving smack in the face.

"I have told you many times not to play in the garden. All the fruits you trampled...are money!"

"Raarrr..."

After giving it a stern lesson, Chu Liang finally settled down to examine the Golden-Furred Hou after its breakthrough.

Previously, the strongest traits of this Golden-Furred Hou were its tough skin and strong body, like it was made of steel. It was difficult to break through its defense. In aggressive moments, its sharp claws posed a threat, and the golden fur on its body was like a weapon that could hurt people.

While spirit beasts typically possessed innate divine abilities, it seemed this one lacked them. It remained unclear whether it lacked such abilities due to stupidity or if they genuinely didn't exist.

At that moment, the Golden-Furred Hou, being at the sixth realm, displayed glimmering eyes as if it possessed mystical abilities.

"Did you learn any divine abilities? Show me," Chu Liang said as he patted Big Head.

"Raaaaarr..." At the mention of this, the Golden-Furred Hou immediately became excited. It excitedly leaped into action. It crouched down and suddenly lifted its head, emitting a roar that shook the sky!

"ROAR—"

When the roar resounded, tangible golden ripples of light spread out. Despite the effect being aimed at Chu Liang, he still experienced a moment of dizziness upon feeling the sound wave.

After all, compared to the Big Head, his cultivation level was far too weak.

Chu Liang sensed that this loud roar likely unleashed some kind of special power. It could get rid of evil entities, control devils, and make illusions disappear. The feeling of dizziness was just a side effect.

It was extremely powerful. If it were to participate in the Spirit-Pet Combat Tournament, which happened during the Mount Shu Summit, Chu Liang was confident that it would easily be a dominating presence.

The Golden-Furred Hou completed its performance and rushed toward Chu Liang, eagerly awaiting praise.

But then, a streak of fire flashed by. It was Di Nufeng, who looked very grumpy. She swung her arm in a circular motion and gave the Golden-Furred Hou a smack.

"I was in the middle of a deep sleep. What's with the noisy roar?" Di Nufeng shouted.

Smack!

The smack on the head left the Golden-Furred Hou feeling dizzy.

Can't this world be a bit kinder? Its eyes conveyed such innocence as it pondered.

Chapter 248: Which Pill Is the One

The Golden-Furred Hou was smacked in the face. It looked pitifully at Chu Liang, hoping he would seek justice for it.

Chu Liang simply blinked in response.

Di Nufeng's morning temper was always fierce, and he wouldn't dare provoke her.

However, since he was the one who had asked the Golden-Furred Hou to perform, if he hid away at this moment, it would show his irresponsibility. If that were the case, how could he expect the Big Head to toil away for him in the future?

So he stepped forward, cleared his throat, and addressed, "Esteemed teacher, it's already late in the day. Now that you're awake, it's just in time for lunch."

He subtly hinted that it was broad daylight, implying that if someone was disturbed by the Golden-Furred Hou's noise, it might not entirely be the Hou's fault.

Di Nufeng rubbed her sleepy eyes and grumbled, "What do you know? I was working hard for our Silver Sword Peak all night and only went to sleep at dawn."

"Oh?" Chu Liang asked curiously. "But esteemed teacher, weren't you drinking all night last night?"

"Of course not!" Di Nufeng replied. "There's a new event at the Mount Shu Summit this time and I was preparing for it!"

"What event?" Chu Liang asked.

This was probably something discussed at the assembly of peak masters the other day, and the news hadn't yet reached the regular disciples. Moreover, since the peak masters could participate, it was likely some kind of recreational event, not the main competition.

Sure enough, Di Nufeng raised her head proudly and announced, "The Wine-God Contest!"

Great. Perfect for what you have been training for your entire life.

Chu Liang found himself staring at the smirk on Di Nufeng's face, a smirk that seemed to convey the message, "I have fulfilled my lifelong ambition." It left Chu Liang feeling puzzled.

Why would the Mount Shu Summit host such an event? He wondered.

If the event were a Mahjong Tournament, it could be rationalized as a mental exercise.

But regardless, this was good news. When it came to alcohol consumption on Mount Shu, if Di Nufeng claimed second place, no one would dare to claim first.

Even if this was purely entertainment, the reward was likely to be substantial.

He even wondered if his teacher had offered fruits or used various methods to convince the higher-ups of Mount Shu to include this event.

"But isn't a Wine-God Contest just about drinking?" Chu Liang said to himself.

It was unknown whether the Golden-Furred Hou could understand human language. At this moment, it was pouting. Even as its expression was filled with suppressed anger, it did not dare to emit a single roar.

...

