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Talk of the Town

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Jiang Chen walked out of the secret room after roughly four hours.

To be honest, the process of curing the poison had only taken about an hour. Jiang Chen had then taken another hour to fully pass onto his father all the aspects of the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”.

In addition to that, Jiang Chen had used this time to go over the mysteries, the keys to training in, and several details of the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”.

Bridging the gap between the “Vast Waves Method” to the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” wasn’t that difficult. After all, the “Vast Waves Method” was derived from the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”.

The “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” was merely an upgraded method at the end of the day.

Of course, the mysteries contained within the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” were more than ten times that of “Vast Waves Method”.

As a duke of a territory, Jiang Feng’s potential was quite good. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been able to train to the peak level of the “Vast Waves Method” at thirty some odd years old.

If it hadn’t been for the restrictions of the method, his current level of practice would definitely not be as simple as nine meridians true qi. With Jiang Feng’s potential, it was a sure bet that he would enter the ranks of the true qi masters.

When Jiang Chen walked out from the secret room, Jiang Ying and everyone else immediately rushed up to him.

“Young duke, His Lordship...” Jiang Ying was the most concerned with Jiang Feng’s well-being. He was admonishing himself quite severely, and he felt that the duke had been hurt because he hadn’t properly protected him.

“Father has sealed the doors.” Jiang Chen didn’t precisely explain why.

Jiang Feng was naturally going to make use of the opportunity of gaining the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” to assail ten meridians true qi. After all, he had spent quite enough time occupying the peak of nine meridians true qi.

Now that he had received a method heritage, this was a tremendous opportunity bestowed by heaven. He made use of this excuse to seal his doors, one to confound the outside world, and two to increase his strength. This was killing two birds with one stone.

Qiao Baishi was obviously already viewing Jiang Chen as an ally. He walked over, extremely concerned. “Young duke, how is your father’s injury?”

“Thank you for your concern third hallmaster, my father’s injury is no longer a serious concern. I will personally pay a visit to the Hall of Healing in a few days to thank the third hallmaster for making this trip. However, I would like to request the third hallmaster to keep the events of today a secret.”

“Naturally.” Qiao Baishi was well aware of Jiang Chen’s intentions.

With the current situation in the capital, obfuscating the status of Jiang Feng’s injury would possibly cause the outside world to not have a full grasp of the picture and therefore be unwilling to act rashly.

Seeing that Qiao Baishi sported a face that yearned for knowledge, Jiang Chen smiled. “I will explain to the third hallmaster in detail the method I used in curing the poison when I have time.”

Qiao Baishi smiled broadly, he had been waiting for this sentence. As a spirit alchemist, Qiao Baishi was eager for knowledge, of this Jiang Chen was well aware of.

After sending off Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen gathered Jiang Ying and the others.

“Jiang Ying, the manor needs increased security in these days. There can be no carelessness about this.

Jiang Fu, handle the matter of the duke's injury in an ambiguous way. Let the outside world speculate as much as possible, it would be best if it became the talk of the town."

"Yes." Unbeknownst to everyone, they had all grown used to taking orders from the young duke Jiang Chen.

It was as if the news that the duke of Jiang Han had been ambushed on his own doorstep grew legs, and it spread like wildfire.

Rumors and speculations abounded in a moment as this issue became the talk of the town.

The vaunted duke of a territory and a provincial magnate had been ambushed on his own doorstep, and it was said that his injuries weren't light - that his life was in precarious danger.

This gave all the other dukes a sudden sense of danger.

Even though they could all guess that the duke of Jiang Han had offended someone he shouldn't have, resulting in his demise, but still, even the duke of a province had experienced an assassination attempt in the capital. Some of the dukes even held sympathy for one of their own kind.

After all, the duke of Jiang Han was the unlucky one today, but tomorrow? Who knew if it'd be someone else's turn.

Once a precedent had been set for things like this, no one knew what else might happen afterwards.

Apart from those who were unfriendly with the duke of Jiang Han, other dukes who were neutral were quite sympathetic towards the Duke Jiang's circumstances.

Within the Soaring Dragon manor.

The duke of Soaring Dragon was holding a private banquet within his manor and was feting his honored guests.

Those who could appear at such an exceedingly private banquet were all esteemed guests and the duke of Soaring Dragon's best friends and confidantes.

Beside the main seat, next to the edge of Duke Long's seat, sat a man wearing silver long robes with fey and strange flowers embroidered on them.

This man emanated a phantom and exotic air. His hair was like a yin yang fish - half of it was black, while the other half was a silvery grey, clearly delineating the left and right sides of his head.

Tranquil blue light flashed out of a pair of eyes, suffused with a bizarre, elusive aura.

"Master Violet, I personally salute you with this cup of wine." The duke of Soaring Dragon lifted his cup and said to the fey and exotic man.

"Heh heh, Your Lordship is too polite. Drink!" The exotic man was quite straightforward as he threw his head back and drained his glass.

Grand Courtmaster Wang from the Pill King Garden laughed sinisterly, "Thanks to Master Violet's action this time. Otherwise it would've taken quite a bit of effort to kill Jiang Feng without anyone noticing."

The exotic man Master Violet laughed faintly, but unceremoniously accepted Courtmaster Wang's flattery with no hint of humility.

The duke of Yanmen, Yan Jiuzhuang, chuckled. "Without Jiang Feng, those within the Jiang Han household will be a host of dragons without a head. That brat Jiang Chen is a mere sixteen years old, how much insight and capability can he possibly have? Without Jiang Feng, the Jiang family business will find it difficult to defend itself. We will be one step closer to what the duke of Soaring Dragon seeks."

The duke of Soaring Dragon chuckled merrily. "Getting rid of Jiang Feng was the first step. The second step is to seize the Jiang Han dukedom. Only when the medallion signifying the ownership of that dukedom is in the hands of our own people will this step be viewed as complete and perfect."

"That Jiang Han steward Jiang Fu was so pitiful. He actually came to my Pill King Garden to ask for a spirit alchemist to save Jiang Feng. It looks like the Jiang family is turning to any doctor they can find in their time of need." Courtmaster Wang felt that he had vented quite a bit of his ill humor whenever he thought of this.

"And what of Jiang Feng's injury?" The duke of Soaring Dragon asked.

Courtmaster Wang hastily responded. "With Master Violet making his move, Jiang Feng is dead without a doubt. Even a true qi master would find no antidote if struck with this poison, much less his nine meridians true qi."

"The Jiang family and the Hall of Healing have a strong relationship, I am worried that the Hall may come between our goal." The duke of Soaring Dragon still wasn't at ease, since he hadn't seen Jiang Feng die.

Master Violet said lightly, "Duke Long is overly worried. With my methods, even the Lord Hallmaster of that Hall of Healing would only have a thirty percent chance of understanding what happened. And that Lord Hallmaster Song Tianxing was not present in the capital the last couple of days. Those left in the Hall, heh, are all worthless."

Master Violet's tone was wildly arrogant, and he held extreme confidence in his methods of poison.

The duke of Soaring Dragon also seemed to rely heavily upon this person. He smiled, "Your aid in this time's matter is representative of even the heavens helping me."

"Duke Long, I will not spend too much time on polite words. You and I have both gained what we need. Don't forget to materialize what you have promised me today, after you seize the throne in the future."

"This duke is hardly someone who burns bridges after crossing them. Be at ease Master Violet, when I ascend to the throne in the future, the position of minister of the state will be yours without a doubt. However, the caveat is that you must help the Pill King Garden topple the Hall of Healing. Before I start my business, I don't want such a mammoth figure as the Hall of Healing standing on the side of the Eastern clan."

Master Violet said faintly, "If I couldn't handle even this little bit of business, what right would I have to haggle over rewards with Duke Long?"

The duke of Soaring Dragon laughed heartily and raised his glass again, "Then here's to a happy partnership and to building a great cause together!"

Within the depths of the palace, Eastern Lu had also received the news of the ambush at the Jiang Han manor.

“Tiandu, what is the latest news?” Eastern Lu was in an exceedingly poor mood. He had just taken down Du Ruhai today, and had obliquely struck at Duke Long’s arrogance.

Who would’ve thought that this Long Zhaofeng would pull out this on the flipside, and pointed the spearhead at Jiang Feng.

If Jiang Feng died because of this, the impact to the royal family would undoubtedly be greater than the one caused by the pruning of Du Ruhai. Regardless of how one looked at it, it was still him, Eastern Lu, who had come up short.

After all, Jiang Feng was a provincial magnate and his meaning in recent strategy had increased abruptly.

Du Ruhai was just a minor character. In the capital, his influence made him out to be someone on the outskirts, someone who was unable to make it into the inner circle.

“Your Majesty, things don’t look so good. The Jiang family has sent for the third hallmaster of the Hall of Healing, but the third hallmaster left not too long after arriving. It would seem that Jiang Feng’s injury is not very optimistic.”

Eastern Lu violently threw his cup onto the ground, his tone sinister and cold. “Long Zhaofeng, are you publicly putting aside all considerations for royal face?”

