

M. Slaying 61

Chapter 61: Self-Learning

"I truly hope I can come here every day."

Chu Liang wandered through the valley again to ensure no venomous bees remained. Once he was done, he left reluctantly and returned to the Mount Shu Sect.

There were some important matters Chu Liang had to attend to in his small cabin. Earning money was ultimately a secondary priority; he shouldn't forget to work on getting stronger.

So, he first collected the rewards for killing the venomous bees. After repeating the reward collection process over thirty times, he focused on studying.

Unsurprisingly, Chu Liang was studying the Talisman Sword Seal that Jiang Yuebai had taught him.

The core concept of the Talisman Sword Seal lay in combining talismanic script with sword qi. A prerequisite to learning this technique was learning how to make talismans, but talisman-making itself was a deep field of study.

Talisman-making, alchemy, and tool-making were all complex and self-contained fields of study, and the Mount Shu Sect did not force its disciples to study them. This was why Chu Liang hadn't even touched on these topics before. However, now that he needed to do so, learning them a little more extensively wouldn't hurt.

In the martial world, there was an important saying, "If you learn till you're old, you'll live till you're old." It meant that if a person didn't continue learning into their old age, it was very likely they wouldn't live until then.

During Chu Liang's last lesson with Jiang Yuebai, Jiang Yuebai taught him the essentials of the sword seal. She couldn't teach him right from the very basics of talisman-making, so Chu Liang had to go home and study it slowly on his own. She gave him a month to learn how to make talismans.

Consequently, Chu Liang went to the Hall of Conservation to buy a book called *The True Dao of Talisman-Making* and went to the Hall of Weapons to buy some basic talisman-making tools—cinnabar powder, yellow paper, ink, and a brush...

Now, with everything he needed, Chu Liang proceeded to learn from the book.

Talismans were items that contained the power of talismanic script. Talismanic script was powerful because it utilized characters^[1] used in Heavenly Law. Once the talismans were triggered, they could invoke the power of the Heavenly Law.

However, the Heavenly Law could not be invoked at will. A cultivator needed to concentrate their foundational qi and attach it to the talismanic script. Then they had to send their divine intent into the heavens to trigger the power of the Heavenly Law.

Cinnabar was commonly used for making talismans because it was the easiest material to attach concentrated foundational qi to. Once attached, the foundational qi would remain attached to it for a very long time.

Nevertheless, true masters of the Dao of Talisman-Making didn't need that, as it was a simple feat for them to use their finger to write talismanic script in the air. This was the level of proficiency a cultivator had to achieve if they wanted to use a flying sword to write talismanic script in the air.

In the beginning stage of studying the Dao of Talisman-Making, a cultivator only needed to memorize some basic characters used in talismanic script and meticulously write them down. If they could produce the desired effect, then they would be considered to have successfully made a talisman.

There was no need for them to understand the reason behind why talismanic script was written the way it was. It was like how elementary school students only needed to know how to use mathematical formulas. As for the origin of the formulas and the theories behind the talismanic script... those were the kinds of questions that only cultivators in the Dao Attainment Realm and the Heaven Origin Realm needed to think about.

Nevertheless, just the first step of learning how to make talismans—memorizing the basic characters of talismanic script—was very challenging. The characters used in Heavenly Law were obscure and complex. Each stroke embodied the Great Dao, so there could not be even the slightest modification to the characters. This meant the cultivator could not simply flip through a book and copy the characters right before facing an enemy.

When writing for ordinary purposes, it didn't matter if a character's horizontal and vertical strokes varied in length. However, for talismans, the strokes had to be perfectly even and in proportion with the rest of the character; this was the first obstacle.

That was the reason why the characters were written on paper in the beginning. The shape of the character and the proportions of its lines could be seen more clearly on paper. The cultivator might have to attempt thousands of times on paper before they could write the characters in the air without making any mistakes. A cultivator's diligence could compensate for their lack of skill in the Dao of Talisman-Making.

Chu Liang looked at the basic characters in the book and tried to write the characters in the air with his hand. It was indeed difficult to see if he was writing it correctly.

The second obstacle was to concentrate one's foundational qi so that it would not disperse. Foundational qi would always ultimately disperse, so to keep it in a concentrated state, the cultivator needed to have extremely good control over their qi. They had to be able to link up all of their meridians for their qi to flow out smoothly.

The third obstacle was the activation time of the talisman. Many talismans did not activate immediately, so cultivators had to take note of how long it took from the time they sent out their divine intent to when the talisman activated. To have control over the activation time, the cultivator had to have precise control over their divine intent.

Yet, Chu Liang already knew from having combined the three energies—vitality, qi, and spirit—into one... that none of them were easy to control.

"This truly is complicated..."

Chu Liang looked at the first talisman in the book and unconsciously wrote out the characters in that talisman with his finger.

He planned to memorize the characters first before trying to write them on paper.

Generally, the first character that cultivators who were new to the Dao of Talisman-Making would learn was the character for fire, one of the Five Elements. Chu Liang was no exception to this. Fire was the simplest word to write in talismanic script, but it was still complex enough to give beginners a headache.

After practicing writing the character in the air with his right hand for quite a while, he wrote it down, completing his first talisman. Then he tapped it lightly.