During lunchtime, the team for the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony gathered together.

On the table were several simple dishes, mainly consisting of delicious and affordable home-cooked meals, as Chu Liang was treating them[1].

He said to Lin Bei, "Have you spread the news that the answer to the third puzzle is available for sale?"

Lin Bei nodded. "Yes, I've spread the word. I told them I went against my team leader's decision and decided to sell the answer to the final puzzle."

Shang Ziliang looked a little worried. "Big Bro, are you sure this is alright? If we sell the answer to the third puzzle, wouldn't we lose our advantage..."

"Don't worry. I'll head out and claim the White-Jade Porcelain Cup first," responded Chu Liang.

"Ah? We're finally getting it!" Lackey A exclaimed, excitement evident in his voice. He continued, "I haven't heard of anyone claiming the prize. If we get it now, we'll be in first place!"

Yet, Chu Liang did not share the details with them, and they were unaware of Chu Liang's conflict with the higher-ups.

They simply thought that Chu Liang had unsolved questions.

But what Lackey A said was spot on. The first three teams to win in the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony would receive rewards, with just the rewards having variations in size. Before teaming up with Chu Liang, they had hoped for, at most, a third place. They had never expected to come in first.

Chu Liang nodded gently.

Even though Chu Liang did not take the Green Pill, Senior Sister Jiang, with her pride, would never claim the prize before him.

This was why Chu Liang had to act quickly. As time went on, more and more people would solve the final puzzle. While he could take his time claiming the prize, no one else would be waiting.

If he still hadn't claimed the prize, Senior Sister Jiang would be waiting for him to do it first, and her ranking would be affected as a result.

"But how do we sell this third clue?" Lin Bei asked again. "Although many people are interested, if too many people buy it, those who expressed their interest later might choose not to purchase. After all, only the top three will be chosen, and buying it later would be meaningless."

Chu Liang said with a smile, "An auction."

"Ohhhhhh!" exclaimed the team members in unison.

This idea had not crossed anyone's mind.

The answers to the three puzzles were sold using different methods, all chosen to maximize Chu Liang's profit. If it were anyone else, even if they had the same answers to the three puzzles to sell, they wouldn't achieve such a favorable outcome.

Chu Liang waved his hand and said with a smile, "Let's not be surprised. Let's eat..."

As he spoke, he lowered his head and realized that all the plates were empty. "Eh? I remember ordering food?"

...

Not long after, Chu Liang arrived at Azure Falling Peak once again.

The ancient tree of Azure Falling Peak still towered into the clouds.

As he landed on the branch he had once visited, he called out loudly, "Senior Aunt Yan, I'm here to disturb you again."

In a flash of white light, a figure appeared before him—it was none other than Daoist Yan, the master of Azure Falling Peak. Clad in a robe of blue and white, she displayed a cold and aloof demeanor.

With her perpetually indifferent gaze sweeping over Chu Liang, she asked, "You're here again. Do you have the high-grade Green Pill?"

"Yes, I do," Chu Liang said with a smile. He took out a small pill box and, with a raise of his hand, sent the pill box floating upward to hand it over.

Daoist Yan accepted the pill box, glanced at it, and remarked, "Then I'll have one of the disciples from the Hall of Alchemy come and verify it."

Even if she could discern the grade of the Green Pill, such matters must be verified by disciples from the Hall of Alchemy to be considered valid, which was also a necessary process for the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony.

With that said, she raised her hand and released a beam of white light. The light swiftly vanished, instantly arriving at the Hall of Alchemy on the Heaven-Reaching Peak, where it transformed into two lines of white characters in mid-air.

"A disciple from Silver Sword Peak has presented a high-grade Green Pill. Send someone for verification."

Upon receiving the message, a member from the Hall of Alchemy promptly arrived. To Chu Liang's surprise, it was none other than the seventh disciple of the Alchemy Master, whom he had met before.

It was Liu Qin.

Liu Qin, wearing a loose white robe, soared over, deftly manipulating the wind as he approached. As he landed, his expression remained indifferent.

To prevent Chu Liang from securing first place, the Hall of Alchemy had invested the most effort. Therefore, they became the most anxious when Chu Liang went silent. They were eager for other teams to reach this stage as soon as possible. So, when Jiang Yuebai came to ask for the high-grade Green Pill, they practically gave it away for free and even delivered it to her doorstep. Their sole desire was for a team to claim first place as soon as possible.

Who would have thought that the first person to come and verify the pill would be Chu Liang himself?

