

# I Don't Want to Get Hurt, So I'll Max Out My Defense –

## Chapter 71

Xia Family First-Rate Bathhouse was personally crafted by the Family Head of the Xia family, Xia Jiuquan.

After discovering the bath market, he immediately joined several Elders from the clan to start preparing to make money from this opportunity.

Using the influence of the Xia family, they managed to renovate a bathhouse, Xia Family First-Rate, in the shortest time possible.

Adorned with silk brocade on the outside and furnished with gold and jade on the inside, it could be described as the epitome of luxurious splendor.

Further, it offered a grand opening promotion with half-price discounts today only, charging a mere twenty-five Lower Grade Spirit Stones for each half-hour session, instantly attracting a massive number of cultivators.

The interior of the bathhouse was divided into male and female sections, with a design highly similar to that of Tangneng First-class, but the space was much larger.

The cultivators felt a sense of familiarity, the same old atmosphere, but when they submerged themselves in the pools, their expressions turned to surprise.

They had expected to feel the automatic circulation of Spiritual Energy within their bodies, but that did not occur. Everything was normal; they were just soaking in the water, which was warm and comfortable.

But what use was that?

They hadn't come for a mere bath; a bathhouse sans Spiritual Energy enhancement was soulless!

"Brother, why do I feel that this water is no different from ordinary water? Can you cultivate?"

"No, this water is not the same as Tangneng First-class; it's not helpful for cultivation."

"I also feel nothing. Could we have been scammed? A regular bathhouse charging me twenty-five Spirit Stones?"

“We’ve definitely been tricked, damn it! The Xia family is utterly deranged. Do they really think that they can charge exorbitant fees just because they decked out the place?”

“No way, I’m not soaking anymore. Return my Spirit Stones to me!”

“Right...”

As the cultivators realized something was amiss with the pools, they immediately became hostile, seeking a refund.

The steward of the Xia family turned anxious when he learned about the situation; they had rushed into opening without understanding the full details—this was problematic.

“Everyone, please wait a moment. Our negligence caused this error. Your bath time will be extended by an additional half-hour, and the formula for Spiritual Energy enhancement will be added right away; your patience is appreciated.”

After calming everyone down, the steward hurriedly went to report the issue to Xia Jiuquan.

It was a grave mistake in intelligence; the water from Tangneng First-class could actually enhance cultivation levels. But during their previous inspection, the water seemed indistinguishable from any ordinary water.

“Hurry and summon the Elders, and bring those two disobedient ones over!”

Xia Jiuquan was furious, but now wasn’t the time for accountability. Thousands of cultivators were waiting inside the bathhouse; an effective solution had to be found immediately to get through today’s predicament.

One minute later.

Several people gathered in the room.

“You two disobedient ones, you didn’t investigate properly. The reason Tangneng First-class bathhouse is so popular is that their baths have the effect of aiding cultivation!”

“Everyone hurry and think of a solution. We must stabilize the first wave of customers; losing money is one thing, but losing reputation is far worse.”

In a major clan, reputation is everything. If people lose respect for the clan, its authority will inevitably wane.

“How about we add some cultivation materials to the water? It will be costly, but at least it can stabilize the cultivators,” suggested one Elder, believing that securing the first wave of customers could keep chances alive.

“Unacceptable. Our bathhouse is too large. If we add materials to all the water, it will be an enormous consumption of resources, and we’ll only lose more in the end.”

“That method is only a last resort; we want to avoid losing money to get recognition if we can. Let’s think of other solutions.”

“You two disobedient ones, come up with a solution, now!” Xia Jiuquan shouted, his tiger’s eyes wide with anger.

A deadly silence filled the room as Xia Liu and Xia Chuan broke out in a cold sweat, terrified.

They were also confused; they had never heard that Ye Liangchen’s bathhouse could aid in cultivation.

“Father, we truly were unaware of this. We did obtain the water from that Ye fellow, but who would have thought it had cultivation effects.”

“As far as the child knows, Ye Liangchen does not care about cultivators taking away his water source; perhaps we can draw the water from Tangneng First-class and use it ourselves. Maybe it can temporarily solve the problem of being unable to cultivate.”

Xia Chuan said.

“Let the steward handle this matter. Arrange for people to ensure that all the water from Tangneng First-class family is brought here!”

“Understood, I will make sure it is done,”

“The rest of you, come with me immediately to placate our guests, we must keep them stable.”

...

Inside Tangneng First-class.

Li Xiaobai was lazily soaking in the bath, chatting away with an old beggar, who was quite extraordinary. He could talk about almost anything and had broad knowledge.