“Your Majesty please cease to be angry. Long Zhaofeng is demonstrating his power this way, it’s likely that his preparations are not yet complete. Your Majesty still has much time to prepare.”

Eastern Lu immediately resumed his royal dignity after his brief rage. “We must greatly comfort and appease the Jiang family in this issue no matter what. We must also prepare for the worst. If Jiang Feng succumbs, how to help Jiang Chen successfully navigate the transition will be an exceedingly difficult problem.”

This was indeed the case. If Jiang Feng died, they would be hard pressed to convince the public that Jiang Chen, at the age of sixteen, should immediately inherit the dukedom.

Would the powers on the Jiang Han territory that the duke of Jiang Han ruled over submit to a teenager, much less the officials and courtiers at court?

A duke's territory encompassed a wide area of land, with many cities that had many powers deeply rooted and interlocked with each other. If there wasn't a strong duke ruling over them, then these local powers would be the first to jump out in rebellion.

"Your Majesty, no matter what, we must appease Jiang Chen. Otherwise, if he slackens, it will be disadvantageous to Princess Zhiruo's illness."

Eastern Lu nodded his head, feeling likewise. Eastern Zhiruo's illness dictated that Eastern Lu couldn't discard Jiang Chen, to say nothing of the strategic meaning of the Jiang father and son in opposing the duke of Soaring Dragon.

"Tiandu, go select a few strong underlings and send them to the Jiang manor. I am worried that targeting Jiang Feng was merely the first step. To fully seize the Jiang dukedom, Jiang Chen will undoubtedly be some people's next target. Nothing must happen to Jiang Chen."

"Your subject understands." Tiandu nodded.

"Go get Gouyu." Eastern Lu rubbed his forehead slightly, a bit tired. At this moment, only his sister Gouyu could set Eastern Lu's mind at rest.

When Princess Gouyu had learned of the ambush on Jiang Feng, she also felt surprised and inexplicable. She had just finished raiding Du Ruhai's home when she heard of Eastern Lu's summons, and immediately hurried back to the palace.

She prayed inwardly for Jiang Chen, hoping that nothing would happen to Jiang Feng.

Chapter 42: Jiang Chen Has the Desire to Kill and Points to Pill King Garden

What many people didn't understand, was that even though the ambush on Jiang Feng became the talk of town, the anticipated great storm and waves didn't follow.

There were no major movements from the royal family.

The duke of Soaring Dragon also didn't seem to take any action.

The oddest thing was, the Jiang manor also didn't make any major moves. It was as if Jiang Feng being ambushed was just a small interlude, and it didn't cause major ripples.

Jiang Chen also kept an extraordinarily low profile. He stayed within the manor, kept a handle on the situation, and threw himself into training.

The Jiang Chen of now, after practicing "Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans", used the vast waves true qi to strengthen his meridians everyday. He had long since forged his six meridians to become extremely strong and durable.

If you add to that the stimulus and support provided by spirit medicine, Jiang Chen's six meridians could be labeled as containing the vigor of dragons and ferocity of tigers. They were full of vitality and held extreme explosiveness.

Jiang Chen had also successfully located his seventh acupoint through the "True Acupoint Resonance" method. However, a noticeable moat existed between six meridians true qi and seven meridians true qi.

Six meridians true qi counted only as the intermediate realm of true qi.

Seven meridians true qi would be the advanced realm of true qi.

Moving forward just one small step here meant a great increase in level. So therefore, against this hurdle, any practitioner would face more resistance towards their ascension.

It was the same for Jiang Chen. He was in no hurry to attack the barriers to breakthrough before he had found the appropriate timing.

About four or five days after the ambush, Jiang Chen still kept a low profile as he paid a visit to the Hall of Healing.

Qiao Baishi had been waiting with bated breath at the Hall of Healing. His eyes lit up when he saw that Jiang Chen had arrived. He had been waiting for the stars, the moon, and finally successfully awaited for Jiang Chen's arrival.

"Young duke Jiang, I've finally awaited your arrival." Qiao Baishi was overjoyed and he directly invited Jiang Chen to the secret room.

“What’s wrong?” Jiang Chen felt it was rather odd that Qiao Baishi had such a discreet manner about him.

“Young duke Jiang, our partnership must move forward earlier than planned.” Qiao Baishi cut straight the point. “We’ve gathered news from many different avenues that the Pill King Garden is researching a new type of miraculous medicine for healing, in preparation for storming the market. If the Pill King Garden obtains the first mover advantage, then it would be a fatal blow for our Hall.”

Qiao Baishi was indeed a bit anxious. He hadn’t thought that the Pill King Garden would suddenly play this hand.

One had to say, the hand that the Pill King Garden had played had come with unexpected swiftness, catching the Hall of Healing off guard.

“Pill King Garden?” A hint of killing intent flashed through Jiang Chen’s eyes when he heard these three words. He naturally wouldn’t have forgotten how the Pill King Garden had suppressed his Jiang family at the Soaring Dragon manor.

And, he would never believe that the Pill King Garden hadn’t had a hand in the ambush of his father this time. Instinct told Jiang Chen that there was definitely the Pill King Garden’s shadow behind all of this.

“What exactly happened?” Jiang Chen was unflustered. If it was a matchup of healing medicine, he didn’t believe that anyone could outdo him, Jiang Chen, within the capital.

“This is how things stand: In seven days time, the Pill King Garden will hold an exhibit for pill medicine in the largest marketplace in the capital. It’s said that they will feature a new spirit medicine called the “Dragon and Tiger’s Blood pill”. It’s a supreme rank pill for healing physical injuries and its effectiveness is the utmost. It will reign victorious over any other pill in the same category that’s on the market currently.”

Qiao Baishi’s tone held a few traces of refusal to submit at this point. The Hall of Healing was the publicly acclaimed number one heavyweight in the world of spirit medicine in the Eastern Kingdom.

In terms of spirit medicine business, the Hall of Healing occupied half of the market territory just by itself.

As for the Farmer God Temple and the Pill King Garden, they, along with some other small, scattered vendors, occupied the other half of the market.

If the Pill King Garden was allowed to make a big splash with the “Dragon and Tiger’s Blood pill” and gain the first mover advantage, then it would be an exceedingly huge blow to the Hall of Healing.

First would be the blow to reputation. The Pill King Garden could only count as a third heavyweight in the spirit medicine market in the Eastern Kingdom. If it was able to thoroughly beat the Hall of Healing black and blue in the segment of healing panaceas, then it would undoubtedly be a huge blow to the Hall’s face.

Secondly would be the blow to business. Everyone knew that healing pill medicines were the largest market in the pill medicine arena. Pill medicines were also finished goods, different from spirit medicines that had to be cultivated. Its prices were often quite astonishing. If the Pill King Garden was able to completely eat up this market, then its strength would be sure to greatly increase after a few years. But in terms of competition, others decrease when another increases. Who knew, perhaps the position of number one spirit medicine heavyweight in the Eastern Kingdom would change hands in ten years.

No matter how one looked at it, the Hall of Healing would not sit idly by and watch the Pill King Garden rise to power.

Jiang Chen had also heard these connotations from the words that Qiao Baishi had spoken.

“The Pill King Garden suddenly becoming so high profile likely means that they have completely thrown their lot in with the duke of Soaring Dragon and found a big backer!” Jiang Chen laughed coldly. “This move is likely their first step in a declaration of war on the Hall of Healing. Third hallmaster, forgive my candor. The ambitions of the Pill King Garden are great, and they are mostly likely rushing at an aim of replacing the the Hall of Healing.”

Qiao Baishi’s face was ashen, “My Hall of Healing has occupied the position of number one spirit medicine heavyweight in the Eastern Kingdom for hundreds of years. As a latecomer upstart, the ambitions of the Pill King Garden are simply a bit too great. Young duke Jiang, I don’t wish to put on any airs. As of today, your house and mine are actually two grasshoppers tied on the same string.”

Jiang Chen smiled leisurely, “If they were to put on the exhibit tomorrow, then we really wouldn’t have enough time. Seven days from now leaves us a lot of time.”

Qiao Baishi’s severe expression relaxed slightly upon hearing Jiang Chen’s words.

“Can we refine the Heavenly Karma Pill in seven days?” Qiao Baishi couldn’t really make an estimate and spoke these words with hesitation.

“Third hallmaster, do you only want to refine the Heavenly Karma Pill? Playing it by ear means always residing in passivity. We make not a move because we choose to, but when we do, we need to make such a move that the Pill King Garden has no room and ability to counter us!”

An astounding aura pulsed between Jiang Chen’s brows. He had finally revealed his long concealed extraordinariness!

“Young duke Jiang, do you possibly have other plans?” Never would have Qiao Baishi thought that Jiang Chen’s appetite would be even bigger than what he’d imagined.

“Tell me first, what is the pill medicine that the Pill King Garden is most proud of, and thus the basis of their footing in the capital? Or to put it another way, what is their core competency?”

Qiao Baishi mused silently for a moment and said, “A large half of the Pill King Garden’s business is concentrated in two areas. One of which is pill medicine that replenishes and gathers qi, and the other pill medicine that clears internal fire and calms the mind.”