For such a major event like the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony, it was normal for a successor of the Alchemy Master to come and verify the pill. However, the fact that the one who came happened to be someone who had a grudge against Chu Liang indicated the attitude of the Hall of Alchemy.

They were certainly not planning to give him any chance to slip through the cracks.

"Senior Brother Liu," Chu Liang greeted with a smile nonetheless.

Liu Qin looked at him, pursed his lips, and remained silent.

Previously, Chu Liang had gained an advantage, so he could act as if nothing had happened.

However, for Liu Qin, it wasn't the same. Having been beaten up and suffered some losses, he obviously still harbored some resentment.

"This is the high-grade Green Pill he submitted. Take a look," Daoist Yan instructed, handing over the pill that Chu Liang had submitted to Liu Qin.

"Yes," Liu Qin said as he respectfully took the pill box from Daoist Yan's hand.

As he turned around, a faint smirk appeared on his face. It seemed he didn't believe Chu Liang could obtain the high-grade Green Pill, and he was contemplating how to expose Chu Liang's deception.

But soon, his expression turned grim, and he scrutinized the pill closely, as if he wouldn't let even a speck of dust on the pill escape his gaze.

After a while, his eyes were full of suspicion.

Liu Qin looked at Chu Liang, seeming to realize something, and exclaimed, "This must be the pill we gave to Jiang Yuebai!"

"What?" Daoist Yan, upon hearing her beloved disciple's name, inquired softly.

Liu Qin explained, "Recently, the Hall of Alchemy only gave out one high-grade Green Pill, and we gave it to Junior Sister Jiang Yuebai. It's obvious where he got his pill from!"

Daoist Yan looked at Chu Liang and asked, "Did Jiang Yuebai give you this pill?"

"No," Chu Liang immediately said as he shook his head.

"Obviously, she didn't give it to you. Junior Sister Jiang would never relinquish first place to someone else," Liu Qin said. "You must have obtained it using shady methods. You either stole it or used some cheating method!"

Daoist Yan remained composed as she stared at Chu Liang. While the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony had no rule against stealing or taking by force, if Chu Liang had indeed stolen the pill from her beloved disciple, she wouldn't be pleased.

Chu Liang regarded Liu Qin with a strange expression as he asked, "How many high-grade Green Pills did Senior Sister Jiang get from the Hall of Alchemy?"

"Of course, there's only one," Liu Qin replied. "You took it, and Junior Sister Jiang now has none!"

In front of Daoist Yan, Liu Qin tried to quietly create tension between Chu Liang and Azure Falling Peak.

But Chu Liang did not defend himself.

With a flick of his wrist, he took out another shimmering high-grade Green Pill and asked, "If you want me to return this high-grade Green Pill to Senior Sister Jiang, you'll need to tell me which of these two is the one you gave her."

"Eh?"

Upon seeing the second high-grade Green Pill, Liu Qin and Daoist Yan were stunned.

The Hall of Alchemy chose this as the final challenge because they were confident that no Green Pill was circulating outside. Obtaining even one was already difficult, so where did Chu Liang get a second pill?

What happened next exceeded their expectations even more. With a flick of his wrist, Chu Liang took out another high-grade Green Pill and asked, "Is this the one the Hall of Alchemy gave to her?"

"What about this one?"

"Or is it this one?"

He seemed almost like a magician. Each time he turned his wrist, another high-grade Green Pill appeared in his palm. In just moments, he was holding five or six pills in his hand.

In the days leading up to this, Chu Liang had been immersing himself in the art of alchemy. In actuality, he had already concocted pills that were nearly up to the standard of a high-grade Green Pill. Though the effects of these pills were on par with high-grade ones, there were some imperfections. To avoid any potential criticism, he kept refining his technique until he finally produced a few perfect Green Pills.

And now, all the high-grade Green Pills he had refined were here. The surprise on Liu Qin's face grew more and more intense. Finally, Chu Liang grabbed a jade gourd and tossed it to him without any second thoughts.

"Senior Brother Liu, please search carefully and tell me which pill is the one you gave to Senior Sister Jiang?"

Chapter 249: All Members Must Participate

The top three winners of the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony had already become known across Mount Shu.

The results weren't going to be officially announced until a few days later at the start of the Mount Shu Summit. However, the Mount Shu Sect wasn't that large, so the news had spread quickly about the three people who had obtained the White-Jade Porcelain Cups.

The person in first place was Chu Liang from Silver Sword Peak. Many people were surprised by this.

The way Chu Liang had rushed to sell the puzzle answers had given them the impression that he hadn't wanted to compete for the position of first place at all. They'd all thought that his only focus had been to make money.