However, whenever Li Xiaobai tried to probe his identity or strength, the old man would brag ostentatiously, almost to the point of exaggeration.

A few people entered through the door, led by an older man with grizzled hair, who had a pleasant appearance and a distinguished demeanor, clearly coming from a well-experienced and prestigious family.

He got straight to the point.

“Boss, can you sell the formula for this pool of water? Name your price in Spirit Stones; money is no object,”

the grizzled-haired elder smiled.

“At Tangneng First-class, we only offer baths, no other trades.”

“Besides, who would sell the means to their own fortune?”

Li Xiaobai glanced sideways at the elder and spoke indifferently.

“Then, can we buy this pool of water?” the elder still had a smile on his face.

“To soak here for half an hour is one Medium Grade Spirit Stone, you can’t afford it,”

Li Xiaobai pointed to the price list on the wall.

“This... is a bit expensive, isn’t it? The Xia Family First-Rate next door charges only twenty-five Lower Grade Spirit Stones,”

the elder was taken aback. In his haste to come in, he hadn’t noticed the price list on the wall—half an hour for one Medium Grade Spirit Stone; this place was even more of a ripoff than Xia Family First-Rate!

“Then go to the Xia Family next door, I don’t welcome paupers here,”

Li Xiaobai said lazily, leaving the elder speechless.

“How can you speak to Elder Chen like this, do you know who Elder Chen is?”

“Believe it or not, I’ll tear your mouth apart!”

The henchmen were unhappy and wanted to teach Li Xiaobai a lesson, as, in their view, there was nothing the Xia Family wanted that they couldn’t have. They thought this shop owner should respectfully present the formula with both hands.

“It is indeed a pleasure to have you visit Tangneng First-class, but I really dislike what you’ve said today,”

“If you’re looking for trouble, I don’t mind giving you some company to play with,”

Li Xiaobai’s expression darkened as he guessed where these people came from.

“Hold your tongues and step aside, don’t speak!”

The henchmen wanted to say more, but Elder Chen stopped them.

This shop owner was not like most people; he couldn't be dealt with by normal means.

Resolving Xia Family First-Rate's urgent problem was of utmost importance, not the time to quibble over minor issues.

"Boss Ye, my servants don't know any better, I apologize on their behalf,"

"One hundred Medium Grade Spirit Stones, I'll buy the water in this pool, how about that?"

"Done!"

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A hundred Lower Grade Spirit Stones for a pool of foot-bathing water, Li Xiaobai felt like he was going to die of happiness in his heart.

This old man is really a piece of work, who knows what he was thinking.

Without a doubt, this must be someone sent by the Xia Family, probably because the cultivators had discovered the problem with their bathhouse being unable to cultivate.

So that's why these people were in such a rush to buy the bath water from Tangneng First-class.

Uncle Chen took out a Storage Bag, collected all the water from the pool, gave a slight bow, and then left with a few attendants.

Li Xiaobai chuckled, flipped his wrist, and the water from his Space Ring poured out, filling the pool once again.

This was water from the moat outside the city, available in as much quantity as needed.

"Woof, kid, your Lord Ergouzi has returned!"

"Your Lord Ergouzi is dead tired, doing good deeds is really not easy."

The scrappy dog from outside staggered in and somersaulted into the pool.

"This dog can talk?"

Situ Kong looked surprised, having known the scrappy dog for a while but never realizing it could talk.

The old beggar was also watching the dog with a playful gaze.

“Woof, you’re the dog, your whole family are dogs!”

“Your Lord Nicholas Ergouzi is a supreme being!”

Hearing Situ Kong’s words, Ergouzi immediately got riled up, leaving everyone rather speechless.

“What good deed did you do?”

Li Xiaobai asked, his confidence in the dog’s intelligence somewhat shaky.

“Next door at the Xia Family First-Rate, lots of people were throwing away unwanted clothes, such a waste, so Lord Ergouzi gave all those clothes to the poor.”

Ergouzi was proud as could be, believing it had done a tremendously good deed, helping hundreds of poor people with dozens of trips back and forth, exhausting itself in the process.

But the continuous voices of gratitude deeply satisfied its just heart.

“This... is indeed a great deed.”

Li Xiaobai’s expression was odd, considering the Xia Family First-Rate was a bathhouse, it’s likely that Ergouzi had taken away the garments of the customers.

That’s good, once the cultivators realize they’re about to lead a life bare of sufficient clothing, there’s bound to be an uproar, and this will definitely cause the Xia Family quite a bit of trouble.

This Justice Elixir is effective, very powerful!