Whoosh—

A blazing fire appeared out of nowhere and surged upward, almost setting alight the walls of the small cabin.

Chu Liang got such a fright that he scrambled to his feet.

I succeeded..? Just like that?

The book clearly said that writing talismanic script in the air was difficult... and that it required practicing thousands of times on paper first. What's all that about then?

Despite his success, his first reaction wasn't of joy.

Instead, he stared at the cinnabar powder and yellow paper on the table and muttered, "What a waste of money."

...

"Kaaaw."

Early the next morning, Chu Liang was awakened by some sudden loud and resonant cries outside. He looked out the window and saw a huge white crane descending to the ground.

It was once again time for the monthly issue of The Seven Stars Gazette.

Chu Liang called out to the white crane, "Thanks for your hard work."

Then he reached out and pulled the booklet inside the cabin. It was time to read the gazette.

As usual, he flipped the booklet open and read the section on the Catalog of the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures first.

There was a significant change in the rankings from the previous month. Taotie City had successfully crafted an enchanted tool called Golden Wings That Brush Against the Clouds. The Celestial Pivot Pavilion had witnessed it in action and entered it into the Catalog of the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures at the rank of ninety-seven. This meant that treasures ranked ninety-seventh and below would all drop by one rank.

The top hundred treasures in the Catalog of the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures had not changed for many years. So, the sudden appearance of the Golden Wings That Brush Against the Clouds undoubtedly attracted some attention.

It was generally considered that there was a wide gap between the top hundred treasures and those ranked below one hundred. Regardless of the power they possessed, all the enchanted artifacts and weapons ranked below the top hundred were only considered treasures of the mortal world, whereas those in the top hundred were considered to be more like legendary artifacts.

It was a major event in the mortal realm every time a treasure that was almost at the level of a legendary artifact was made or discovered, as it indicated there could be a shift in the balance of power. In other words, Taotie City, the owner of the new high-ranking treasure, had become even more powerful.

As a disciple of the Mount Shu Sect, Chu Liang should feel a sense of crisis. In recent years, there had been an increasing number of voices claiming that the Mount Shu Sect was not qualified to be ranked among the Divine Nine. Most of these voices belonged to the sects who were in the upper ranks of the Terrestrial Ten.

Those sects had their attention fixed on the Mount Shu Sect—the bottom-ranker in the Divine Nine—like a tiger watching its prey, waiting for the chance to take the place of the Mount Shu Sect. Taotie City was one of them.

After Chu Liang was done reading about the changes in the Catalog of the Mortal World's Ten Thousand Treasures, he moved on to reading the Chronicles of the Nine Provinces.

There was also some explosive news in this month's Chronicles of the Nine Provinces. The moment he flipped to that section, six words in large print caught his eye—"The Return of the Demon God."

Chu Liang had already heard this news in the Hidden Forest Mountain, so he wasn't surprised by it. Nevertheless, it was easy for him to imagine how shocking this news would be for those who had been living in peace for all these years.

The Mountain Range of the Seven Kings in the Far West had sent out many divine envoys this time and allied with many forces within the Yu Dynasty. Their goal was to spread the news of the imminent return of the demon god, so it wasn't a secret at all. Rather, they wanted to raise a storm that would sweep across all nine provinces! Their blatant publicizing of the demon god's return made it seem even more real.

The anonymous sect leader of the Celestial Pivot Pavilion wrote a profound commentary telling the world how grim a matter this was. It reawakened a sense of crisis in those who had long forgotten about the terror of the demon race.

The expression of everyone who read the commentary, including Chu Liang who had already known about the demon god's return, gradually turned grave.

Then Chu Liang turned to the next page of the booklet and was a little flabbergasted. It was because his name was on the page.

The Celestial Pivot Pavilion had written an account of the actions of several demon divine envoys who had been captured. The first one mentioned was the demon divine envoy who had committed a brutal massacre in Kaoshan City.

This sinister demon envoy had been killed by the joined forces of Yun Chaoxian, a core disciple of the Great Astral Sect, and Chu Liang, a young disciple of the Mount Shu Sect. They had also killed a malevolent shaman envoy who had been colluding with the demon envoy.

Of course, the article's focus was on Yun Chaoxian, while Chu Liang was only mentioned briefly. Nevertheless, the writer of the article couldn't be blamed for that. After all, Yun Chaoxian was one of the four core disciples of the Great Astral Sect, and he had been previously mentioned in The Seven Stars Gazette.

As for Chu Liang... who was he? No one knew about him.

Without knowing the specific details, everyone would think that Yun Chaoxian had been the main force in eradicating the evil entities and that Chu Liang had merely tagged along to ride on Yun Chaoxian's coattails.

Regardless, Chu Liang still found it quite surreal to see his name in The Seven Stars Gazette, which was read all over the world. If he were an ordinary disciple, he would most likely cheer excitedly in jubilation for a few days.

Chu Liang made a small smile.

Then he turned to the next page and saw another familiar name. His smile widened slightly.

Seriously...

"Di Nufeng, Mount Shu Sect's notorious evil tyrant peak master, recently caused a disturbance in the waters near the East Sea and started a fight. The Penglai Supreme Sect took action and expelled her from the area. Everyone was greatly satisfied by the result."