The first part of his strategy was that his team had to sell the answers faster than everyone else could solve the puzzles. Otherwise, no one would buy them. The second part was that he had to solve the puzzle for the next stage faster than his team sold the answers for the previous stage. That was how he'd managed to confidently maintain his lead in the competition.

In other words, Chu Liang had been two steps ahead of everyone else. He was simply terrifying!

Previously, he'd gotten a little famous within the sect for selling teas and fruits on the Red Cotton Peak. After the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony, all of Mount Shu now knew about this fellow disciple who was an extremely intelligent profiteer.

The person in second place was Jiang Yuebai from Azure Falling Peak. This was within everyone's expectations.

Before the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony began, everyone had predicted that Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai would compete to be placed first and second, with the majority leaning a little more toward Xu Ziyang getting first place.

If Xu Ziyang had won first place, it would be easy for the other disciples to accept the result of Jiang Yuebai getting pushed down to second place. However, first place had been taken by that profiteer instead. This result made the disciples feel resentful toward Chu Liang.

The person in third place was Zhao Zhizhuo from Heavenly River Peak. Many people hadn't heard of this name, and there wasn't anything surprising about that.

The reason why this junior brother even had a name at all was that he'd outbidded everyone else at the Chu Liang's auction with a bid of 2,200 sword coins and acquired the answer for the third puzzle.

Chu Liang had even thoughtfully gifted Zhao Zhizhuo a high-grade Green Pill as a bonus and made an exchange on his behalf for the White-Jade Porcelain Cup.

That led to all three White-Jade Porcelain Cups having owners.

That was the extent of the spotlight that the third-place winner received. There weren't as many gazes directed toward him as those directed at Jade Sword Peak.

The most shocking news was that Xu Ziyang didn't have a ranking. His team hadn't even made it into the top three!

Of course, this was also related to Chu Liang.

Xu Ziyang had been too prideful to buy the answers from Chu Liang. When the rest of the disciples had already advanced to the next stage, Xu Ziyang remained immersed in his thoughts. By the time the treasure hunt ended, he was still contemplating the intricately carved jade in the cave on Treasured Pagoda Peak.

It wasn't that Xu Ziyang had solved the puzzles too slowly; it was just that compared to Chu Liang, Xu Ziyang had been pretty far behind.

All Xu Ziyang could do was accept the loss rationally. A loss was a loss. Everything would be fine as long as he won at the Mount Shu Summit.

Considering that even Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai had been unable to solve the questions as quickly as Chu Liang, some Mount Shu disciples had even suspected that he'd stolen a copy of the puzzles beforehand.

After all, he was Di Nufeng's disciple. It wouldn't be surprising if he did something that shameless.

Nevertheless, that suspicion was swiftly shut down because Mount Shu's higher-ups wouldn't have let such a thing happen. So, the disciples then suspected that perhaps Chu Liang had connections among the higher-ups and received special treatment.

Chu Liang had earned such a large amount of sword coins from selling the answers... Did the higher-ups have a share in it? In particular, the Hall of Alchemy seemed very suspicious because of the way they had intervened the auction at the last minute. Could it have been to guarantee Chu Liang's victory?

Some disciples of the Hall of Alchemy cursed at those negative speculations.

The young detective Xu Ziqing, with her keen eyes, was the only one who managed to see through the web of rumors and figure out the truth of the matter.

She felt a bit sad because her and her brother's teams hadn't gotten into the top three. Nonetheless, seeing Chu Liang and Jiang Yuebai take first and second place put a small smile on Xu Ziqing's face.

In all of Mount Shu, I'm the only one who knows how they got first and second place.

But I won't tell.

Hehe.

...

On Silver Sword Peak...

Di Nufeng erected a board in the hall of her pavilion and gave all the members of her peak a pep talk before they headed into battle.

"The Mount Shu Summit, held only once a decade, is a rare opportunity for us. The first-place winners of the recreational events will each receive a prize of around three thousand sword coins. As for the main competition, the disciple who wins the title of Head Disciple will acquire immeasurable resources! We must treat this with utmost seriousness."

Di Nufeng picked up a bamboo rod and pointed at the name "Chu Liang" on the board.

"First of all, you're the only one who can participate in the main competition, so I won't give you extra pressure. As your teacher, I don't have high expectations for you. You just need to defeat Xu Ziyang and Jiang Yuebai," Di Nufeng said nonchalantly.

Chu Liang responded with a warm and innocent smile.

Hehe. Sure.

"Do you want to participate in a few other events?" Di Nufeng asked.