“Robbing the rich to help the poor, very strong!”

“A dog of justice!”

The two old men also gave a thumbs-up, praising continuously, which Ergouzi enjoyed immensely, its vanity greatly satisfied.

“Ergouzi, within this city, the class division is clear, and families only consider their own interests, never looking at the bigger picture, leading to the poor becoming poorer and the rich richer, and conflicts are intensifying. Don’t you think we ought to take some action?”

Li Xiaobai started to lay on the sweet talk.

The righteous Ergouzi couldn't resist, "That's right, as messengers of justice, we must do something, kid, you call it, how do we do this!"

"We're going to use Tangneng First-class bathhouse to create a city of harmony and equality. I'll take responsibility for making Tangneng First-class strong and prosperous, and you're in charge of causing trouble, suppressing the competition."

"Ergouzi, this city needs you!"

"Don't worry, got it, Lord Ergouzi will ensure the common folk live well!"

The heart of justice wouldn't allow it to waste any more time in the bathhouse, so after a short rest, Ergouzi dashed out once more.

Meanwhile, a few figures walked in from outside.

"Boss, are you selling the bathhouse formula?"

Li Xiaobai hadn't seen these people before, but as soon as they opened their mouths, the familiar tune was there.

"No."

"Then can you sell this pool of water?"

"My price for half an hour's worth of water is a bargain, just 120 middle-grade Spirit Stones."

"Deal!"

The visitor made up their mind without any hesitation and promptly paid the Spirit Stones, took away the water from the bathhouse, and left.

Li Xiaobai's wrist flicked, and the pool was filled up again.

He was about to go mad with joy.

Ordinary water from two pools actually sold for the price of 200 middle-grade Spirit Stones; the Xia Family was indeed foolish enough.

"Boss, are we rich?"

"Old man, we're rich!"

Li Xiaobai stopped taking his bath and just waited for the Xia Family to come again to buy water.

He had already figured out their pattern; the magnitude of the Xia Family First-Rate's operation was too great, a single pool of water couldn't meet their demand, and they would definitely send different people to buy more, until they had filled up the Xia Family First-Rate.

As expected, a few minutes later, several more people entered the shop wanting to buy water.

Li Xiaobai welcomed them wholeheartedly, and after some bargaining, the transaction was settled at the price of 150 middle-grade Spirit Stones.

Throughout the entire afternoon and evening, Tangneng First-class saw dozens of groups of visitors, all coming to buy water, for a total income of over 3,000 middle-grade Spirit Stones.

Situ Yanyu collected Spirit Stones until her fingers trembled; such a large sum of money was beyond her wildest dreams.

This was more profitable than running a bathhouse!

"Basic operations, not worth showing off, how about a remuneration of 100 middle-grade Spirit Stones each for you and your granddaughter."

...

Meanwhile,

Within Xia Family First-Rate, Xia Jiuquan was leisurely sitting on a Taishi Chair sipping tea.

His good-for-nothing son had finally done something reliable, securing water from Tangneng First-class for his own usage, enough to appease the present wave of customers. This water could hold them over for a few days, giving the Xia Family enough time to crack its secrets.

In a couple of days, once the half-price promotion ended and they doubled the price, Xia Family First-Rate would definitely become a Money Tree with riches pouring in every day.

Xia Jiuquan was indulging in his pleasant dreams when suddenly, a knocking sound came from outside the door.

"It's terrible, Family Head, the water that Tangneng First-class sold to us is just ordinary river water, it can't help with cultivation at all, and the guests are making a huge uproar!"

"What are you saying!"



At that moment,

The bathhouse was already filled with curses.

The steward had sworn up and down that this water was exactly the same as Tangneng First-class's and that it could help with cultivation.

But after a long wait, there was absolutely no effect, and to make matters worse, the middle-grade cultivators could sniff out a sour stench of feet from the water.

This was unacceptable.

"Damn it, the Xia Family is too shameless, trying to fob us off with foot-washing water!"

"This water is clearly the bathwater you've used, it's an insult to us cultivators!"

"Even if you refund the Spirit Stones today, we won't let it go without an explanation, we must have an explanation!"

"Indeed, we need an explanation; does the Xia Family think they can bully people just because they are a big clan?"

"Brothers, it's settled then, this is definitely a shady establishment, let's smash it up!"

"I am the son of the Li Family, Li Ya, I'll take responsibility for any trouble, smash it for me!"

"I am the young miss of the Sun Family, Sun Xiya, smash this shady establishment for me!"

"I am the Young Master Wang..."