Pill medicine that replenishes and gathers qi were largely used in battle. The situation of depleting true qi often appeared in battles between the strong. At that moment, a pill medicine that replenished and gathered qi would serve the function of instantaneously replenishing qi.

Clearing internal fire and calming the mind was used more often in training. Martial dao practitioners often faced numerous internal demons when training, and maintaining a dispassionate self was something that a practitioner had to achieve at all times. Except, a practitioner’s internal demons were not that easy to control, so pill medicine that cleared one’s internal fire and calmed the

mind were employed to control internal demons and prevent practitioners from a cultural deviation.

The coincidental thing was, Jiang Chen had written out a list for Princess Gouyu a few days ago, and its use was to clear internal fire and calm the mind. It wasn't a pill recipe, just a regular medicine prescription. She would be able to directly take it if she mixed the appropriate spirit medicine ingredients together.

"How much true qi can the pill that replenishes and gathers qi instantaneously recover?" Jiang Chen asked with curiosity.

"Our Hall of Healing has a similar product, but one pill can at most recover twenty percent of true qi. It also cannot be taken in succession - it will be ineffective if retaken within two hours."

Qiao Baishi was a bit shamefaced. "Our Hall has always wanted to expand into this arena, but the technical barrier to a qi replenishing pill is high and difficult to breakthrough. The Pill King Garden actually is ahead in this area. Their qi replenishing pill can instantaneously recover thirty percent true qi, and usage can be repeated after an hour."

Jiang Chen nodded. "What of their mind calming pill?"

"There are no quantitative measures for this type of pill, but its effects are instantaneous and readily apparent after being taken. Our Hall is also slightly inferior to the Garden in this regard."

Qiao Baishi did not deceive himself and truthfully conveyed the situation to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen didn't respond immediately, but closed his eyes and pondered. After a long while, Jiang Chen's finger lightly tapped on the table.

"What if we were to produce a pill that could instantaneously recover forty to fifty percent true qi. Would it defeat the Pill King Garden in this area?"

"Instantaneously recover forty to fifty percent?" Qiao Baishi surged to his feet with a face full of excitement. "If our Hall had such a good product, based on our sales channels and networks, as well as our strong distribution capability, we can absolutely cause the Garden's products to go into the trash heap within half a month!"

“If the costs of the mind calming pill was only one tenth of similar pill products, but its effects were superior, would it be enough to throw the Pill King Garden’s products once more into the trash?” Jiang Chen asked again.

“Costs of goods sold are only one tenth? Its effects are superior? Then what else is there to say? It will definitely put them into the trash heap! We only need to wage a price war to wipe the floor with them!”

Qiao Baishi was agitated with excitement and his eyes were filled with desire. “Young duke Jiang, are you joking when you say all this?”

Jiang Chen said faintly, “Do I look like I’m joking?”

“This...” Qiao Baishi was at a momentary loss for words, but his trembling lips betrayed the wild and crazy emotions that were currently running through him.

The mere thought of this situation coming to bear fruit, and the victorious scene of thoroughly beating the Pill King Garden, was enough to cause Qiao Baishi’s heart to race and his hot blood to thrum quickly.

“I only have one request and that is to completely pulverize the Pill King Garden. Make them disappear and have that Wang fellow beg in the streets!”

Jiang Chen felt a deep seated internal disgust towards Grand Courtmaster Wang. Whenever he thought of the haughty tone that person had adopted as he’d lectured Jiang Chen’s father, Jiang Chen had the urge to stomp him to death.

“Young duke Jiang, if we were to crush the Pill King Garden in these two areas, then the Garden would be a fly without wings. It wouldn’t be able to struggle for long, and we would be able to swot them with one wave of a hand!”

“Old rules with regards to the split. I’ll take sixty and you forty!”

Qiao Baishi nodded his head repeatedly. “That is how it should be. Young duke Jiang is indeed a phoenix or dragon amongst men. Allow me to say something fawning and that is truthful - our Hall is honored even by a split.”

Qiao Baishi was a smart man. The lower his profile was now, the more goodwill he would engender from Jiang Chen.

At this moment, the smart Qiao Baishi knew clearly that the partnership between the Hall of Healing and Jiang Chen was not one of equal footing. The Hall was dependent on Jiang Chen and curried favor with Jiang Chen.

If he didn't get that relationship straight, then the Hall definitely wouldn't be in business for long!

Chapter 43: Three Types of Pill Medicine

The plan was to be put into action immediately. Jiang Chen had one stubborn insistence: that the pill refiner must be Qiao Baishi himself.

Because, up until now, Jiang Chen hadn't understood much about the Hall of Healing. He only trusted Qiao Baishi. Relatively speaking, Qiao Baishi was a smart man, and one with morals and loyalty.

Therefore, when it came to the core of the refining operations, Jiang Chen was only willing to let Qiao Baishi participate, and none of the other pill refiners in the Hall of Healing.

Qiao Baishi earnestly wished for such a development.

Even if Jiang Chen didn't say anything, Qiao Baishi wouldn't hand over such a good opportunity to someone else. Even if Jiang Chen wouldn't let him get a handle on all the crucial content.

However, if he, Qiao Baishi, was involved, then it meant that he controlled the right to speak within the Hall.

This was undoubtedly a huge help for Qiao Baishi controlling the greater picture in the days to come.

As long as he and Jiang Chen had this layer of cooperation, how would anyone else within the Hall be able to upset his status as the successor?

In this case, it would be perfectly justifiable for the Lord Hallmaster to cultivate him in the future and pass on the position to him.

After all, opposing Qiao Baishi would be equivalent to cutting off the core competency of the Hall of Healing.

Qiao Baishi was extremely grateful. He felt that he had made an extraordinarily wise decision that day. If it wasn't for the fact that he sold that

Dragonbone Sun Grass to Jiang Chen against all odds, then the current situation in the capital would likely look completely different.

And he, Qiao Baishi, would still be toiling away within the Hall with his tail tucked between his legs.

And now, if he could successfully execute all of these things, and do away with their competitor the pill King Garden in one stroke, then his strength, charisma, and leadership ability, would spontaneously skyrocket.

This way, his position within the Hall of Healing would be stable without a doubt and he would receive countless endorsements.

After all, everyone wanted to see a Lord Hallmaster that could bring revenues and honor to the Hall of healing.

Firmly suppressing the pill King Garden would be an astonishing achievement that the Lord Hallmaster Song Tianxing had striven for, but never accomplished!

Three days later, the Heavenly Karma Pill was successfully produced. The fire had spat out eight complete pills. Three of them were upper rank, four middle, and one lower rank.

When Qiao Baishi felt the concentrated medicinal powers of the “Heavenly Karma Pill”, his eyes teared up at the sight of that flawless exterior that looked like it had been formed by nature itself, and the smell that was enough to make blood boil and surge by itself.

He finally believed that the Heavenly Karma Pill was true after all.

He had shouldered too much pressure in recent days. As the days went by and the Heavenly Karma Pill continued to fail to make an appearance, some skepticism and voices of doubt also sounded from within the Hall of Healing. They suspected that they had been played by Jiang Chen this time.

And now that the Heavenly Karma Pill that had captivated hearts was finally in front of Qiao Baishi, how could he not wash his face with tears?

A pill refiner felt the most accomplishment and thus was most moved at the moment when the fires died down to reveal the fully formed pill.

Qiao Baishi was no exception, the significance attached to this Heavenly Karma Pill was too much and too heavy!

It was as if Qiao Baishi had relieved himself of all the crushing burdens on his shoulders in that moment.

The qi replenishing pill was also produced after another two days. When Qiao Baishi inquired after the name of this pill, Jiang Chen concealed its original name and called it the "Vast Ocean Pill".

In the last two days, Jiang Chen made some changes to the recipe for the mind calming medicine and named it "One Buddha Powder".

This One Buddha Powder didn't need to be refined. It only needed some crushed spirit ingredients, and to undergo a couple more steps, before becoming medicine.

The lack of a refining step meant the absence of material loss and the ability to bypass the costly step of refining.

This would naturally decrease costs to one tenth of regular pill medicine.

After all, eight or nine out of ten pills were lost in the refining process. Out of ingredients enough for a hundred pills, only ten or twenty pills would be able to be successfully refined in the end.

A highly skilled refiner could possibly refine twenty or thirty pills, but it wasn't a guarantee that that would always be the case.

Qiao Baishi had barely slept over the past six days, but he was still full of very strong vigor. He had the vitality of dragons and ferocity of tigers. It made one suspect that he wouldn't say that he was tired, even if he engaged in fierce battles for another two months.

Indeed, Qiao Baishi's professional passion had utterly immersed himself into this business.

The shock that Jiang Chen brought him over the past six days had simply been too great. Although he had been the one in charge of actually refining the pill, Jiang Chen had been the one in control of the core operations and recipe.

Qiao Baishi had no complaints about this setup, this was also what was written into the contract. It would be unrealistic to ask Jiang Chen to fully tell him all the details regarding the core operations and details of the pill.

A dreamlike, fruitful six days passed.