"Esteemed Teacher, I, your disciple, will respond to your call for action! When you summon me, I'll rush over promptly, and once I've arrived, I will fight!" Chu Liang answered. "I'm planning to sign up for the Flying-Sword Race and the Mahjong Tournament!"

"Very good. Your fighting spirit to vie for first place is very commendable," Di Nufeng remarked. Then as she turned to Liu Xiaoyu'er, she said, "You set a great example for the other members to learn from."

Liu Xiaoyu'er blinked. Her eyes were filled with confusion.

Seeing Liu Xiaoyu'er remain motionless, Di Nufeng cleared her throat. "Ahem. Xiaoyu'er, are you not planning to participate in an event?"

"Can I participate?" Liu Xiaoyu'er asked.

Strictly speaking, she wasn't a disciple of the Mount Shu Sect, but she couldn't be considered a spirit pet either. Nevertheless, the recreational events didn't have rigid regulations. So, as a humanoid demonic beast, Liu Xiaoyu'er could participate in all of the events except the main competition.

"You can certainly participate in the events. You just need to choose the right event," Chu Liang explained. "The Wine-God Contest is where people like my esteemed teacher compete in drinking wine... The Spirit-Pet Combat Tournament is where demonic beasts like the Golden-Furred Hou fight... The Flying-Sword Race is where people like me compete in using a sword to fly..."

Liu Xiaoyu'er swiftly made a decision. "Then I'll participate in the Mahjong Tournament."

"You know how to play mahjong?" Chu Liang asked doubtfully.

Ever since she came to Mount Shu, I've never seen her leave our peak to play. Did she learn how to play mahjong in the river?

The little girl's expression remained as calm as before. "I don't."

Chu Liang: "..."

It went without saying that the Golden-Furred Hou would be participating in the Spirit-Pet Combat Tournament. Big Head was napping outside the pavilion, totally unaware of the heavy responsibility that had been placed on his shoulders.

Peak Master Di Nufeng set three objectives for them to achieve in the competitions.

"Be stylish, shine brilliantly, and win sword coins."

She then gave each member of Silver Sword Peak warm words of reassurance and encouragement.
[1]

...

After the pep rally, Chu Liang returned to his cabin.

Soon after that, someone came looking for him. When Chu Liang saw who it was, he was genuinely surprised.

"Alchemy Master?" Chu Liang uttered, hurrying to bow to the Alchemy Master.

Chu Liang's past encounters with the Alchemy Master hadn't been particularly pleasant. Nonetheless, the Alchemy Master was, after all, one of the Mount Shu Sect's Four Guardian Elders, so it was still necessary for Chu Liang to treat the Alchemy Master with proper etiquette.

The Alchemy Master gave a slight nod. "Mm."

Then, with his bright eyes, the Alchemy Master scrutinized Chu Liang for quite a while, until Chu Liang became visibly uncomfortable.

Right then, the Alchemy Master finally spoke. "That high-grade Green Pill in the gourd—did you concoct it yourself?"

So, that's what he came to ask about? Chu Liang thought.

"Yes," Chu Liang answered with a smile and a soft nod. "Actually, the high-grade Green Pills in that gourd were produced from my practice attempts. Pretty much all of them have some sort of defect. Only the last few I made can be considered perfect."

"As long as pills can deliver the desired effect, what does it matter if there are some minor defects?" the Alchemy Master asked, shaking his head. "Do you have previous experience with alchemy?"

"No." Chu Liang shook his head. "I just had some interest in it. I have the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony to thank for giving me the determination to try concocting pills myself."

"So, you've never concocted any pills before, and it only took you a little over a month to concoct your first high-grade Green Pill?" the Alchemy Master asked with a seemingly casual demeanor.

Chu Liang nodded. "Yes, that's about right."

Actually, he'd taken even less time than what was mentioned.

"I came to ask you..." the Alchemy Master suddenly said, "if you'd like to join the Hall of Alchemy and become my disciple[2]? Moreover, you'd be my successor[3]."

Huh?

When the Conservation Master tried to recruit Chu Liang previously, Chu Liang hadn't expected it, but the offer hadn't been that big of a shock.

However, this time, the Alchemy Master's offer was truly astonishing. After all, the two parties harbored animosity for each other due to what had happened in the past.

The Alchemy Master noticed Chu Liang's expression and figured out what he was thinking.

Then the Alchemy Master said softly, "There were some conflicts between the Hall of Alchemy and Silver Sword Peak in the past, so perhaps you bear some grudges against my hall. You must understand that it is impossible to avoid having conflicts between disciples of the same sect. However, when it comes to truly important matters, such conflicts are insignificant.