Inside Xia Family First-Rate there was chaos everywhere, with the offspring from several prominent families leading the charge in causing trouble and inciting other cultivators to tear apart this deceitful establishment.

They all came from prominent families, and had never been humiliated like this, even if it was the Xia Family, they wouldn't let it go peacefully today!

Chapter 73

Xia Jiuquan's head was spinning, and the faces of the other clan elders were similarly grim.

They had been duped, played by the owner of Tangneng First-class.

Who could have imagined that what the other party sold was nothing but ordinary water, utterly useless for cultivation?

“Uncle Chen, quickly take people back to the family and bring the initial stage Spirit Grass, no matter what, we cannot allow the family’s reputation to be tarnished. Let’s just get through tonight first!”

“Yes!”

In the bathhouse, a group of family elders rushed to the hall to pacify the crowd once again.

“Ladies and gentlemen, this situation was unexpected by us as well. To make amends, we have switched to overnight stays for everyone’s bath time. Our steward has already gone to transport the Spiritual Medicine from the family. In a quarter-hour, it will be added to the bathhouse.”

“We ask for your trust in the Xia Family once more!”

Xia Jiuquan’s sincerity was substantial, as the noise inside the bathhouse gradually subsided. Twenty-five Lower Grade Spirit Stones had been exchanged for a large number of Xia Family’s cultivation resources – on balance, they were in profit.

The Cultivation World is, after all, a circle that prioritizes strength and benefits.

Since the Xia Family was willing to pay a hefty compensation, they were willing to wait a little longer. After all, overnight stays were now available, so what harm was there in waiting?

“The Xia Family is a prestigious clan, but these tactics are not commendable. Does the Family Head think that by taking the clothing of my daughter, you can keep her here?”

A cold voice drifted out from the women’s bathhouse.

“That voice... Miss Wang of the Wang Family, Wang Ruoxian?”

“Wasn’t Immortal Wang studying at Xiao Cheng Sect? How did she come back?”

“Unexpectedly, Immortal Wang is also here in this bathhouse. Indeed, bathing is the best way of communication; the owner did not deceive me!”

Xia Jiuquan was startled at the voice; he recognized it, and did not expect Miss Wang to be here as well. With the backing of the Xiao Cheng Sect, she was definitely not someone they could afford to offend.

“What do you mean by this, Immortal Wang? Our establishment does not have the habit of taking the personal belongings of our guests.”

“Yet, more than half of the clothes belonging to the cultivators present have mysteriously disappeared. How would you explain that?”

The cold voice came again.

At the same time, the entire women’s bathhouse erupted into screams of shock.

“Who took my clothes!”

“My personal garments are gone; I can’t show my face anymore!”

“Xia Family, you are so despicable. Once I return, my Liu Family will certainly draw a clear line with you!”

It was only now that the cultivators realized that indeed, their clothes were gone.

The ground was bare, not even a sock remained.

Xia Jiuquan was also dumbfounded; a thief had actually entered the bathhouse and stolen the clothes of more than half of the cultivators.

Dammit, who did this!

“Patriarch Xia, I have no interest in any Spiritual Medicine; I only want my clothing back.”

“Don’t worry, Immortal Wang, I will send someone to find them, oh no, to buy them!”

...

Inside Tangneng First-class, Ergouzi sneaked back once again.

“Woof, kid, there’s a big fish!”

“What big fish?”

“The Xia Family is transporting Spiritual Medicine to Xia Family First-Rate, ten whole carts of it. Such resources should be shared, so the common folk can also benefit!”

“Such good fortune!”

Li Xiaobai’s eyes lit up; this was an excellent opportunity to make a fortune. With ten carts of resources, they could probably exchange them for a hefty sum of Spirit Stones.

The Xia Family was genuinely generous. No need to say, this required action.

“Yan Yu, watch the door. I’ll be right back.”

The scrappy dog was very familiar with the surrounding terrain, taking the shortest routes.

Half an hour later.

Carriage after carriage appeared in his line of sight; these carriages were larger than ordinary ones, each pulled by two horses.

“

The two squads of people proceeded with their guard duty.

“How about it, can we rob them?” Ergouzi asked.

“Standard operation, Drunken Immortal!”

With the skill at hand, there was no need for them to show themselves, as the rich aroma of wine wafted through the air, filling the streets with the scent of strong liquor in an instant.

The smell of alcohol drifted through the area, intoxicating all living creatures, whether humans, horses, or other beings, all of them collapsing to the ground weak and with a blank mind.

“Not bad, kid, hurry and collect the Spiritual Medicine.”

Ergouzi was excited, his head heated up, and he charged out, eager to fleece them.

