

## M. Slaying 48

### Chapter 48: The Trade Between Cultivators

Because he was apprehensive about missing any messages and arousing suspicion, Chu Liang didn't have the time to bother with Yun Chaoxian. He closed the door and retrieved the Soul Subjugator Token to check.

As his divine sense entered the interdimensional soul domain, he observed the bright golden messages.

[Fifty-Ninth]: "I have acquired an Ancient Ape Demon's Soul, but I am unable to use it myself. I am interested in trading it for other treasures. Any takers?"

Oh?

So, this group also featured a trading function.

Following that, comments appeared from the one referred to as Fiend.

[Fiend]: "An Ancient Ape Demon's Soul is exceptionally rare and cannot be produced without the perfect alignment of time and place. When fed to battle-oriented yin spirits or ghosts, it can significantly enhance their combat prowess. How old is this soul essence?"

[Fifty-Ninth]: "It's approximately three hundred years old."

[Fiend]: "That's quite valuable. Let's first see if the two of them are interested. If not, I can assist you in posting it in other interdimensional soul domains to inquire."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Thank you, Honored Fiend!"

Fiend's explanation was thoughtful, allowing Chu Liang to understand the effect of this item.

Within the realm of spirits and ghosts, there existed a diverse array of entities, ranging from benign ones like the Painted Skin Ghost and Soul-Luring Ghost to combat-oriented entities such as the Sword-Wielding Ghost and Rakshasa Ghost. This Ancient Ape Demon's Soul likely served as a potent enhancement for them, akin to how the Tiger Essence Nourishing Pill would be for him.

Whatever its function, Chu Liang had no need for it if it was intended for ghosts.

However, as he was currently posing as Fifty-Eighth, he wasn't sure whether... he could use it or not. So, he opted to remain silent for the time being.

Soon, another response materialized.

[Sixtieth]: "I want it. What would you like in exchange?"

[Fifty-Ninth]: "I haven't decided yet. As long as it's a fair trade and useful to me, it's acceptable."

[Sixtieth]: "How about I offer you two Mi Luo Green Leaves?"

[Fiend]: "A Mi Luo Green Leaf can store numerous ghosts, providing a far more convenient method compared to our conventional containment techniques. Moreover, ghosts can reside within them, cultivating themselves and boosting their advancement. They provide significant benefits. Two Mi Luo Green Leaves should suffice as an exchange for your Ancient Ape Demon's Soul."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Honored Fiend, since you recommend it, this trade is acceptable. Where are you currently? Is there a nearby Taotie Pavilion?"

[Sixtieth]: "Yes, it's the Taotie Pavilion in South Gate City."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Then, send the Mi Luo Green Leaves to the Taotie Pavilion in Hundred Flowers City, and I will send the Ancient Ape Demon's Soul to South Gate City."

[Sixtieth]: "Alright."

In just a few words, the deal was amicably settled.

At this point, Chu Liang showed up.

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Oh dear! He beat me to it."

[Fifty-Ninth]: "Haha! Senior, perhaps next time."

[Fifty-Eighth]: "Alright."

With this simple exchange, he made his presence known and then logged off, successfully withdrawing from the interaction.

The entire process involved a straightforward exchange of treasures with minimal communication. However, Chu Liang managed to deduce some crucial information from it.

Firstly, it appeared that the seventy-two Soul Subjugators were not close to each other.

This could be a common issue among dark sects like the Dark King Sect, where internal conflicts among fellow disciples tended to be particularly intense, leading to mutual distrust even among sect members.

The fact that they resorted to conducting their business through the Taotie Pavilion, rather than in person, hinted at a lack of trust among them. It was possible that they had never even met face-to-face.

For Chu Liang, who was undercover, this was good news.

Moreover, their trade provided Chu Liang with an idea.

If the White Pagoda ever rewarded him with items he didn't particularly fancy, he could consider trading them for things he genuinely needed.

There was a small market within Mount Shu where disciples were permitted to set up stalls. However, it was rumored that most of the items sold were quite ordinary, and true treasures were seldom found there. Chu Liang had never participated in it, but he might visit the small market in the future.

Another option was the Taotie Pavilion, which existed outside of Mount Shu.

All the Taotie Pavilions across the world were affiliated with one of the Terrestrial Ten, the Taotie City located in the northern region.

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Over a thousand years ago, Taotie City was merely an ordinary third-rate immortal sect, founded in history to combat the demon race. Following the demon race's retreat, the sect gradually waned.

The city was located in the barren northern regions and possessed no distinctive characteristics beyond its size.

However, during a period of decline for the sect, the newly appointed city lord came up with a brilliant idea.

Given the city's expansive area, he decided to exploit its size by initiating a campaign of posting recruitment notices, inviting individuals from various sects and backgrounds to journey to Taotie City... for commercial endeavors.

Indeed, he aimed to recruit merchants.

He sought to bring people to Taotie City for trade-related purposes.

Due to the unique nature of cultivators, most exchanges were conducted via barter rather than the use of currency.