"I saw the Green Pill you concocted. I've never in my life seen someone who is as gifted in alchemy as you. If your talent isn't fostered to reach its maximum potential, it would be an absolute waste of such rare talent. I am confident that I can train you to become the best alchemist in Mount Shu... perhaps even in the whole world.

"I'm old and nearing the end of my life. I hope to leave behind an alchemist who can be a pillar for Mount Shu after I'm gone. My disciples are still nowhere near that level... So, for some years, I've been looking for my successor. I never imagined it would be you. Nevertheless, as long as you agree to be my disciple, all past conflicts will be forgotten, and I will bring all members of the Hall of Alchemy over to apologize to you."

His words were sincere and rather heartfelt.

Chu Liang could hear it in the old man's tone. The old man genuinely wanted to take Chu Liang as his successor.

Compared to potentially leaving behind a world-best alchemist for Mount Shu, all the conflicts they had previously were indeed trivial.

"Esteemed elder, I'm grateful that you have such high hopes for me. I am sincerely honored and humbled," Chu Liang said. "If Mount Shu needs me to, I am, of course, willing to further my studies in alchemy... But is it really necessary for me to be your disciple? Can't I remain as a disciple of Silver Sword Peak and serve as an attendant at the Hall of Alchemy?"

"Do you not want to change your teacher?" the Alchemy Master asked with a frown.

It wasn't odd at all that a disciple would choose not to change teachers, but the Alchemy Master seemed rather surprised to hear that coming from Chu Liang.

"Isn't your teacher Di Nufeng?"

Chapter 250: The Commencement!

The sky stretched endlessly above, painted with soft, drifting clouds. A gentle breeze carried a refreshing coolness through the air.

In the delightful, golden September, Mount Shu once again welcomed the Mount Shu Summit that happened once every ten years.

The team from Silver Sword Peak could be seen walking forward with a majestic and vigorous demeanor. Comprised of three human-like creatures and a Golden-Furred Hou, they looked confident and energetic as they made strong, elegant strides.

"Why are there so many people?" Liu Xiaoyu'er nervously whispered, tugging at Chu Liang's sleeve from behind.

Since she had joined the Mount Shu Sect, she had never once encountered such a grand scene, and it was only natural for her to feel a bit timid.

Not only had she never seen such a spectacle, but Chu Liang had also never seen such a scene as well. Yet, he maintained a calm facade, his eyes widening imperceptibly as he whispered to her,

"Just stand quietly. There are already so few of us from Silver Sword Peak. If you didn't come, how could it be acceptable when I would be the only one at the bottom when the esteemed teacher goes up on stage to observe the ceremony?"

On the public square on the Heaven-Reaching Peak, the disciples of Mount Shu assembled in several formidable teams, each led by their respective peak masters. Some groups had over a hundred members and the sheer size and coordinated movements of these teams cast an imposing shadow. Their presence exuded such dominance that it overshadowed the teams around them.

In stark contrast, some teams only had a few people...and even had to rely on demonic beast mingling among them to bolster their presence.

A high platform had already been set up at the front of the square, with the Four Guardian Elders of Mount Shu seated at the top. Alongside them were guests from the other sects in the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten, as well as officials from the capital of Yu, all gathered to observe the ceremony.

This ceremony, being ingrained in the legacy of the Mount Shu Sect for millennia, held immense importance. It was a tradition for guests from other sects within the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten to attend, a gesture of respect towards Mount Shu and an opportunity to witness the new generation. Typically, only individuals of status were chosen to represent their immortal sects, while younger members could join if they were interested.

Chu Liang looked afar and saw a few familiar figures.

Amidst the designated seating area for the Great Astral Sect, there was a muscular and rough-looking dude. It was obviously Yun Chaoxian, who had promised to come by. There was a girl next to him but Chu Liang didn't recognize her.

Yun Chaoxian stood there without any regard for his image, waving his arms at Chu Liang. His well-developed arm muscles bulged rhythmically, resembling an enthusiastic gorilla.

That girl next to him is definitely not someone he likes... Chu Liang remarked inwardly.

Amidst the designated seating area for the Valley of the Three Absolutes, there was a white-haired girl. That was naturally Luo Yao.

Amidst the designated seating area for the Buddhist Cloud Monastery, there was a baldie whose teeth could be seen reflecting sunlight. Obviously, that was Pushan.

Since they parted ways in the Blue Dragon's Hidden Realm, they hadn't seen each other. This event provided the perfect opportunity for them to catch up.