Unfortunately, he didn’t make it two steps before he too collapsed, out of dog’s business.

“Heh heh, it’s all mine now!”

With a wave of his hand, Li Xiaobai gathered all ten carts of Spirit Grass into his Space Ring, which upon inspection, appeared to be Lower Grade Spiritual Medicine.

Selling them later would also be quite a fortune.

Drawing his sword, the Sword Qi crisscrossed the street, leaving behind several large characters on the ground: Nicholas Ergouzi, teaching you a lesson!

After robbing them blind and leaving without any witnesses, it was a perfect crime.

Li Xiaobai might be pleased, but Tangneng First-class was in complete turmoil. The herbs from Xia Jiuquan were the ultimate means to secure customers, but to their surprise, someone had intercepted them midway.

Many cultivators had waited a long time and still saw no sign of the herbs, and the stewards had also disappeared.

They finally understood they had been duped.

“No use talking about it, go and bring some clothes for the Immortals. When we get back, immediately report today’s incident to the Family Head. I’ve taken note of this grudge.”

“Indeed, we were scammed for no reason, and I can’t swallow this bitter pill.”

Within the Xia Family First-Rate, in the Family Head’s room.

The higher-ups were all gathered.

“No need to keep supplying materials. Xia Family First-Rate will temporarily suspend operations starting tomorrow. I’ll explain things to the other families personally.”

“Find out who Nicholas Ergouzi is, daring to rob the Xia Family of its Spiritual Medicine. He must pay the price!”

Xia Jiuquan was enraged. The consecutive setbacks since the opening of Xia Family First-Rate had caused considerable losses to the Xia Family.

Whether it was the expenses of purchasing water from Tangneng First-class, losing resources in the robbery, or the renovation costs for Xia Family First-Rate, the loss amounted to over ten thousand mid-grade Spirit Stones when tallied up.

Even for the well-established Xia Family, it was no small expenditure.

The most crucial point was that someone in the city had quietly stolen the Xia Family’s goods. This was not something an ordinary cultivator could do; it suggested the shadows of several major families behind the scenes.

Could it be a show of force against him?

“So, about this Xia Family First-Rate...”

Xia Chuan ventured to ask.

“Unfilial son, it’s all because of your misinformation that the Xia Family’s reputation has been dragged through the mud. If you weren’t my own flesh and blood, you would have been beheaded already!”

Xia Jiuquan was furious, and the furniture in the room was instantly reduced to dust.

The young masters of the Xia Family didn’t dare to take a single loud breath.

“Xia Family First-Rate will cease operations. Tomorrow I will personally visit Tangneng First-class and meet with that owner to see exactly who they are!”

“Also, your younger brother is coming back. You all should make sure to receive him well!”

...

The next morning,

A large group of cultivators gathered in front of Tangneng First-class. After the debacle at Xia Family First-Rate, everyone in the city had learned of the bathhouse’s miraculous nature.

Simply bathing there could enhance one’s cultivation level, a feat even the Xia Family couldn’t mimic. This shop was incredible.

However, when the cultivators saw the new prices posted on the wall, they were all stunned.

Half an hour for one mid-grade Spirit Stone, has the owner gone mad?

“Owner, you’re not running a scam as well, are you?”

Chapter 74 – Chapter 74 Family Heads Gather

“Small business, prices absolutely fair.”

“It’s just a pity that all of you left yesterday. I was actually ready to offer a free one-month VIP membership to our loyal customers, but in the end, only a few people enjoyed this privilege.”

“Such a shame.”

Li Xiaobai shook his head and sighed, feeling a sense of triumph in his heart.

Yesterday you disregarded me, today I am out of your reach.

Only I knew how to enhance cultivation levels through soaking in the baths; I had monopolized this business.

Riding on the heat of the Xia Family First-Rate incident, the reputation of Tangneng First-class had been established, and creating branches in the future would surely bring in a hefty sum every day.

Popularity is really unpredictable. One second you're on the receiving end, and in the blink of an eye, you become the sought-after — truly mysterious.

“Monthly VIP membership!”

“There are really people soaking in the baths inside!”

“What good luck, to have gotten a monthly VIP. If they continue to soak for a month, their cultivation could jump several levels, right?”

The crowd became restless, watching the few people inside the bathhouse enjoying themselves. The cultivators regretted their earlier decisions; why couldn't they resist the temptation and abandon the boss?

The boss must be angry, expressing his dissatisfaction in this manner!

The price of a single medium-grade Spirit Stone was indeed expensive for a Loose Cultivator, but for a family's disciples, it was still affordable.