They engaged in exchanges to obtain the items they required, as money was usually useless.

Nevertheless, the primary challenge with barter was the existence of information gaps.

For instance, Zhang San in the Southern region might require something that Li Si in the Northern region owned, while Li Si might require something that Wang Wu in the Eastern region had. They might not have been able to effectively communicate with each other, resulting in none of them acquiring what they needed.

These information gaps existed also because many cultivators were unwilling to disclose their treasures.

A common saying went, "An innocent man with a treasure in hand is as guilty as a thief."

If someone openly flaunted the treasures they possessed and what they wished to trade them for, they were more likely to attract bandits and thieves instead of traders.

In summary, due to several constraints, trade among cultivators in the past was notably inconvenient.

Taotie City provided a central hub where cultivators from across the world could openly list their possessions and requirements for all to see, streamlining the process.

With Taotie City's reputation serving as a guarantee, the confidentiality of all traders' information was strictly upheld, and both parties entrusted their traded items to Taotie City. After the city confirmed that everything was in order, the exchange would be completed.

This entire process was straightforward and secure, despite Taotie City charging a high commission. Most cultivators were willing to pay this fee to circumvent the risks of fraudulent dealings.

Mainstream cultivators like Chu Liang, who were part of sects within the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten, couldn't truly relate to such needs. These major sects possessed ample internal resources and a substantial membership, rendering them self-reliant and enabling them to establish their internal trade systems. For example, the Mount Shu Sect had the Sword Exchange Pavilion and the four halls, which facilitated resource circulation.

Even if they wanted to trade with external parties, they didn't have to worry about being deceived because they were backed by a major sect.

However, for non-mainstream cultivators, who were often fewer in number, these concerns were a persistent source of frustration.

The existence of Taotie City was akin to a godsend.

Naturally, the reputation of Taotie City wasn't established overnight.

It took generations and hundreds of years for Taotie City to evolve into a recognized global trading hub, earning its place among the Divine Nine and Terrestrial Ten.

In recent years, Taotie City expanded its reach beyond its original boundaries.

They set up Taotie Pavilions in major cities, allowing both sides to conduct anonymous transactions at any location, with the pavilions managing the delivery process, providing peace of mind for traders.

As they established these business operations, Taotie City didn't neglect its own heritage. They used the substantial funds they earned to reinforce their sect and enhance the power of their disciples.

At present, the disciples of Taotie City were renowned for their abundance of gadgets, and they had earned a reputation for their wealth.

While the major immortal sects competed in terms of combat prowess and technical superiority, Taotie City had built its reputation and leveraged it to establish a platform while focusing on logistics. They utilized their initial returns to boost their strength and constructed the river that protected their city.

From Chu Liang's perspective, the ascent of Taotie City was nothing less than professional.

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That night was tranquil, and early the following morning, Chu Liang, after a quick wash-up, went to the adjacent room to find Yun Chaoxian.

He heard robust sounds coming from the room as Yun Chaoxian engaged in shirtless martial arts practice, throwing punches.

Chu Liang couldn't help but wonder, do muscular guys just not like wearing clothes?

Yesterday, after this fellow had torn his clothes in the Hidden Forest Mountain, he had traveled all the way to Kaoshan City shirtless, carrying a formidable weapon. Upon entering the city, he had been stopped by the city guards.

He had to purchase a piece of clothing somewhere and wrap the halberd before being granted entry through the city gates.

"Brother Chu, you're awake!" When Yun Chaoxian noticed Chu Liang entering, he ceased his movements and greeted him with a smile. "I was just about to call you. I've already tracked the location of the Heavenly Shock Wave! Let's go and deal with that guy!"

"Sure," Chu Liang replied with a smile. After a brief pause, he suddenly inquired, "Brother Yun, do you have any simple and easy-to-learn martial arts techniques? Could you teach me a few moves?"

He had recently acquired the strength equivalent to that of ten tigers. It would be a waste not to make good use of this newfound physical power. Learning a few swift and straightforward martial arts techniques from Yun Chaoxian would be the most ideal outcome.

Chu Liang would never have requested to learn any high-level secret martial arts techniques. However, when it came to acquiring basic techniques, Yun Chaoxian likely wouldn't mind teaching him a few moves.

"Eh?" Yun Chaoxian uttered, his curiosity piqued. He asked, "Brother Chu, why the sudden interest in learning martial arts?"

"Because... I witnessed your heroic and invincible performance in the Hidden Forest Mountain yesterday, and I couldn't help but admire it. I couldn't resist the urge to learn," Chu Liang replied earnestly.

"Hehehehehe..." Upon hearing this, Yun Chaoxian couldn't hide the delight on his face. He waved his hand and said, "You flatter me! If you haven't practiced martial arts before, I can teach you a few basic moves. What type of weapon do you usually find most comfortable?"

Chu Liang didn't hesitate as he responded, "A brick."

Yun Chaoxian was bewildered.

