

Sect Master's Immortal Journey

#Chapter 28: Stall - Read Sect Master's Immortal Journey Chapter 28: Stall

Chapter 28: Stall

In the past, as a key disciple cultivated by Taiyi Sect, Meng Zhang was only provided with ten jin of spirit rice per month. However, when he became the Sect Master of Taiyi Sect, there were too few disciples in the sect. To quickly improve the cultivation base of the disciples, he ordered a relaxation of the supply of spirit rice.

During this rare outing, Meng Zhang indulged himself a little and ordered a table of spirit dishes at Forest Spring Watch's restaurant. The chefs under Forest Spring Watch's command were indeed skilled, turning simple ingredients into exquisite delicacies that whetted one's appetite.

After enjoying the spirit dishes, Meng Zhang sat in the room of the restaurant and circulated his true qi, refining the absorbed spiritual energy. Since it was Forest Spring Watch's territory, he didn't worry about being disturbed.

Meng Zhang's refining speed was fast, and all the absorbed spiritual energy merged into his true qi. The remaining undigested spiritual energy from the consumed spirit dishes would slowly release and nourish his physical body in the following days.

For Refining Qi stage cultivators, absorbing spiritual energy through consuming spirit dishes was more effective than directly absorbing external spiritual energy. The saying goes, "Nutrition from food is better than that from medicine." Long-term consumption of spirit dishes not only provided sufficient spiritual energy for the body to absorb but also avoided issues like pill toxin residues and drug resistance that could occur from taking pills.

Of course, if one ate spirit dishes for every meal every day, even the cheapest ones, it would be a burden for an ordinary cultivator to afford.

Leaving the restaurant, Meng Zhang wandered around Singing Sand City's market, which was bustling with activity under the nighttime lights. Most of the shops wouldn't continue their business at night, leading to a somewhat deserted atmosphere in most areas. However, the northwest corner of the market, where Meng Zhang was heading, became more lively.

The northwest corner was known for hosting the Ghost Market, a famous place in the surrounding area for many years. The Ghost Market originally referred to a market operated by Netherworld ghosts. In most places, it was equivalent to a night market.

The Ghost Market had no permanent shops; all were temporary stalls. These stalls were a mixed bag, with goods of varying quality, and most were counterfeit. Occasionally, there would be news of someone striking it lucky and obtaining valuable treasures from the market.

The management of the Ghost Market by Singing Sand City was somewhat lenient. As long as there was no blatant robbery or violence, the authorities generally turned a blind eye to its operations. As for those who bought counterfeit goods and were deceived, they could only blame themselves. After all, all transactions were conducted on a cash-and-carry basis, and once the deal was done, there was no going back.

Even so, the Ghost Market remained lively and bustling every night.

Following the crowd, Meng Zhang reached his destination—a vast and empty square that was now filled with stalls, leaving only a few narrow passages for pedestrians to pass through. The Ghost Market had some dim lights, making it appear rather gloomy. If it weren't for cultivators entering and exiting, it would be challenging to see the ground clearly.

Meng Zhang walked among the stalls and eventually found the right targets. He was looking for damaged magic tools that he could use with the Blood Refining Martyr Art. This spell had proven useful, helping Meng Zhang drive away Zhao Dong, a Refining Qi stage cultivator from Zhao Family.

Compared to talismans, the Blood Refining Martyr Art had much greater power. For example, a Refining Qi stage Talisman Master could create a First Rank high-grade talisman, which would have the power equivalent to their regular attacks. On the other hand, if Meng Zhang used the Blood Refining Martyr Art to refine a First Rank high-grade magic tool, the explosion's power would be comparable to a Refining Qi stage cultivator's full-force attack.

However, the Blood Refining Martyr Art had its limitations. First, the success rate of refining a First Rank magic tool during the Refining Qi stage was relatively high. But as the rank of the magic tool increased, it became much more challenging to refine successfully. Second Rank magic tools were challenging to refine, and for Third Rank magic tools, unless a miracle occurred, it was almost impossible to succeed.

As for damaged magic tools, they could also be used for blood refinement, but they couldn't be severely damaged. It was best if most of the structure remained intact.