A medium-grade Spirit Stone is an important resource for cultivation. Using it to exchange for access to the bathhouse was a much higher cost-performance.

Without much hesitation, the family disciples paid up cheerfully and began to soak.

Still the same familiar faces, still the same familiar aromas.

Seeing this, the other cultivators also gritted their teeth, paid the Spiritual Stones, and went in. There were only so many spots, and if you were late, they'd all be taken.

Besides, whether it's Spiritual Stones or soaking in the baths, both are for cultivation. Nothing to feel heartache over.

“The Xia Family Patriarch has arrived!”

The crowd parted automatically as a middle-aged man in a white garment entered the store.

His face was stern, with sharp features; his brows emanated an air of dominance, carrying an aura of authority that did not even require anger.

This was the first time Li Xiaobai had seen the Xia Family Patriarch. Although they had not met before, the disputes had been incessant.

“The Wang Family Patriarch has arrived!”

“The Li Family Patriarch has arrived!”

“The Zhang Family Patriarch has arrived!”

A few more calls rang out, and the crowd conscientiously moved aside. Today was a good day, with all the major family heads gathered here, evidently wanting to uncover the secrets of Tangneng First-class.

There could be a good show to watch.

“I am Xia Jiuquan, the Patriarch of the Xia Family. Greetings to all.”

“Half an hour, one lower-grade Spirit Stone. Small business, no credit.”

Li Xiaobai looked amused; Xia Jiuquan? There’s no shortage of unusual names these days, as if he’s not dying fast enough.

“You want to charge me too?”

Xia Jiuquan looked surprised. Which shop in town wouldn’t want to curry favor with him? Yet this boss actually wanted to charge him Spirit Stones.

“Want to soak without Spirit Stones?”

“Don’t delay my business; there’s a queue behind you!” Li Xiaobai said dismissively, having no sympathy for the Xia Family.

“Exactly, the old man has no shame at this age, trying to have a royal bath for free?”

“Without Spirit Stones, don’t wander around here. I heard the Xia Family also started a bathhouse to make a quick buck, but unfortunately, they even lost their underpants.”

“It’s truly humiliating. If I were you, I would have found a deserted place to end it all by now.”

Behind him, a group of Family Heads mocked and sneered without any mercy.

These were deeply entrenched families within the city, endlessly engaged in both open and secret rivalry. Although the Xia Family had extensive connections, they wouldn’t be too humble either.



These Family Heads had known about Tangneng First-class a few days prior but, after testing, they believed the bathhouse water to be nothing extraordinary, so they paid it no heed.

But unexpectedly, the Xia Family actually came up with Xia Family First-Rate, aiming to emulate others in opening a bathhouse to make money.

It was only at that moment that many of the Family Heads realized that Tangneng First-class indeed had an effect on increasing cultivator's cultivation levels.

They all wanted to see what skills this owner, who had made the Xia Family suffer a setback, truly possessed.

“Merely a Lower Grade Spirit Stone is but a fence for a latrine in my Xia Family.”

Xia Jiuquan kept a cold face as he threw out a few Lower Grade Spirit Stones, enough to rent the whole place for a day.

“Such a braggart, why don't you ascend to the heavens?”

Li Xiaobai muttered a few words and collected the Spirit Stones.

The other Family Heads also rented the place for an entire day, seizing the opportunity to thoroughly research this bathwater.

This was still their first encounter with bathing. As Family Heads at the full circle of the Golden Core Stage, they felt their Golden Cores within their Dantians trembling as soon as they immersed themselves in the water.

The bottlenecks that had always troubled them seemed to have a faint sign of breaking through.

Spiritual Energy surged wildly within their bodies, growing incessantly, surprising the Family Heads with eyes wide open and faces filled with disbelief.

“It turns out what the juniors reported was all true. This pool truly has the effect of enhancing one's cultivation level!”

“Moreover, the effect is significant, even we can feel such a strong boost.”

“Such a great fortune!”

Greedily inhaling the steaming vapor of the pool, the Family Heads fully entered the state of cultivation.

“Newbies will be newbies, looking totally unaccustomed to the ways of the world.”

The old beggar curled his lips, these cultivators were treating the bathhouse like a cultivation ground without understanding the pleasure of bathing, wasting such a fine resource.

“Bark!”

“Kid, you actually sabotaged Lord Ergouzi, surely you’re looking to monopolize…”

Ergouzi woke up ranting and raving.

Li Xiaobai quickly covered its mouth; now that all the Family Heads of the city were gathered, if his little actions were exposed, he probably wouldn’t be able to escape the consequences.