Gazing upon the pill bottles piled in front of him, Qiao Baishi still had a feeling of being in a dream. The feeling of accomplishment and contentment that he'd received over the past six days from being in the profession of a pill refiner was something that he had yet to experience in his life until now.

And this was all thanks to the youth in front of him.

In that moment, a feeling of beholding a high mountain grew within Qiao Baishi as he looked at Jiang Chen.

“Third Hallmaster, I have done all that I should. The rest is up to the operations of the Hall of Healing. I will be very disappointed if we are unable to thoroughly defeat the Pill King Garden.”

Qiao Baishi patted his chest. “Young duke Jiang, I never shoot my mouth off. However, just watch our operations this time. With the aid of such divine pill and the basis of my Hall's networks and distribution channels, if we are unable to thoroughly defeat the pill King Garden, then we are truly unworthy of our reputation.”

Jiang Chen was satisfied with Qiao Baishi's declaration and smiled faintly. “That is to say, the Hall won't be missing the pill medicine exhibit that will take place in the marketplace three days from now?”

“Haha, it's a given that we won't miss it. The Pill King Garden is acting with such high profile, if our Hall of Healing doesn't have any response, wouldn't it be a bit of a let down of our reputation as the number one spirit medicine heavyweight in the kingdom?” Qiao Baishi was in exceedingly good spirits.

“Remember to notify me to go watch the show then. I wouldn't want to miss such an interesting display.”

“Young duke Jiang is naturally the first esteemed guest we will invite.” Qiao Baishi smiled.

“Oh right, remember to send an invitation to Princess Gouyu when the time comes. There’s a portion of the One Buddha Powder reserved for Princess Gouyu.” Jiang Chen happened to say.

“Oh? Princess Gouyu also has a portion?” Qiao Baishi blanked momentarily and immediately smiled. “Then we must prepare a gift of gratitude for Princess Gouyu.”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily and thought, ‘that woman Gouyu probably doesn’t want for money...’ But given that the Hall of Healing was giving a gift, they probably would be too embarrassed to give anything below one or two million silver.

After spending a full six days in the Hall of Healing, when he returned to the manor, his father Jiang Feng still remained behind closed doors. Jiang Chen knew that his father’s sealed door training this time could last anywhere between one month to three or four months.

With his father’s martial dao-holic tendencies, he probably wouldn’t come out before he’d broken through ten meridians true qi.

Perhaps, the day that his father opened his doors, would be when the first true qi master appeared in the Jiang Han manor!

Since Jiang Chen had already given his orders before he went to the Hall of Healing, everything was still relatively calm. Panic hadn’t ensued just because Jiang Chen had not appeared for a period of time.

“Jiang Fu, what has happened outside during this time?”

Jiang Fu stood reverently and respectfully in front of Jiang Chen. As he faced the young duke, Jiang Fu had withdrawn the neglectful and contemptuous intentions he’d held in the past.

You had to give it to him, Jiang Chen’s performance during this crucial time had won over the servants in the duke’s household.

“Young duke, all has been more or less calm the past couple of days. Rumors have been flying in the outside world about the duke being poisoned, but no big moves have been made. There is a saying that is most popular in the outside world right now, saying that the duke has... has already fallen victim, but that we haven’t announced it due to some pressures...”

Jiang Fu spoke in halting bursts when he spoke of this. After all, the servants weren't too sure if the duke of Jiang Han was indeed still alive.

"There's no need to pay any attention to these rumors." Jiang Chen was naturally most aware of his father's current situation.

"Has anyone come to find me over the past couple days?" Jiang Chen asked another question.

"Yes, the duke of Jinshan and the duke of Hubing have been by, and their two young dukes."

The Jinshan dukedom was fatty Xuan's home, and the Hubing dukedom was Hubing Yue's home. Friendship with these dukedoms had gone back for several generations, and it was very normal for them to visit upon hearing that something had happened to Jiang Feng.

"Has anyone else been by?"

"Yes, Princess Gouyu has also come." Jiang Fu's tone turned a bit odd when he spoke of this. "And, Princess Gouyu has been by, everyday and has left a message."

"What message? What are you speaking so haltingly for? Speak candidly."

Jiang Fu said with an awkward smile, "Princess Gouyu says whenever the young duke comes back is when he needs to get the hell into the palace to see her. She seemed to have said that Princess Zhiruo misses you."

Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily. "This lass, if you miss me then say you miss me, why use the girl Zhiruo as an excuse? Looks like you're not a thin skinned lass."

Jiang Fu was tongue tied and dumbfounded. He had been gobsmacked by Jiang Chen. The two royal princesses had become "a lass" and "a girl" in the young duke's mouth.

The young duke of his household was truly unwilling to let things be until he had spoken words that astonished all.

“Alright, then I need to go play in the palace. Uncle Ying, I’m afraid you’ll have to accompany me.” Given how things stood in the capital, Jiang Chen didn’t dare be careless.

“Yes.” As the leader of the Jiang family guard, protecting his master was Jiang Ying’s duty. He had berated himself continuously for not adequately protecting the duke previously, and hadn’t found a chance to redeem himself. Now that he took orders from the young duke, he had to naturally be hell-bent on carrying them out. Even if he were to sacrifice his life, he would have to ensure the young duke’s safety.

Princess Gouyu had indeed gone to the Jiang Han manor everyday the past couple of days. Her feelings had been quite complicated. She didn’t know if Jiang Chen was purposefully avoiding her or just didn’t want to see her at all. Or is it that Jiang Chen held a grudge against the royal family because of what had happened to Jiang Feng?

Princess Gouyu had always been a loner and pursued martial dao training, she very rarely paid attention to the feelings of others.

But somehow, that lazy youth - that venom tongued youth - had left a deep imprint on her consciousness, like a brand.

Even if she purposefully avoided thoughts of him, his lazy composure and an expression that seemed to smile, but not really at the same time, would float to the forefront of her mind when it was late at night and no one was around.

When someone came to report that the young duke Jiang had come to visit, Princess Gouyu abruptly surged to her feet, but then seemed to immediately feel that her reaction had been a bit exaggerated.

She took a moment to collect herself, and then walked out.

Jiang Chen was standing next to the fake mountains outside of Gouyu’s chambers, watching the waters trickle down on the artificial mountain. He’d actually lost himself in contemplation during that moment.

Chapter 44: Loot from House Raids, Take Your Pick

“Eh? A lass that actually listens to instructions?” Jiang Chen’s viper tongued personality revealed itself as soon as he saw Princess Gouyu. “Looks like you’ve agreed to believe me. I can tell that your condition is much better than

a few days ago. At this rate, you'll breakthrough to eleven meridians true qi within the month. Congratulations in advance."

Jiang Chen's tone was lighthearted, as if breaking through eleven meridians true qi was as normal as eating and sleeping, and nothing to make a big fuss over.

Princess Gouyu had originally been full of expectation, waiting for Jiang Chen to compliment her with a few words. It'd be fine even if they were some all purpose, generic compliments - stuff like her extraordinary potential or being a rare genius at martial dao.

But, she discovered tragically, this fellow didn't even seem to know that women needed to be complimented.

Seeing that Princess Gouyu was staring at him in a wide eyed manner, Jiang Chen smiled tiredly. "So tell me, what did you need me for? The past couple of days have really exhausted me. If there's nothing else, I'm going to go home and sleep."

Princess Gouyu felt both enraged and amused by his demeanor.

"Jiang Chen, looking at how you are now, is your father well?"

Jiang Chen winked. "Do you want something to be wrong with him?"

"Of course not," Princess Gouyu's jade lips moved rapidly as she appeared to be a bit put out in her anger. "Am I truly so nefarious in your heart?"

"Alright, alright. We're all on the same boat now. I have to hold my nose and co-exist with the good and bad parts of you, don't I? Right, you've come to my house everyday, what urgent business is there?"

Princess Gouyu really didn't know how to deal with this fellow and could only respond honestly, "Of course I had a reason when I came to find you. Follow me."

"To where? You're not trying to be a cradle robber are you?" A wary look appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"Rob your butt! What do you take me for?" Princess Gouyu almost directly slapped his face.

“Hmm, you’re so fierce and you look like a tomboy... do you like women?”

Princess Gouyu was utterly defeated. If looks could kill, Jiang Chen would have absolutely died at least ten times at this moment.

He followed Princess Gouyu along her way and the two arrived at a large warehouse surrounded by heavily armed guards on all sides.

They all made their respective bows upon seeing Princess Gouyu.

“Jiang Chen, come inside with me.”

Jiang Chen still gave Princess Gouyu some face in front of others as he docilely walked inside. This was actually a large treasury.

The gold, silver, and other treasures inside were piled into a small mountain. All sorts of strange and precious treasures were piled high on racks on its two sides.

“What do you think these are?” Princess Gouyu asked.

“Isn’t that nonsense? I’m not blind.” Jiang Chen responded snappily.

“These were all raided from Du Ruhai’s house. They sit here, untouched.”