For Meng Zhang, the Blood Refining Martyr Art was a powerful spell that he could use as a last resort. With his current Refining Qi fifth level cultivation base, he was much stronger than many cultivators at the same level, but he was still just a mid-stage Refining Qi cultivator. By using the Blood Refining Martyr Art to refine several First Rank high-grade magic tools, he could unleash attacks equivalent to those of a Refining Qi stage cultivator.

Using fully intact magic tools for blood refinement would be too extravagant for Meng Zhang; he couldn't afford the consumption of spiritual stones. Hence, he had come to the stalls in the Ghost Market to buy cheap items.

Meng Zhang used his Deception Breaking Eye to see through the external appearances of the items on the stalls and discern their true qualities. He found a small broken sword, its tip broken, hilt damaged, and the blade rusty. After seeing that the sword was usable, Meng Zhang approached the stall owner to negotiate the price.

Using his Mind Reading Divine Ability, he understood the owner's thoughts clearly and offered ten low-grade spirit stones for the item. The owner's bottom line was nine low-grade spirit stones, so Meng Zhang's offer made him feel uneasy. He had initially thought that Meng Zhang, with his young appearance, was an easy target to swindle.

However, he hadn't expected that Meng Zhang was quite experienced in bargaining.

In the end, Meng Zhang successfully bought the magic tool for ten low-grade spirit stones. With his Deception Breaking Eye, he could easily see through any counterfeits on the stalls. With the help of Mind Reading, he could also get a rough understanding of the stall owner's thoughts. No matter how eloquent the stall owners were in trying to attract customers, Meng Zhang wouldn't be deceived.

After a few more rounds, Meng Zhang spent another eight low-grade spirit stones to purchase a damaged white bead. Having roamed around the Ghost Market for a while, Meng Zhang was about to leave when he unintentionally glanced at an item on a distant stall. His footsteps paused for a moment before he casually walked towards that stall.

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Chapter 29: Bargaining

Meng Zhang slowly approached the stall, glanced at the goods being sold, and casually picked up a mountain-like magic tool. "This broken thing is supposed to be Thousand Jun Peak? It's in such a sorry state, and you dare to sell it?" Meng Zhang said bluntly without any reservations.

Thousand Jun Peak was a type of magic tool that relied on its weight for power. The main material used in crafting Thousand Jun Peak was the earth attribute Thousand Dust Sand, which was relatively common in the Endless Sea of Sand. As a result, various grades and styles of Thousand Jun Peaks were considered relatively mainstream magic tools in the Endless Sea of Sand.

The usage of Thousand Jun Peak was straightforward; the user only needed to activate it and fiercely strike down on the target's head. As the name suggested, it was said to carry the force of a thousand jun (a unit of weight). Of course, this was an exaggerated claim. Even a Second Rank Thousand Jun Peak would not possess the force of twenty

thousand jin. A First Rank Thousand Jun Peak could generate at most 2,000-3,000 jin of force.

"Dear customer, this Thousand Jun Peak is definitely not junk; it's just a bit old. With a simple repair, it can be used for sacrifice again," the stall owner tried to talk his way out without shame.

"Do you take me for a fool? This piece of trash is broken in half, and you call it just a bit old!" Meng Zhang pointed at the broken upper half of the Thousand Jun Peak and cursed loudly.

"To tell you the truth, I am an apprentice tool refiner. I can tell whether any magic tool is useful with just one look," Meng Zhang confidently claimed.

"This Thousand Jun Peak is already completely ruined; it's not worth repairing at all."

"I'm buying this thing just to practice my skills and try to extract the Thousand Dust Sand inside it."

The stall owner was momentarily taken aback. He realized he was dealing with someone who understood the craft, so there was no use using the usual tricks to deceive him.

Among loose cultivators, there were few tool refiners. Generally, only some larger sects and families would have the means to cultivate tool refiners. "Enough with the nonsense; give me an honest price. If we can agree, I'll buy this piece of junk; if not, I'll walk away without wasting another word," Meng Zhang continued his act.

"Dear young master, this Thousand Jun Peak, aside from anything else, is quite heavy. If you extract the materials, you can get at least five or six jin of Thousand Dust Sand."

"On the current market, one jin of Thousand Dust Sand costs at least ten low-grade spirit stones."

"Since we've hit it off, I'm willing to make a loss. I'll sell this Thousand Jun Peak to you for fifty low-grade spirit stones, which is the cost price."

The stall owner's face twitched as he spoke.

Having listened to him, Meng Zhang didn't hesitate and pretended to turn to leave.

