

M. Slaying 52

Chapter 52: Gao Jin

However, the problem was where could he get the money from.

"Ah..." Chu Liang sighed.

Going back to the inn and asking Yun Chaoxian for some money was certainly not an option. That "clever" guy even had to borrow money from Chu Liang just to buy some clothes.

Frankly, assuming that the information that Second Madam Gu provided was genuine, then the payment she asked for was pretty reasonable. Getting money was an extremely simple matter for those underground cultivators of unconventional paths.

The ones who were more straightforward would just go and rob someone.

Those who were a bit more discreet would swindle others of their money. An example of this was one of the criminal activities that the Yu Dynasty had been actively cracking down on in recent years... Cultivators would release the evil spirits they'd raised to cause chaos in wealthy households and then charge the households a fee to drive the evil spirits away. They used this method to gain both fame and fortune.

Simply put, there were plenty of ways for these unscrupulous cultivators to acquire money.

However, the city had been on lockdown for the past few days, so tension was high in the city. This was likely the reason why Second Madam Gu needed someone to do such an easy task for her.

Nevertheless, while it's easy for unconventional cultivators to obtain money by engaging in illegal activities, Chu Liang could not do the same. Even if he wanted to, he would need to find some evildoers to swindle. Nevertheless, Kaoshan City was such a large city. Where should he even go to search for wealthy evildoers?

Chu Liang touched the chunky little beetle in his pocket. He felt the little guy's mouth nibbling his finger incessantly. It seemed hungry.

As Chu Liang pondered for a moment, his gaze wandered around the street. His eyes suddenly lit up. He had thought of something.

Chu Liang looked around again and spotted a large fellow whose appearance suggested there wasn't even the slightest possibility of him being a decent person.

Chu Liang approached the large fellow and asked, "Greetings, could you please tell me where Kaoshan City's biggest gambling house is?"

"Gambling house?" the large fellow said, looking Chu Liang up and down.

Chu Liang had already removed his black robe, so he now appeared as an elegant and finely dressed young man.

The large fellow asked, "Are you looking to gamble?"

Chu Liang blinked and replied, "I... just want to have a look."

"Heheh." The large fellow grinned. "I was just thinking of going there to play a couple of rounds. I'll just take you there then. Brother, these clothes you're wearing... You look like you're the son of a wealthy family."

"No, not at all..." Chu Liang replied with a smile while clutching his pocket.

The large fellow led Chu Liang through a long winding path. After a while, they arrived at a small storefront. Hanging in front of its door were two strips of cloth that served as curtains, on which the word "Gambling" had been inconspicuously written.

There were two guards by the door. They seemed to know the large fellow, as they merely nodded and let him through without any questions.

The large fellow led Chu Liang inside, where they were greeted by the sight of a whole other world as Chu Liang had expected.

Concealed behind the small storefront was a massive gambling house, filled with the clamor of raised voices. There were at least one thousand eight hundred people gathered there. They were all flushed with anger or excitement while engrossed in the various games that were being played at the gambling tables. The place seemed completely detached from the outside world.

"Brother, which game do you want to play?" the large fellow asked enthusiastically.

"I... I'll take a look," Chu Liang replied. He shyly swept his gaze over the various gambling tables and even walked around to have a look. As he furrowed his brows, he muttered, "I... don't know how to play any of these."

"So, what do you know?" the large fellow asked.

"I can... play mahjong," Chu Liang answered. "I've played it a few times with the elders in my family during the New Year's celebrations."

"Heheh, no problem. There's a mahjong room here too. But... if you're playing with small stakes, you might not be able to find anyone to play with. You need to bet with a substantial amount of money," the large fellow said.

"I... I don't have much money with me, but I brought this. I'm not sure if it's enough."

Chu Liang seemed a little nervous as he revealed the gold brick in his sleeve to the large fellow.

"Wow!" The large fellow was so astonished that his eyes nearly popped out. He put on a wide grin. "It seems I've run into the god of wealth today. Alright, alright. I'll go ask for you."

After that, he brought Chu Liang to the private rooms on the upper floor. He looked for a certain middle-aged man and had a brief conversation with him.