“Ah? This dog of an official was this greedy?” Jiang Chen started cursing loudly when he heard these were Du Ruhai’s loot. “So it pays this much to be an official in the capital? I must thoroughly consider moving to the capital and becoming an official. What’s the big deal in being a duke? Fighting wars everyday, shedding blood and sweat, and having to face suppression in the end. How nice it is to be an official. An unimportant and miniscule official like Du Ruhai could hoard so much wealth! I say, what’s your purpose in bringing me here? Are you trying to corrupt me? If that’s the case, I only have one sentence -- you win, hurry up and move all these things into my home.”

Princess Gouyu was so amused by his manner of complete seriousness that she involuntarily cracked a smile.

She suddenly discovered that it was quite relaxing being with this damnable sort of character. This fellow was always up to a dirty trick of some sort whenever he found the opportunity to do so, and his open-minded optimism always suffused his seemingly diffident demeanor.

“Jiang Chen, my royal brother has instructed me that you can take your pick from the items here.”

“You really are planning on corrupting me?” Jiang Chen hadn’t thought that Princess Gouyu had brought him here for this purpose.

“You can’t possibly really want all of it?” Princess Gouyu’s eyes widened.

“If I wanted this gold and silver, I wouldn’t take it from the mouths of a corrupt officials. But I can consider spending it for you.” Jiang Chen said with a merry laugh. “If I remember correctly, there’s been successive floods in recent years within the territory of the Jinshan dukedom, and the people have fallen on hard times. Nine houses out of ten are deserted. If these stolen goods could be used to relieve their suffering, it can yet be regarded as charity. The only thing unknown is that, will the ruler of your house be willing to do so?”

“Are you... are you serious?” Princess Gouyu had never thought that such words would come from Jiang Chen’s mouth. This enabled her to gain a better understanding of Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen said with a grave face, “Do you think I would joke with the lives of millions of victims of a natural calamity?”

Princess Gouyu felt a wave of vertigo as Jiang Chen’s awe inspiring righteousness had driven her a bit out of breath. Finally, her phoenix eyes twitched, “Alright, I will make the decision on behalf of my royal brother. If I remember correctly, the Jinshan dukedom and yours are old family friends?”

“Succouring victims are an act of benevolent rule. It benefits the face of your royal family. What does that have to do with the relationship between our two families?”

Jiang Chen’s rebuttal caused Princess Gouyu’s face to flush red. She too felt that her words had lacked appropriateness and were deserving of admonishment.

After a moment of awkwardness, Princess Gouyu finally found a topic. “Jiang chen, this Du Ruhai was an avid collector of divine weaponry. These weapons are all out of the ordinary, why don’t you select an item or two?”

“Oh? I surely won’t be polite here.” Jiang Chen didn’t decline and came to the racks filled with weaponry.

It was a bit of an exaggeration to call these mundane weapons divine weaponry.

Jiang Chen swept his gaze over the lot. Most of these items were pieces of junk in his eyes. There were a few items that barely merited a look.

Jiang Chen's gaze halted on a saber that was three feet long. This saber was hidden within its sheath like a dragon hiding in the abyss. It looked inconspicuous from the outside, and it didn't have any trace of a gleam.

But Jiang Chen's millions of years of memories from his past life allowed him to slightly perceive that some latent, wild power, was hidden within its ordinary exterior.

It was a kind of reservation that disdained showing its edge in mundane, common things.

It was an arrogance that disdained wallowing in the mire with common weaponry.

"That's the one!"

Jiang Chen had chosen this saber with his first glance. It would keep to a subtle dormancy when it was time to keep a low profile. When its cutting edge was needed to be revealed, it would absolutely, unabashedly, display that peerless brilliance!

This was Jiang Chen's personality, and was also this saber's personality.

Congenial personalities meant it was serendipity!

Princess Gouyu was slightly surprised to see Jiang Chen ignore cutting sharp knives that were sending out brilliant rays of light, and chose instead a knife with an absolutely ordinary exterior.

"Jiang Chen, this is a piece of Layered-Feather Golden Crystal and is a superb material for crafting weapons. Why didn't you decide upon it?" Princess Gouyu could only bite the bullet and make a recommendation.

If Jiang Chen chose only a saber, Princess Gouyu felt that this reward would really pale in comparison to the help that Jiang Chen had given her.

“Oh? I thought I could only choose one. Then I’ll choose that as well. But I have this saber and thus, temporarily, I have no need of other weapons.” Jiang Chen paused and suddenly thought of something, his words taking a turn. “The Hidden Dragon Trials are about to commence, therefore I should make some preparations. Your connections are vast in the capital, right? Help me forge flying daggers out of this material.”

“Forge flying daggers?” Princess Gouyu started and felt that such outstanding material should be used in refining divine weaponry. It seemed a bit of a shame to use it to craft small weapons like flying daggers.

“Yes, judging by the material amount, forge a set of nine flying daggers.” Jiang Chen didn’t care in the slightest about wantonly wasting things. To be able to become his, Jiang Chen’s, flying daggers - this could be said to be the Layered-Feather Golden Crystal’s good fortune.

Seeing that Jiang Chen was so resolute, Princess Gouyu naturally wouldn’t go against Jiang Chen’s wishes for the piece of Layered-Feather Golden Crystal. She nodded, “I’ll try to have it ready for you in the next couple of days.”

“Mm. Being so amiable and nice is more likeable, is it not?” Jiang Chen had a tone like that of lecturing a small girl.

Princess Gouyu now lacked the strength to challenge Jiang Chen and rolled her eyes at him. She suddenly thought of something again. “Oh right, Jiang Chen, the Pill King Garden will have a pill exhibition the day after tomorrow. This was included in the news that I’ve received. This Pill King Garden has great ambitions and likely has the Hall of Healing in its crosshairs. Your Jiang family has a partnership with the Hall of Healing, so you’d best be on your guard.”

“Heh heh, I’ve also heard of this matter. It should be interesting.” Jiang Chen flashed a harmless and innocent smile, completely not thinking anything of this matter.

He carelessly spread out his hands. “I’ll be on my way if there’s nothing else.”

Princess Gouyu was extremely angry at seeing Jiang Chen care not a whit. But her thoughts suddenly took a turn, wasn’t this fellow always like this?

At the Soaring Dragon manor last time, hadn’t he also been completely unconcerned?

And what was the result? Bai Zhanyun had been punished with one bout, and was now docile and obedient towards Jiang Chen, as if he was a completely different person.

“Could it be that this kid hasn’t shown his face for a few days because he’s been secretly preparing a fine scheme?” The more she interacted with Jiang Chen, the more Princess Gouyu understood about his acting style.

When this kid displayed a harmless and innocent smile, perhaps this was when a plot was brewing.

Given these thoughts, Princess Gouyu couldn’t help but feel anticipation, even though she felt that Jiang Chen didn’t have a hope of winning against the Pill King Garden.

But this Jiang Chen often committed astounding and shocking actions - who knew what new tricks he would come up with this time?

Seeing that the sight of Jiang Chen’s back was about to disappear, Princess Gouyu finally abruptly remembered something. “Oh right, Jiang Chen, the situation in the capital is complex during this time. Commander Tiandu has decided to arrange for a couple of his best men to be sent to your Jiang Han manor who will answer to your commands. This will avoid you having a shortage of people when you need them.”

“Let them come tomorrow.” Jiang Chen carelessly waved his hand, having taken advantage of someone but still pretending otherwise. “I’m saying this first - don’t just send me a few sticks of wood, I’ll reject the goods if they’re not good to use.”

Princess Gouyu truly wished to pluck off her shoe and beat this brat up. She’d been nice to him, even sent him men and gifted him presents. How dare he not have a single nice thing to say in return, and pick and choose instead?

“Rascal, this brat is a rascal.” A trace of a smile slightly curved up Princess Gouyu’s lips as she softly scolded him with a few words.

Princess Gouyu couldn’t really bring herself to hate Jiang Chen when she thought of the changes that had occurred within her during the past couple of days.

Because, the incantation for smoothing her qi that Jiang Chen had given her was simply too useful. Add to that the aid of the spiritual medicine prescription, and in just a few days, Princess Gouyu could feel that her internal demons were being dispelled and resolved with a speed that could be observed with the human eye.

The true qi within her body had also slowly changed from its original wildness to a state of being able to be controlled and handled with ease, compared to prior experience.

All of her confidence, pride, and faith that had been lost, had now been recovered.

The most important thing was when she did all this, that familiar true meaning of martial dao also reappeared naturally.

Eleven meridians true qi...

A strong sense of desire suffused Princess Gouyu's eyes - eyes that were as brilliant as the stars.

Chapter 45: Saber Aura Rising to the Sky

Jiang Chen had come away with quite a haul after his trip to the palace. First, although this saber didn't look like much, it gave him the feeling of meeting an old friend. In addition, Princess Gouyu's plan to arrange some men for his use could resolve a critical situation, one in which fire was singing his eyebrows.

Although his personal strength had greatly improved recently, his personal strength was not up to the task of handling the large maelstrom that was the capital, one that could worsen at any time. If a few good men could be sent to him, that would at least free up Jiang Ying and allow the man to stay within the manor and preside over matters with peace of mind.

It was already night by the time Jiang Chen returned to the manor. He sat down cross legged, the nameless saber propped up in front of him.