“This is called strategic investment. Only when Tangneng First-class grows big and strong can it have a say and help more common people to solve employment issues.”

“Ergouzi, you did really well earlier, keep it up, the city is counting on you!”

“Bark! Lord Ergouzi is the embodiment of justice, those nobles are Ergouzi’s to deal with!”

After a round of coaxing, Ergouzi’s sense of justice was invoked once again, and with a swish, it darted out of the house.

Li Xiaobai sighed; the Elixirs were truly powerful. Ergouzi now truly felt uncomfortable if it didn’t do good deeds every day. With just a bit of guidance, it could be easily bamboozled.

Within the pool, the Family Heads were roused from their meditative state by Ergouzi’s noise, faces filled with disbelief.

Something that could aid those at the full circle of the Golden Core Stage must certainly be an exotic treasure. Yet, why couldn’t they detect even the slightest bit of Spiritual Energy fluctuation in the water?

No matter how one looked at it, it seemed to be just ordinary foot-bathing water.

After taking a spoonful and tasting it carefully, a familiar flavor spread throughout their mouths, and the Family Heads’ expressions turned bitter, halting their futile attempts.

“Why did you think of opening a bathhouse in the city, Boss? Wouldn’t it be better to directly open a store selling cultivation materials?”

“If this water were to be sold, wouldn’t it make a killing?”

A Family Head cautiously inquired.

“Well, bathing is just bathing. To consider it merely as a means for cultivation is far too one-dimensional. The culture behind it is profound and intricate; you will gradually understand.”

Chapter 75: – Chapter 75 Opening Chain Stores

“The boss seems quite open-minded, having such a beautiful waitress is a fortune indeed,”

the Wang Family Patriarch tried to insinuate familiarity.

“To tell the truth, Liangchen is face-blind and can’t really tell who’s beautiful and who’s not. Liangchen chose Yan Yu as a waitress not because she’s beautiful, for I truly don’t know whether she is or not,”

Li Xiaobai said indifferently, with his hands behind his back.

Inside the bathhouse, the air was charged with tension, and the various family heads were somewhat confused. What kind of response was this?

The owner doesn’t play by the rules!

“Has the boss ever considered expanding the operational scale? The current Tangneng First-Class is too small to satisfy the demands of the city’s cultivators!”

the Li Family Patriarch continued to inquire. Their ultimate goal this time was to get their hands on the formula for Tangneng First-Class.

Having accurately described the miraculous effects of the bathhouse, and having experienced it firsthand, if they could control this resource,

amassing wealth and cultivating the pillars of their families would be a cinch.

“Of course, are the esteemed family heads interested in investing?” Li Xiaobai said with a chuckle.

“I believe Boss Ye has heard about the popularity of Xia Family First-Rate. Why not merge your bathhouse into Xia Family First-Rate? In the future, the profits of Xia Family First-Rate will be divided between Boss Ye and us, sixty-forty. How about it?”

Xia Jiuquan said bluntly.

“Xia Family First-Rate has already gone bankrupt, and you still want to ride on the coattails of my Tangneng First-Class?”

Li Xiaobai said with a strange look, infuriating Xia Jiuquan with his words.

“Tangneng First-Class has no formula. The enhancement of cultivation level is all thanks to my wholehearted dedication to serving the people. The water in this bathhouse is just ordinary water. If there’s something you fancy, feel free to take it with you.”

“If you really want to work together sincerely, then just invest directly in the shop,”

Li Xiaobai said, speaking the absolute truth. If discussing a formula, it could only be made personally by him.

“Boss Ye must be joking. This Tangneng First-Class is a blessing for the cultivators, a place that can benefit all the cultivators in the city. For the sake of the people, it should rightly be contributed,”

Xia Jiuquan said.

“Correct, it’s about benefiting the entire city’s populace, not just a matter for Boss Ye alone. It would be more secure to let us manage it together,”

“Yes, yes, if we run it together, a sixty-forty profit split is still a huge profit for you, Boss Ye.”

“...”

The family heads clamored, each trying to persuade him.

Li Xiaobai was speechless. These people clearly wanted to snatch away the secret recipe of Tangneng First-Class, yet they also wanted to take the moral high ground, using the welfare of the people as an excuse to make him hand over the formula willingly.

They were exceedingly crafty.

“Didn’t you hear Boss Ye say no? Just soak honestly in your baths, and scam when you’re done, before you bring trouble upon yourselves,”

a few black-robed figures spoke faintly from a corner of the pool.