Amidst the designated seating area for the Greater-Yin Cult stood Luo Xiaoyong, who was all alone. Chu Liang had met him once before. As the Mortal-Realm Wanderer of the Greater-Yin Cult for this generation, he was responsible for attending any event that required someone's presence.

Chu Liang spotted these few familiars as he scanned the spectators' stand. However, he quickly averted his gaze as everyone on the raised platform ahead stood up.

A fluttering figure descended.

This was a middle-aged man at the age of around 40. His face had a smooth, pale complexion, his sideburns were long, and his eyes were sharp, making him quite handsome.

As he stood there, he didn't seem out of place. However, the moment he appeared, he became the center of attention. Everyone around couldn't help but look at him.

Most disciples on Mount Shu didn't recognize him, but judging by the amount of respect shown to him by the Four Guardian Elders, it wasn't hard to guess his identity.

It was the sect leader of the Mount Shu Sect—Venerable Wen Yuan!

The presence of the sect leader was required for only a few matters, and the Mount Shu Summit was naturally one of them.

Observing the faint surge of excitement among the crowds, Venerable Wen Yuan made a downward gesture with his hand, as if gently lowering something, and a quiet calmness settled over the entire square as though carried by an unseen breeze.

As he spoke, a clear-sounding voice spread throughout the all thirty-six peaks of the mountain. He wasn't loud but spoke every word clearly.

"The qi of the heavens is vast and boundless, my Dao will continue to flourish as the day goes by!"

...

The speech that Venerable Wen Yuan shared was very short and concise. It was mainly a very diplomatic speech about the Mount Shu Sect flourishing, saying that he trust the disciples of this generation to make Mount Shu better and better.

After the speech, the Conservation Master stepped in and assumed the role of the host.

As the host of the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony, the Conservation Master first announced the prize for the winners of the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony.

The prize for first place was the Five Elements Formation Diagram: Celestial Trap.

When they announced the prize, there was a small uproar. The Mountain God Memorial Ceremony that happened had always been a game. In the past, there had been valuable enchanted tools rewarded, but very rarely would there be items of this level.

In the world of immortality cultivators, precious enchanted tools or divine techniques were absolutely necessary for anyone seeking to challenge individuals of higher realms of cultivation.

After all, challenging someone of a higher realm was an extremely difficult feat. Only those who could achieve this were considered powerful. For example, the Demon-Suppressing Pagoda remained the top-ranked legendary artifact because it was the weapon used to challenge the demon god, who was at a higher cultivation level.

The Formation Diagram: Celestial Trap of Five Elements was capable of subduing individuals of higher cultivation levels as long as they were below the seventh realm. With the activation of five cultivators at the Golden Core Realm, this formation diagram could overpower a cultivator at the Realm of the Five Elements. This was why it was precious.

When Chu Liang heard about this reward, he felt a flutter of excitement. However, upon realizing that the reward would be divided among the five of them, and that he would have to always activate this formation diagram with his top-tier team, he felt that the prize was just okay.

However, even if the Mountain God Memorial Ceremony had no prizes, he had gained more than enough through this event. The financial gain was the minor achievement. The most important thing he gained out of this was the Alchemy Master's approval, which he earned through the pills he refined. He had already made a deal with the Alchemy Master that he would spend more time and effort to follow the standard teaching on the Dao of Alchemy offered at the Hall of Alchemy.

The thought of being a professional alchemist had never crossed Chu Liang's mind. However, the Alchemy Master spoke in such an earnest manner that he couldn't say no. It was better to learn a skill so that he would have other options in the future. With this in mind, he agreed to be an attendant at the Hall of Alchemy.

The prize for second place was a White-Jade Sword Formation that also required five people to activate.

All of Jiang Yuebai's teammates were her senior and junior sisters at the Azure Falling Peak. And so, this technique would be easily used by them.

Surprisingly, the prize for the team that won third-place was five spirit pets: five spirit beasts born from the same litter with telepathic connections, capable of displaying exceptional combat prowess if they join forces in a fight.

Zhao Zhizhuo, the auction winner who received the puzzle answer from Chu Liang, was a chubby kid. At this moment, the grin on his face stretched so wide that his wrinkles resembled the creases on a big stuffed bun. Even if they sold the five spirit pets for money, they would earn several times the sword coins they had invested in purchasing the answers. Those who later hesitated and did not continue bidding felt such intense regret that their stomachs churned.

Then, the Conservation Master announced the start of the preliminary round of the Mount Shu Summit.

"Access to the Stairway to the Heavens will open at this time tomorrow. It will be a test of Dao heart for all Mount Shu Sect disciples and only the top sixty-four disciples will acquire the right to participate in the fighting tournament. All disciples of Mount Shu, be prepared for it."