Then the large fellow turned back toward Chu Liang and waved, saying, "Brother, go inside and enjoy yourself."

Chu Liang nodded sincerely at the large fellow and expressed, "Thank you."

Subsequently, the middle-aged man led Chu Liang into a private room. As expected, there was a mahjong table inside, with a game set up ready to go. It was likely that they'd already been informed in advance that a new player was joining.

A man stood up and vacated his seat for Chu Liang.

"This young gentleman is here for the first time, so please take good care of him," the middle-aged man said, patting Chu Liang on the shoulder.

The middle-aged man directed a smile at the other people at the table. After that, he turned and left.

Upon exiting the room, the middle-aged man found the large fellow waiting for him outside with a fawning smile.

"How about it, Venerable Ninth? I should be getting ten percent of whatever they manage to rip off from that kid, right?" the large fellow asked.

"Dream on." Venerable Ninth, the middle-aged man, glared at him. "Even if you're to get a cut, you'd have to pay off your gambling debt first."

"Yes, yes. No matter what, we have to keep that gold brick he brought today. Whatever cut I get should be enough to pay off my gambling debt!" The large fellow sneered. "A whale like him is rare! I put in a lot of effort to convince him to come here!"

"Alright, I'll give you credit for that," Venerable Ninth replied with a smirk.

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Inside the private room, Chu Liang pushed down the tiles in his hand with a naive and confused expression.

Pleasantly surprised, he asked, "Eh? Did I just win?"

"Yes, yes, yes," said the skinny man sitting opposite Chu Liang at the table. He nodded repeatedly and continued, "This young gentleman has great luck. It's only his first round, but he's already made a big win."

The shirtless man with tattoos beside him laughed mischievously. "It's beginner's luck. Since you're on a roll, you should play a few more rounds, right?"

"Yeah!" an old woman sitting at the table chimed in, smiling brightly like a blooming chrysanthemum.

"You're all so kind..." Chu Liang said as he collected his winnings, tucking the tael of silver into a pouch that the gambling house had provided. He smiled and continued, "I won, yet you're all happy for me."

"Oh, that's how we are when we play mahjong here. We get happier the more we see other gamblers win big," the skinny man replied with a chuckle.

"Really? That's wonderful! I'll definitely come here often from now on," Chu Liang expressed while nodding. "It seems my luck is pretty good today... You won't run away just because I'm winning a bit, right?"

"Don't worry, lad," the shirtless man said and pointed to a large chest behind him. "We all have collateral here in the gambling house. You can go ahead and keep winning. I guarantee you'll win so much that you'll get giddy with joy."

"That's great!" Chu Liang exclaimed. Then his eyes lit up. "Huh? Did I win again?"

"Huh?" the other three people at the table uttered in surprise, feeling something was amiss.

It's only the first round of tiles, yet what is this? A season of victories is occurring in a game of mahjong...?

"Beginner's luck is amazing! Ahaha!" Chu Liang laughed with a smile that was warm and pure.

Then he arranged the tiles, drew more tiles, played some tiles, and discarded some tiles.

The smiling faces of the other three people at the table froze.

Chu Liang, on the other hand, had a naive expression as he exclaimed, "Wow! The feng shui here is really good..."

After several rounds, the skinny man was the first to escape by using the excuse of needing to pee. He left the room while repeatedly yelling that he was about to wet his pants.

Venerable Ninth was standing outside the room with a dark expression. "There are three of you, and you couldn't even defeat one person?"

"Venerable Ninth, there's something really suspicious about this kid!" the skinny man exclaimed anxiously. "I've been playing mahjong for so many years, and I've never seen anything so strange! Could he be a cultivator playing tricks on us?"

"No," Venerable Ninth replied, shaking his head.

All the gambling establishments were tightly monitored, with various items in place to detect things like enchanted formations. Any fluctuation in a gambler's foundational qi would be detected immediately. This was to prevent cultivators from using divine techniques to mess with the games.

However, that might not apply to a cultivator at the level of the Dao Attainment Realm, who had delved into matters related to the laws of the heavens and the earth. Nevertheless, if an Eminent One needed money to use in the mortal world, all they had to do was ask, and numerous forces would gift them some money. They had no need to play around in gambling houses.