"Young master, don't go. If the price doesn't suit you, let's continue negotiating," the stall owner hurriedly tried to stop him.

"You really take me for a fool? If you can extract more than three jin of Thousand Dust Sand from this junk, I'll swallow everything on your stall," Meng Zhang retorted.

"And, do you think extracting materials is something anyone can do?"

"I am an apprentice tool refiner. If I really have to extract this broken thing, it will require a considerable amount of effort and resources."

"If it weren't for the sake of honing my skills, I wouldn't be interested in this piece of junk at all."

Meng Zhang played the role of an arrogant and knowledgeable apprentice tool refiner, portraying himself quite convincingly. Apprentice tool refiners didn't have the ability to refine tools independently; they mainly assisted their masters or extracted low-grade materials. Meng Zhang's argument had no loopholes.

A heated bargaining session followed. Though Meng Zhang knew from Mind Reading that the stall owner's bottom line was twenty-five low-grade spirit stones, he pretended not to know and feared that setting the price too high might arouse suspicion. He wanted to ensure the deal would go through, so he put in a lot of effort. Finally, he managed to buy the Thousand Jun Peak for thirty low-grade spirit stones.

After storing the Thousand Jun Peak in his storage bag, Meng Zhang suppressed his surprise and quickly left the place. The true value of the Thousand Jun Peak was far more than thirty low-grade spirit stones; even three hundred wouldn't be enough.

As Meng Zhang was about to leave the Ghost Market, a young man who seemed shifty approached him hurriedly. Thinking that the man might pose a threat, Meng Zhang halted and scanned him while using Mind Reading to read his thoughts.

"I see," Meng Zhang realized the man's intentions and relaxed. However, he became interested in the man's merchandise.

"Dear customer, it seems you are quite generous. Would you like to buy something special?" The young man, who appeared to be in his twenties, had a seemingly honest face with a trace of cunningness that occasionally showed through.

Though not short, he appeared relatively clean and spirited, exuding the liveliness typical of young people. However, his suspicious movements made him somewhat unlikable.

"What special thing?" Meng Zhang asked knowingly. The young man looked around before leading Meng Zhang to a secluded corner not far away. Then, he took out a jade bottle and opened it, releasing a refreshing medicinal fragrance. Inside the jade bottle were several pills.

"So, you're selling privately made pills," Meng Zhang seemed dismissive.

In the Cultivation World, there used to be many Alchemists in various sects and even among loose cultivators. They freely circulated the pills they crafted in the Cultivation World, leading to a large-scale demonic calamity many years ago. Major sects paid a high price to quell the disaster.

Afterward, to avoid a repeat of history, pills with unknown origins were no longer allowed to be circulated in the Cultivation World. Each region in the Cultivation World established a powerful sect to govern the Alchemists, control the distribution of pills, and more. Alchemists who weren't certified by these sects were forbidden from selling their pills privately.

In the surrounding regions, the Alchemist Guild led by Flying Swan Sect monopolized the supply of pills. Only forces like Twin Success Valley and Forest Spring Watch could join the Alchemist Guild.

As a result, the cultivation world saw a rise in the clandestine sale of privately made pills.

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Chapter 30: Taking advantage of a mistake

As per the usual propaganda of the Alchemist Guild, most of the privately made pills sold in the market have issues like insufficient medicinal properties and excessively strong pill toxins. In some cases, these pills are even deadly. Moreover, there is an abundance of scammers who claim to sell pills but actually offer fake ones. Reports of unfortunate victims falling for such tricks are not uncommon.

While it's true that the Alchemist Guild has raised valid concerns about these problems, it's an exaggeration to claim that all privately made pills are faulty. The officially recognized pills certified by the Alchemist Guild are often too expensive for impoverished cultivators to afford. Compared to that, privately made pills are more affordable.

In the Cultivation World, pills serve various purposes, not just for assisting in cultivation and enhancing one's Cultivation Base. In reality, the majority of pill consumption is for healing and detoxification. Where there is demand, there will always be a market. Regardless of how the Alchemist Guild tries to suppress it, privately made pills will continue to exist, and wild Alchemists will persist.