They were three Evil Cultivators who had been with Li Xiaobai all along. Ever since they found out Li Xiaobai knew Zhang Rui, they had changed their ways, serving him obediently with good words, and barely even dealing with the Xia Family anymore.

“Mr. Zuo, you guys...”

Xia Jiuquan was surprised, not expecting to encounter these old acquaintances.

“Boss Ye is our brother. Bullying him is bullying us. The rest is up to you!”

“Exactly! Get lost, quickly. Without any sincerity and spouting nothing but crap, even the beggars can’t stand it,”

the straw-cloaked man also cursed and said.

“You are...”

Xia Jiuquan felt uneasy and dared not take another look at the straw-cloaked man, intimidated by his presence. The straw-cloaked man’s appearance reminded him of someone.

Someone who should not exist in this world.

“I am who I am, a different kind of firework. Don’t you dare use your power to oppress others.”

“Of course, Xia here has no intention of bullying others with power,”

Xia Jiuquan stealthily tugged at the sleeves of the other family heads, signaling them not to act rashly.

Although the other families were puzzled, they also understood that Xia Jiuquan was not one to act without reason and silently agreed to let him take the lead in the discussion.

“What are your thoughts, gentlemen?” Li Xiaobai asked.

“We are willing to invest and help Boss Ye acquire the shops. As for the profits from the business, how about splitting them fifty-fifty?”

“One-nine, you are only providing the location.”

“That’s too little. We also need to spend resources to acquire the shops. Four-six!”

“Two-eight, I am the one managing the shops, and you haven’t done anything.”

“Three-seven, we can’t go any lower.”

“Deal!”

Right then, the various family heads started issuing orders, quickly gathering people and buying up a large number of shops in the city, ready to transform them into bathhouses.

Li Xiaobai was pleasantly surprised; with the opening of the branches, wealth would start rolling in. The time to become rich and prosperous was approaching.

After the family heads had departed, taking a bath with one's juniors still felt somewhat odd.

Following the family heads, Li Xiaobai quickly surveyed the city, buying up all the shops suitable for transformation into bathhouses.

The System exchanged resources and arranged the venues quickly, and luxurious bathhouses were built in no time. The family heads watched, dumbfounded; it was their first time seeing someone stuff so much water and bricks into a Space Ring.

However, they still hadn't uncovered any secrets about the water source.

In one day, dozens of new Tangneng First-class shops appeared in the city, with various promotional slogans popping up everywhere, drawing in many cultivators and commoners.

Under Li Xiaobai's direction, the bathhouses included a special area for the poor. Ordinary families could enjoy a free bath for half an hour each day, and if they wanted more time, they could earn it by helping out in the bathhouses.

This was considered a benefit for the ordinary people, and the popularity of the new shops could be easily imagined once they opened.

That evening, Ergouzi returned, looking somewhat panicked.

"Boy, quickly check if Lord Ergouzi has been injured!"

"What have you been doing outside?"

Li Xiaobai purchased a pill that healed injuries and tossed it to Ergouzi.

"Lord Ergouzi encountered a bandit den and battled them for hundreds of rounds, barely losing!"

Ergouzi stood up straight and said indifferently with his hands behind his back.

Li Xiaobai was covered in metaphorical black lines; you didn't look like this just a moment ago.

“What did those people look like?”

“They all wore black robes; I couldn’t see clearly. But when they made their move, Lord Ergouzi saw a bloody aura. They must be Evil Cultivators without a doubt.”

“Where did you encounter them?”

“Outside the city, in a small forest. They had a portrait in their hands, seemingly searching for someone. At a glance, they didn’t seem like any good sort.”

Li Xiaobai pondered. These Evil Cultivators were likely searching for him. Given the straw-cloaked man’s influence and to avoid extraneous complications, it would be best to lay low in the city.

In a few days, the family disciples would travel together to the Holy Demon Sect for training. At that time, he could go with them, and bring along those three idiotic Evil Cultivators as well. This way, it would be less likely for the Evil Cultivators outside the city to target him.

He checked the System panel.

[Defensive Power: Indestructible Golden Body, Sixth Turn (23000/60000) upgradable.]

There were still four Dragon Serpent Fruits inside the Space Ring; he swallowed them all.

[Attribute Points +5000...]

[Attribute Points: 20000.]

All points to defense!

[Defensive Power: Indestructible Golden Body, Sixth Turn (43000/60000) upgradable.]

Only one step away from upgrading, he would soon be rid of the Blood Demon Corrosion.

Li Ya came over with a cheerful expression, “Boss Ye, the young talents of the city are holding a gathering tomorrow. Would you like to join? Miss Yan Yu has already agreed to go.”