A man and a saber sat facing each other beneath the moonlight.

Circulating the vast waves true qi within his body, Jiang Chen was now as if a giant whale traversing the vast ocean. He continuously drew forth vast waves

of true qi and circulated them around him, expanding the waves of that ocean layer upon layer.

Beneath the star-studded sky, Jiang Chen's vast waves of true qi were suffused with rays of silvery-white splendor. They interacted with the crescent curve hanging high above, adding splendor and opulence to each wave. Layers of silver light sparkled, exuding a mystical feeling.

Jiang Chen frolicked like a lesser dragon amongst the waves as he circulated his true qi with abandon. His soul traveled to the ninth heaven like a divine dragon, free from inhibitions and thus carefree. The splendor shining down from the multitude of stars in the sky actually indistinctly formed an odd flow, a strange sort of circulation with the vast waves true qi that Jiang Chen was guiding. At that moment, the orbiting stars seemed to be the eyes of ancient deities, uniformly sending warm looks to this mortal realm.

Suddenly, a strange scene took place!

The nameless saber that was propped in front of him, akin to a precious gem of the ninth heaven that had been hidden in a dark age, abruptly shot forth a beam of stunning splendor. When this light shot out, it made straight for the vault of heavens like a soaring, towering beam, the Milky Way hanging upside down!

Whoosh!

It was as if the world from ancient times had taken a quick peek, as if an ancient deity had opened its eyes once again. This brilliant splendor was a bolt of lightning in the sky, fading after it'd shot across. In the next moment, this nameless saber emitted waves of low, humming resonances. The entire sheath started vibrating.

A surge of almost uncontrollable, frightening power agitated to burst out of the sheath.

It felt like enormous, ancient demons wanting to break through their seal, light that could cleave the earth erupting from the earth, tens of thousands of violent beasts about to surge out of their cage... At this moment, Jiang Chen abruptly opened his eyes and used his right hand to lightly press down on the scabbard. "Partner, does this mean that you've awakened?"

Jiang Chen's press was a strong and mighty seal, tamping down at once on all the raging impulses, the saber's aura and wildness. The sheath in Jiang Chen's hand slightly moved a few times, and then stopped docilely. Then, an odd ring of light emanated quickly from the hilt of the saber as it covered Jiang Chen's entire body.

In that moment, man and saber became one.

It seemed that a solemn and dignified ceremony had been completed, a perfect union had been completed. In the next moment, a thought flashed through Jiang Chen's mind. This blade had already established him as its master! When this thought flashed through his mind, a wave of composed, self possession passed through Jiang Chen's entire body as if a protection talisman had been planted in his body. An incredible feeling of safety stole throughout his entire being.

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In an exceedingly covert spot in the Eastern Kingdom, a sudden look of surprise shot from a mysterious elder's eyes. Looking at the brilliant splendor streaking across the sky like a meteor, his eye were filled with shock, astonishment, and even a few hints of fear. "Such frightening splendor; can it be that a staggeringly strong expert is passing by?"

If Eastern Lu had been present, he would have recognized this old man. He was the spirit realm cultivator, the one who had been a recluse for hundreds of years, the legendary figure of the Eastern Kingdom!

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Princess Gouyu did indeed bring four people over the next day. To speak more accurately, four strong experts. They were all cultivators in the advanced realm of true qi.

"Jiang Chen, these four are all from Commander Tiandu's Sheng battalion. You can call them, respectively Sheng One, Sheng Two, Sheng Three, and Sheng Four."

Sheng One was of average build, roughly thirty years old. His eyes were experienced and his movements crisp. It was apparent from one look that he was the leader amongst the four, and was actually a nine meridians true qi cultivator.

Sheng Two and Sheng Three were a pair of twin brothers, all strong as a bear in the hips, and with a back as supple as a tiger's. Their bodies were filled with wild strength and boasted of eight meridians true qi.

Sheng Four was a fair skinned youth, no more than two or three years older than Jiang Chen. His personality was the same as his appearance, cold and aloof, giving others the impression of an unapproachable person of few words.

"Do the four of you know your duties?" Gouyu asked.

"Obey Young Duke Jiang's orders, even if it means venturing into mountains of knives and oceans of fire or a dragon's watery lair and a tiger's den! To protect Young Duke Jiang, with our deaths before failure!" The four's responses were clean-cut and crisp. They were cultivators and, more than that, they were soldiers. Obeying orders from superiors was the duty of a soldier.

"Very good. Young Duke Jiang is an important subject to the royal family. You four are now carrying out the kingdom's mission. Remember, don't lose face for your Sheng battalion. Don't lose face for Commander Tiandu!"

"We would rather die than lose face!"

Gouyu was quite satisfied by the four's performance. Her eyebrow was cocked and she wore a few hints of a smile, "Jiang Chen, what do you think about these four?"

"Their strength is quite good and they listen to orders. I think I can make use of them." Jiang Chen also gave Gouyu some face.

Princess Gouyu had actually been afraid that Jiang Chen would say some ridiculous things again. The worries in her heart were settled upon hearing his words.

"Oh right, Jiang Chen, I received an invitation from the Hall of Healing this morning, inviting me to view some sort of pill exhibition tomorrow. What is going on? Wasn't it the Pill King Garden putting on the pill exhibition? What's this to do with the Hall of Healing?"

Jiang Chen chuckled, "The heavyweights of spirit medicine in the capital aren't limited to just the Pill King Garden. After all, when did the capital become the Pill King Garden's stage?"

“Just what’s going on here?” Gouyu was extremely curious.

“You’ll find out the specifics tomorrow, won’t you? You have to go, perhaps there’ll be a large red envelope of money for you.” Jiang Chen smiled and was unwilling to say more regarding this matter.

“What red envelope, I have no interest in that! But, it seems that there is once again a good show to be seen. That, I can’t miss. Are you going tomorrow?”

Jiang Chen waved the invitation in his hand. “How could I be absent from such a good time?”

Just as they were talking, Jiang Fu led a person in with a sullen, sinister face. Jiang Fu knew how to behave in a delicate situation and bowed when he saw Princess Gouyu, speaking to Jiang Chen afterwards. “Young duke, this visitor says he’s from the Pill King Garden. He says they are putting on a pill exhibition tomorrow, and that they invite our Jiang household to observe in attendance.”

The person’s face was shrewd and it bore a smile of a petty person realizing his ambition. His voice was loud and carried, “Young Duke Jiang, at the end of the day, your Jiang family was once in a partnership with the Pill King Garden. We will be hosting a large scale event tomorrow. What do you say, will you show us some face?”

Jiang Chen flicked a glance at the invitation the other had brought, but didn’t accept it. He nodded, indicating for Jiang Fu to accept the invitation. Jiang Fu was also a quick witted person. When he accepted the invitation, he opened it respectfully and placed it in front of Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen looked at it briefly and smiled faintly. “I am someone who doesn’t give face, and only denies it. Are you sure you welcome me?”

“Welcome? We will definitely welcome you. Heh heh, but tomorrow, it’s our Pill King Garden denying someone else face. If the young duke likes a good time, take care not to miss it.” That person smiled proudly and left with a turn. He hadn’t seemed to recognize Princess Gouyu, and naturally didn’t observe the proper greetings to a princess.

“Pill King Garden, indeed a petty character achieving their goals.” Jiang Chen observed that this person didn’t even possess basic courtesy, having ignored

a princess, of all people. One had to say that the Pill King Garden had become a bit too conceited, a bit too cocky.

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Within the Pill King Garden.

Courtmaster Wang and several other high executives of the Pill King Garden were in attendance. Of those, Master Violet sat in the middle, surrounded by the crowd.

“Master Violet, all is in readiness. All we await is to amaze the world with a single, brilliant feat at tomorrow’s pill exhibition.” Courtmaster Wang looked like the cat that’d ate the canary, and extreme excitement marked his features. “This Pill of Dragon and Tiger’s Blood has such potency that, as soon as it hits the shelves, it is sure to take over half of the market, and it will be a small matter to advance into even the markets of the neighboring sixteen countries. Add to that our three pronged approach with our Qi Replenishing Pill and our Crane Heart Pill, given enough time, our Pill Kill Garden is sure to replace the Hall of Healing!”

“Yes, tomorrow, we can finally harshly slap the Hall of Healing’s face!” Another Garden executive laughed. “The Hall of Healing has always maintained its grip on the market of healing panaceas. When our Pill of Dragon and Tiger’s Blood is available, let’s see what other pill medicines they bring out to compete with us in the future!”

The impact to the Hall of Healing in defeating them in three different arenas would undoubtedly be huge. The senior executives of the Pill King Garden could almost see the day where the Pill King Garden replaced the Hall of Healing. Even thinking of such a scene was enough to send their blood boiling.

Master Violet said faintly, “Denying face to the Hall of Healing is merely the first step. The Hall of Healing is a mammoth figure, and their hallmaster is no easy character. Don’t oversimplify things. We must work in tandem with the duke of Soaring Dragon, otherwise it will be impossible to replace the Hall of Healing in the short run.” Master Violet’s gaze was diabolic. He knew clearly that if Soaring Dragon was unable to replace the Eastern clan, then the Pill King Garden would absolutely be unable to replace the Hall of Healing in the short term.