"Then, what's happening? It's really bizarre. You said the three of us could form secret signals with the tiles to communicate, but we need to actually have a chance to play to do that. He keeps winning after drawing a few tiles. How are we supposed to even play like this?"

After pondering for a moment, Venerable Ninth said, "He probably has brilliant mental prowess that allows him to remember many tiles, which allows him to keep playing a winning hand... He's an expert."

"Huh?" the skinny man exclaimed. "Isn't he pretty much like a deity then?"

"On the gambling table, he might as well be a deity," Venerable Ninth scoffed coldly. "Today, it seems I've underestimated him. It's been many years since I've encountered a worthy opponent. I'll have a game with him."

With that, he pushed the door and sat at the table.

"The game shouldn't be delayed for so long. I'll take his place," Venerable Ninth said with a smile as he gazed at Chu Liang.

Chu Liang smiled in return and responded, "Sure."

When Venerable Ninth sat down, the shirtless man and the elderly lady appeared rather nervous. Their expressions seemed forced, and their gazes were fixed on the two pairs of hands on the table.

Chu Liang's long, slender fingers exuded a jade-like luster from years of cultivation.

Venerable Ninth's hands, on the other hand, were covered in scars; he seemed to have experienced many hardships.

When his gaze met Chu Liang's, the air seemed to freeze, with sparks emerging from the tension. There was a shimmering aura of a clash between two experts.

After an hour passed by...

"Hmm? I've won again," Chu Liang said while pushing down some tiles.

He was still as pleasantly surprised as when he won in the previous rounds.

Meanwhile, Venerable Ninth's expression was like that of a mourner at a funeral.

A clash between two experts? What a joke.

Venerable Ninth had entered the scene filled with confidence to compete against this naive and inexperienced young man, who didn't seem to know his place. However, Venerable Ninth had no idea that he would end up losing several hundred taels in just a few rounds.

The others at the table, as well as the skinny man who had left earlier, had each lost over a thousand taels.

They were playing high-stakes games, and nearly every hand ended in Chu Liang's victory, so his winnings had already exceeded the capacity of his large pouch.

"Lad, that's enough!" Venerable Ninth yelled, standing up in a rage and smacking the table.

He could now clearly see that this young man wasn't just memorizing some tiles; he was memorizing all of them! The young man could clearly have whatever tiles he wanted on the gambling table, which meant he was here purely to amuse himself.

"What's wrong? Are you stopping me from winning money?" Chu Liang blinked.

"You've already won several thousand taels. You better leave now and never set foot in our gambling house again. You understand that as a person, you have to get along with others to leave a lifeline for yourself, right?" Venerable Ninth said in a heavy tone.

"Hey, I just came here to have some fun with you guys. Why are you getting angry?" Chu Liang smiled as he placed the pouch on the table. "All the money is here. I won't take a single tael. That should be fine, right?"

With that, he flashed a confident and carefree smile and got up to leave.

Upon seeing Chu Liang step out of the room, Venerable Ninth's gaze wavered.

Venerable Ninth said, "Lad, how about telling me your name? If we meet again in the future, we can be friends!"

Chu Liang didn't look back.

He just waved his hand and left a name, "Gao Jin[1]!"

As they watched him leave with such a free and easy vibe, the people in the room were astonished and speechless. There even seemed to be dramatic sound effects accompanying Chu Liang's departure... until he was out of their line of sight.

At this point, the skinny man returned and said bewilderedly, "Did he leave without taking his money? Huh? What's with these silver tael?"

He emptied the pouch of silver taels only to discover that the silver taels had been swapped with dull and seemingly lifeless gray stones that had the same shape as the taels.

"What is this..." Venerable Ninth, who was experienced and knowledgeable, immediately guessed what was happening. He turned his head abruptly toward the large chest where they had stored the silver taels. "Quick, check it!"

When they opened the chest and examined its contents, they discovered that a small hole had been drilled into the side of the box, and all the silver taels stored inside had turned into stones.

"Ah..." Venerable Ninth uttered. Stunned, he slumped into his chair and muttered in a resentful tone, "Gao Jin, you little thief..."