As the young man approached Meng Zhang, the latter read his thoughts using Mind Reading. Being a small sect like Taiyi Sect, they also had a need for various pills. If they could buy suitable pills at a lower cost, it would be a great advantage. Upon hearing Meng Zhang mention privately made pills, the young man smiled and politely introduced himself, "You must be Taiyi Sect's new Sect Master, Meng Zhang. I'm Shi Weiming, just a humble merchant."

"I wonder if Sect Master Meng is interested in the goods I have," he added.

Both Meng Zhang and Shi Weiming were at the Mid Refining Qi stage in their Cultivation Base. Meng Zhang's Divine Ability, Mind Reading, couldn't penetrate too deeply into Shi Weiming's thoughts, but it gave him some surface-level insights.

Even though Taiyi Sect was a small sect, they had dealt with them before. The former Sect Master was Daoist Profound Spirit, and they had pleasant exchanges a few times.

"As for the variety of goods, we have almost everything commonly found in the market. If you are concerned about the quality, you can inspect the goods yourself," Shi Weiming said, having previously gathered information about Taiyi Sect and observed Meng Zhang for some time before taking the initiative to approach him.

He handed Meng Zhang two bottles of pills. After a careful examination using his Divine Ability, Deception Breaking Eye, and his knowledge of pills, Meng Zhang concluded that the pills were indeed of good quality.

"If all the goods are of this quality and the prices are reasonable, I'm interested in purchasing several bottles," Meng Zhang responded straightforwardly.

Both parties were sincere in conducting the trade, and after some negotiations, they reached a preliminary agreement. Shi Weiming provided Meng Zhang with a list of pills he could offer, and Meng Zhang chose the types and quantities he needed.

They agreed to meet in Singing Sand City the next evening for the trade—cash in hand, goods in exchange.

After the agreement, Shi Weiming quickly disappeared into the darkness.

Meng Zhang had pursued this trade not only to acquire relatively cheaper pills but also to establish a channel of communication, hopefully forming a connection with the Alchemist behind Shi Weiming. One never knew when he might need the Alchemist's assistance. Some far-sighted sects and families would even invest in supporting Alchemists, even if they couldn't join the Alchemist Guild officially. Such deals might incur losses, but it was worth it to have a reliable source of pills when needed.

Meng Zhang understood this reasoning and hoped that Taiyi Sect could have its own Alchemist eventually. However, such matters couldn't be rushed. At present, Taiyi Sect had to focus on surviving before considering anything else.

After leaving the Ghost Market, Meng Zhang visited some shops that were still open in the market and bought several types of medicinal materials before returning to his inn.

He had chosen a private courtyard room, which was a bit expensive but provided enough privacy. With the inn's token, he activated the protective formation in the

courtyard. After confirming that the protective formation was not designed to monitor the guests inside, he felt relieved. Forest Spring Watch seemed to have done a good job in this regard, explaining their good reputation.

Compared to the domineering Twin Success Valley, Forest Spring Watch's approach, both in style and policy, appeared more gentle and benevolent.

Having checked that the protective formation had no major issues, Meng Zhang went back to his room. He first took out the Thousand Jun Peak he had bought earlier.

The Thousand Jun Peak was a magic tool resembling a small mountain peak, severely damaged, with the upper part completely missing, leaving only the lower half, which was also covered in scars, appearing as if it could fall apart at any moment.

Ignoring the condition, Meng Zhang carefully prepared the medicinal solution. He had purchased various medicinal materials from different shops, and the recipe for the preparation came from the Trial Ground.

After a busy session, Meng Zhang successfully prepared a pot of dark green medicinal solution. He applied the medicinal solution to the surface of the Thousand Jun Peak and infused it with true qi, gently shaking it.

After a while, the surface of the Thousand Jun Peak began to shed layer by layer. Meng Zhang performed his actions with extreme caution, afraid of damaging the magic tool.

After about half an hour of effort, Meng Zhang finally succeeded. The outer shell of the Thousand Jun Peak had been completely stripped away, revealing a faint golden metal lump inside. The surface of the lump was covered in dense and intricate runes, many of which were damaged and no longer effective.

"Sure enough, there's a treasure like Hundred Refinements Fine Gold hidden inside. I wonder which fool of a tool refiner crafted this Thousand Jun Peak?"

The Thousand Jun Peak had clearly been around for quite some time, and it was unclear from where it had been unearthed. It ended up being placed on a stall in the Ghost Market, benefiting discerning buyers like Meng Zhang.

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