This was the bigger picture. However, Master Violet also firmly believed that this type of bigger picture was sure to reverse with the arrival of himself, Master Violet. And, such a reversal would definitely start with tomorrow's pill exhibition!

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All was prepared, the day that the Pill King Garden had long awaited for was finally here.

The weather was splendid, the sun was bright with not a cloud in the sky. This seemed to portray that the future of the Pill King Garden would really be smooth and bright. Jiang Chen walked out of the secret training room early in the morning, and made his way to the biggest marketplace in the capital, the Myriad Treasures Palace, after he was done enjoying breakfast. He was escorted by the four cultivators of the Sheng battallion.

The Pill King Garden had long since appointed greeters at the entrance to the Myriad Treasures Palace. When they saw Jiang Chen's arrival, the Garden's greeters all displayed some surprise. In the eyes of the Pill King Garden, as long as the Jiang family's head was still screwed on properly, there would be no way that they would attend today's festivities. If they came, they would be, without a doubt, making things unbearable for themselves. After all, the Pill King Garden was to raise their prestige and deny other's face today. If the Jiang family came, would that not be entering the lion's den?

Chapter 46: A Gloating Pill King Garden

The Pill King Garden's exhibition stage had been prepared within the luxurious main hall of the Myriad Treasures Palace. All of the various guest seating had been arranged appropriately.

As Jiang Chen walked into the Myriad Treasures Palace and trod on the noble carpet, he was enjoying himself hugely.

In contrast to the Pill King Garden's high profile, the Hall of Healing kept an incredibly low profile. They hadn't started preparing their exhibition stage, even up until now.

Many actually hadn't known that the Hall of Healing was also hosting a pill exhibition, including even the Pill King Garden.

A saying was in vogue in the capital at the moment, that the Pill King Garden had developed a new type of healing pill, and was about to challenge the Hall of Healing's position.

To put things bluntly, the pill exhibition today held the Hall of Healing in its crosshairs. It was to provoke and to slap the Hall of Healing in the face.

"Wait, you there, halt! This is a distinguished gathering for the pill exhibition. Do you have an invitation?"

Two practitioners with fiercely aggressive postures barred Jiang Chen's way.

Jiang Zheng, who was at Jiang Chen's side, gave a cold snort and directly flung the Pill King Garden's invitation into their faces.

They glanced at the invitation after receiving it and smiled spuriously. "This is the lowest leveled invitation, and provides standing room with no assigned seating only. Walk over to that corner over there by yourself. Remember not to talk loudly, and not to give offense to other honored guests."

A slap to the face. The Pill King Garden had indeed prepared this face denying move from the very beginning. They had already designed this slap in the face trap from the day that they had sent the invitation to Jiang Chen.

Yet Jiang Zheng laughed in contempt, "Don't get the wrong idea. Our household's young duke has no interest in your so-called pill exhibition, and has absolutely no interest in attending. We're just passing by and returning your paltry invitation."

The other party was stunned. Why had they come if not to attend the pill exhibition?

"Not here for the pill exhibition? Then you're just loitering. Someone come and throw them out." A Pill King Garden administrator walked over with an aggressive posture.

Jiang Zheng smiled coldly. "Has the Myriad Treasures Palace been rented out by you, the Pill King Garden, today? My household's young duke is an honored guest here. Are the bones of you lowly slaves itching for a beating?"

The four brothers from the Sheng battalion stepped forward in unison, and the killing aura that they had cultured in the army flared out powerfully, causing the administrator's face to go white and repeatedly back up.

Jiang Chen said faintly, "Get out of my way."

At this moment, a figure took a turn out from the interior hallways of the Myriad Treasures Palace. It was the Third Hallmaster, Qiao Baishi, of the Hall of Healing.

Qiao Baishi was wreathed in smiles as he walked up in greeting, smiling hugely. "Young duke Jiang, I have been awaiting your arrival. Please come inside, come inside."

"Hallmaster Qiao, what is with your Hall of Healing? Didn't you say you were holding a pill exhibition today? Why so low key?" Jiang Chen complained purposefully.

Qiao Baishi smiled, "The style of our Hall of Healing has always been to keep a low profile. We will set up our exhibition stage soon. It actually won't take too much time."

"That makes sense. There is reality beneath the Hall of Healing's surface. It's quite normal for you to keep a low profile and not to create such a large scale ruckus like the nouveau riche." Jiang Chen nodded with a smile.

"Qiao Baishi, what do you mean by this?" On the Pill King Garden side, Courtmaster Wang, the man holding down the fort, walked over in a huff. "It's our Pill King Garden that's holding a pill exhibition today, and you are guests. Do you intend to ruin custom and create trouble?"

Courtmaster Wang had struck a strong pose of righteousness.

"Courtmaster Wang, surely you've gotten something wrong? You're putting on a pill exhibition, yes, but does that mean our Hall of Healing cannot do the same? You've sent an invitation to us, but does that mean we have to give you face and attend?" Qiao Baishi's tone was diffident.

"You... you're not here to attend the pill exhibition?" An expression of incredulity bubbled up in Courtmaster Wang's eyes.

“We’re here to attend a pill exhibition, but one by our Hall of Healing.” Qiao Baishi smiled faintly.

“What do you mean?” Courtmaster Wang’s eyes grew cold. “Qiao Baishi, are you here to purposely cause trouble?”

“Cause trouble?” Qiao Baishi laughed coldly. “Courtmaster Wang, you think too highly of yourself. Is the status of your Pill King Garden worthy of the Hall of Healing causing trouble for you?”

Courtmaster Wang was speechless and glared at Jiang Chen. “Jiang Chen, you’ve even returned the invitation to us. What are you doing here then?”

“You dunce, I’m here to attend a pill exhibition. The Hall of Healing has a close business relationship with my Jiang family. How can I not do them the favor of attending when they hold a pill exhibition?” Jiang Chen looked at Courtmaster Wang like he was looking at an idiot.

Courtmaster Wang’s face was ashen, he felt that he’d been played by someone. But he immediately thought of the setup for the day - wasn’t it to slap the Hall of Healing in the face?

Since the Hall of Healing was so foolhardy as to overextend themselves with a pill exhibition, it was perfect timing to beat down the Hall’s arrogance with one stroke.

A trace of a sinister smile floated onto Courtmaster Wang’s face when his thoughts travelled down this path. “Qiao Baishi, looks like your Hall of Healing didn’t want to sit passively and await your doom. Since you came knocking, let’s compete and see who’s better at pill medicine.”

Courtmaster Wang was in high spirits and ready for action. Since the Hall of Healing was so overconfident at competing on the basis of pill medicine, then let the “Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood” harshly slap the Hall’s face.

The Hall of Healing was still highly efficient when it came to execution.

An exhibition stage had been erected directly opposite the Pill King Garden in just a short time. Apart from Qiao Baishi, Second Hallmaster Yue Qun as well as six or seven elders were there from the senior executives of the Hall of Healing.

In addition, the Hall of Healing's large amount of administrators had also started their nervous preparations.

The Hall of Healing was playing to an extreme this time. Apart from people like Jiang Chen and Princess Gouyu, all the other guests hadn't received invitations beforehand.

Instead, they waited on the side. Whenever a guest of the Pill King Garden handed over their invitation, the Hall of Healing would smoothly and simultaneously hand them an invitation.

This way, the Hall's purpose of challenging the Garden in the immediate vicinity was more than readily apparent.

Basically, anyone with power or influence in the capital had received an invite from the Pill King Garden this time. When these guests also received the Hall of Healing's invitation after arriving, they all felt that it was odd.

However, the majority of these people were all neutral. Not only were they not against it when they saw that the Hall of Healing was actually commencing in head to head combat with the Pill King Garden, but their interest was also quite piqued.

Their interest levels had truly been lacking when they'd originally thought that they were attending a pill exhibition. But unanticipated gains might be made if they were able to witness the competition between the spirit medicine heavyweights!

The Pill King Garden's senior executives huddled together and held a discussion for a while. They all felt that the Hall of Healing hadn't come with good intentions.

But Master Violet was quite confident. The "Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood" was his proud work, and a pill recipe that had come from a hidden sect. He was absolutely confident that it would storm the market in such a common kingdom.

The Hall of Healing? Master Violet shook his head, his eyes quite contemptuous.

The senior executives of the Pill King Garden had been a bit worried, but quickly returned to a status brimming with confidence upon seeing that Master Violet was so confident.

It was said that Master Violet came from a reclusive sect. Would such a superior person be unsuccessful in a mere kingdom capital? The Hall of Healing had come knocking at the door today, and was destined to be beaten into the shape of a pig's head by the Pill King Garden.

With this consideration, the Pill King Garden neither barred the way nor protested against the Hall of Healing's actions, allowing the Hall to give out invitations at their leisure.

Of course, they wouldn't be able to bar the Hall if they wanted to.

After all, sure the Pill King Garden was hosting a pill exhibition, but the Hall of Healing also had the right to hold their own.