Chu Liang could understand the necessity of this preliminary stage. During every Mount Shu Summit, there would be at least a few hundred disciples, or at most thousands, participating. If all

of them went straight to the fighting tournament, the number of eliminations would be excessive. Therefore, having a preliminary round was considered normal.

But what is this Stairway to the Heavens? Chu Liang thought to himself.

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"Stairway to the Heavens is a mountain path and you just have to keep moving forward," Di Nufeng explained.

"Eh?" Chu Liang blinked.

After the grand opening, he wanted to ask his esteemed teacher, who held a high status on Mount Shu, if she had any valuable experience to share. However, Di Nufeng's answer was very simple.

"During every Mount Shu Summit, the elders would set up a completely different illusion. There's no point in me telling you what I saw," Di Nufeng explained nonchalantly, waving her hand. "Just remember, the one who walks the farthest within the shortest time ranks the highest. Anyway, it's just a test of Dao heart. My Dao heart guides me to beat up whoever I see, whether they're real or fake. A punch is the first thing I do. And as I continued throwing punches, I passed the preliminary round."

Chu Liang frowned dubiously.

Could the Test of Dao Heart that the elders had specially set up be as simple as my teacher said?

Chu Liang wondered.

Could this be what's known in legends as... the fool who defeats the expert?

As Chu Liang walked out of his esteemed teacher's pavilion, he saw two people waiting for him on the small hill.

It was Yun Chaoxian and that girl who had been with him earlier.

The girl looked quite young, with her hair tied up in double buns wrapped in cloth. Standing next to Yun Chaoxian, she appeared petite and charming. She wore a neat blue and white satin dress, and her large eyes sparkled with a divine light.

She carried a long weapon wrapped in cloth on her back, which appeared to be a legendary weapon passed down through generations.

"Brother Chu," Yun Chaoxian greeted warmly, "I've come to cheer you on."

"Thank you, Brother Yun," Chu Liang replied with a nod of gratitude before turning his attention to the girl. "And who might this be?"

Yun Chaoxian chuckled heartily. "This is my junior sister, Tang Shi," he said. "She is also a core disciple of our Great Astral Sect."

The Great Astral Sect has four core disciples: one skilled in saber techniques, one proficient in spear techniques, one adept in swordsmanship, and one proficient in halberd combat.

Chu Liang couldn't believe that the girl before him was a spear wielder as he stared at her in shock. It was difficult to associate her petite figure with the long, imposing spear.

Yun Chaoxian said to Tang Shi, introducing, "This is Chu Liang, the one I mentioned to you before. He's the Mount Shu Sect disciple who's more intelligent than me."

You really didn't have to add that last sentence, Chu Liang remarked inwardly as he chuckled awkwardly.

"Wow, that's amazing!" Tang Shi exclaimed, blinking her big eyes. Her voice sounded soft and gentle.

Great. It seems like this girl isn't very bright either.

Chu Liang was just about to host them when he spotted a silver light flying over. It was Xiaoyu'er, Big Head, and Baize playing with a flying disc.

Whoosh!

A gust of golden wind suddenly swept over.

Yun Chaoxian and Tangshi felt the wind behind their heads. Before Chu Liang could reassure them not to panic, the two had already reacted even faster than he did.

They both flipped over and drew their weapons simultaneously. Yun Chaoxian wielded a halberd, his expression fierce and determined.

Tang Shi swiftly drew the Hegemon King's Spear, towering over her figure by two heads. Then, her entire body surged upward with her muscles bulging and sleeves rustling crisply, and a golden light radiating all around her! Like a vajra-warrior incarnate, she bent her knees, twisted her waist, and shouted, "What evil creature are you!"

Her deep and hoarse voice stunned Chu Liang, causing his pupils to dilate. He hastily shouted, "It's a spirit pet from Silver Sword Peak. There's no need to panic!"

Chu Liang wasn't the only one startled. Even the Golden-Furred Hou was taken aback by her furious roar, causing its entire body of golden fur to bristle. It clamped onto the flying disc and moved left and right... before quietly retreating step by step.

"Oh! So it is you who's playing around," Yun Chaoxian exclaimed. Having encountered the Golden-Furred Hou before, he immediately withdrew his halberd and waved his hand with a smile.

Tang Shi's body, which had enlarged by three sizes, instantly returned to normal. Once again, she acted like a soft and gentle little girl, pursing her lips and chuckling lightly as she said, "Tang Shi was so scared... Hehe..."