However, these guests were still particular about courtesy and first sat in the Pill King Garden section according to custom, since they had received the Pill King Garden's invitation first.

Apart from a group of diehard Hall of Healing supporters, the neutral guests all held the mentality of not wanting to offend either, and found a seat in the Pill King Garden first.

They also knew that the Hall of Healing would naturally not mind that they had gone first to the Pill King Garden section because the Hall had given an invitation without forewarning. This was the custom of the order of arrival.

Courtmaster Wang was quite satisfied when he saw that the majority of the guests still sat on the Pill King Garden side. He looked in Qiao Baishi's direction with a few hints of provocation.

The senior executives of the Hall of Healing sat on the chairs behind the exhibition stage, more than a bit ill at ease. This whole matter had been under Qiao Baishi's organization.

They were also here today by Qiao Baishi's invitation, and weren't too sure as to what tricks he had up his sleeve.

They saw that a great commotion and gathering of people were present on the Pill King Garden side, whereas, apart from its few staunch allies, the Hall of Healing section had only a sprinkling of people.

“Number three, just what are you doing? If you want to do something, you should’ve sent invitations beforehand, no? How can our Hall of Healing bear this kind of result this way?” Second Hallmaster Yue Qun was finding it difficult keeping an affable expression on his face.

“The Second Hallmaster speaks sense. If I had known this was the case, I wouldn’t have come today.” The Blue surnamed elder who’d had some friction with Jiang Chen last time also complained.

“Heh heh. The Third Hallmaster most likely has a secret master plan.” This was an elder who ardently supported Qiao Baishi.

“Let’s reserve our judgement, we’re here already. I won’t believe that the Third Hallmaster has arranged for us to be here for the purposes of losing face. Our Third Hallmaster isn’t such a brainless person.” This was Qiao Baishi’s confidante.

On the Pill King Garden’s side, Courtmaster Wang was in high and vigorous spirits as he strode up the high exhibition booth. His voice was loud and charged, full of heroism. “Everyone, our Pill King Garden is introducing the “Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood” on this time’s pill exhibition. It’s a healing panacea, and its effects are double those of similar products on the market, and even higher!”

What?

Healing panacea? Effects double those of similar products on the market, and even higher?

Many had originally been whispering in hushed conversations, but all quieted down in coincidental unison when they heard Courtmaster Wang’s words.

The scene had become so quiet that even a pin drop could be heard.

“This ‘Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood’ dissipates bruises, strengthens connections between muscles and bones, and has enormously wonderful effects. Particularly with regards to external injuries - it can fully heal wounds from various knives and swords in three days, without even leaving a scar.”

Fully healing wounds from various knives and swords in three days, without leaving a scar!

“For internal injuries, even if you’re beaten so badly that you cannot get up from the bed, taking this pill will enable you to recover within ten days back to your conditions before the injury.”

Courtmaster Wang grew more excited as he talked, spittle flying wildly as he lauded the “Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood” so superlatively that it was like flowers were raining down from the sky.

One had to say, if the “Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood” was as miraculous as he said, then the pill was sure to triumph over all similar products on the market as soon as it was introduced.

The Pill King Garden had raised such a high profile and gone to such great efforts in advertising this time’s pill exhibition -- it did indeed have the basis to be so high key. The Pill King Garden was definitely trying to amaze the world with this single, brilliant feat on the basis of this pill!

Who didn’t know that these types of healing panacea were currently one of the most popular pill medicines in pill medicine market? After all, no practitioner could avoid being injured. Once injured, they would be unable to avoid using this type of healing panacea.

Whoever occupied the market of healing panaceas would gain the first mover’s advantage. Whoever could corner this market would herald in the market trend.

In the span of a moment, most of the guests had surmised the reason being the Pill King Garden’s high profile. This was a declaration of war on the Hall of Healing, and a challenge to their position!

Chapter 47: Accidental Repeat Occurrence

On the Pill King Garden’s side, the senior executives were all wearing cocky smiles. They had long anticipated the ruckus that the “Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood” would cause when it was announced.

This was why it was said that “those who undertake civil pursuits are poor, and those who undertake martial pursuits are rich”. Those who cultivated were

most amenable to spending money. If you had no money, then opt out of the road of martial dao while it was early.

Healing panaceas were the area that practitioners were most willing to spend money. After all, a good healing panacea oftentimes meant a safeguard for life!

The Pill King Garden had seized upon this point, eyed the supreme secret of this market, and chosen the right breakthrough point. As long as they were able to beat the Hall of Healing into the ground in this area, given enough time, what would be so impossible about them replacing the Hall of Healing's position?

After all, the Pill King Garden already had a great advantage in the areas of qi replenishing and heart calming pills.

If the Pill King Garden was able to obtain a lead in three areas using a three pronged approach, it would undoubtedly be a frightening challenge to the Hall of Healing!

Courtmaster Wang said, "Honored guests, we will place six "Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood" on six display tables beneath the stage. Please line up in front of the display tables and take turns in inspection and discussion. It's said that what the ear hears may be false, but what the eye sees is true. Everyone can personally appraise whether the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood is truly that miraculous, and if this courtmaster has any elements of bluster. When the appraisal is over, we will find 'Pill Trial Warriors' to conduct an on site experiment."

The so-called "Pill Trial Warrior" was a type of high risk profession. Most who undertook it were those low level practitioners who had no hope on the path of martial dao, yet wanted to earn fast money. Whenever a new pill was introduced, they would test a pill on themselves.

Any type of pill, before it was checked by the extensive marketplace, held risk.

Pill Trial Warriors personally tried pills, undertaking risk with their own bodies, before the pill was fully trusted by widespread consumers.

This was a high risk, high reward profession.

After all, if something was wrong with the pill - or if there were side effects - the first unlucky ones were the Pill Trial Warriors.

The guests presents all got up and walked towards the display tables. Everyone wanted to obtain a place near the front of the line to catch a glimpse first.

It was a good thing that there were six display tables with six lines. The wait wasn't too long in that regard.

Roughly an hour later, almost all the guests had had their look.

"Tsk tsk, I can tell that this Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood is uncommon just from its scent. The healing panaceas on the market truly are trash when compared to this!"

"I wonder how much the price will be per pill? I plan to buy and hold ten or more of them - the prices might inflate hugely then!"

"This 'Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood' will surely become the most wanted healing panacea in the capital after this!"

"Mm. Other similar products truly are not competitive when compared to it. Us practitioners can be thrifty everywhere except on healing panaceas."

"That's the theory! We're not afraid of high prices, just that it's not good enough!"

At this moment, Courtmaster Wang was wreathed in smiles and his heart was bursting with joy. He had kept his ears open and listened just now - the comments of all the guests were almost all positive to a fault. Apart from those who worried that the price would be out of their reach, almost all were waxing eloquent with praise.

What did this mean? This meant that before the Pill Trial Warriors had tested the pill, the "Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood" had already received widespread acceptance.

What could almost certainly be anticipated was that once this Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood was introduced into the market, it would kickoff a purchasing trend and would be extremely popular and sell quite well!

“Grand Courtmaster, I’ve been listening and everyone is ceaselessly praising the pill. It looks like the effects are better than we’ve anticipated!”

“Heh heh, I took a look at the Hall of Healing side just now. The second hallmaster Yue Qun’s old face was almost purple with anger. I’d like to see what face the Hall of Healing has left to compete with us this time!”

The senior executives of the Pill King Garden were all extremely excited, and felt the exaltation from fulfillment. To be able to stomp on a mammoth competitor, this type of accomplishment naturally made them feel beyond excited.

Courtmaster Wang was still relatively calm and said, “Prepare to call upon the Pill Trial Warriors. Any pill introduced must first be tested by a Pill Trial Warrior. This way, we can dispel the last of the market’s worries and reservations.”

This part of the process could not be omitted.

The Pill Trial Warriors were invited out. There were four in total.

The process of testing the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood was certainly going to be very cruel. One had to first injure the Pill Trial Warriors and then have them take the pill for on site proof of its healing properties!

All of the guests’ eyes had focused on the Pill Trial Warriors.

At the moment, a golden mallet suddenly sounded from the Hall of Healing side as it crashed into a bronze gong.

The third hallmaster, Qiao Baishi, of the Hall of Healing was already on the exhibition stage with a smile on his face. “Sirs, it’s rare to have so many guests present, truly many exalted guests have filled the seats. The Hall of Healing would like to make use of this opportunity to also introduce a healing panacea!”

“What?” The scene was in an uproar.

The Pill King Garden had introduced the healing panacea of Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood.

The Hall of Healing was also introducing a healing panacea - wasn't this an open challenge and call for combat?

There was quite a bit of surprise on the Pill King Garden side. Courtmaster Wang's features were hostile as he stared at Qiao Baishi, inwardly cursing, "Is this Qiao Baishi purposely causing trouble? What healing panacea could the Hall of Healing produce to rival my Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood in their flurry of haste? He is interrupting the rhythm of my Pill King Garden and attempting to impact the smooth introduction of the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood."

In Courtmaster Wang's eyes, Qiao Baishi's move to introduce pill medicine was fake, but his attempt to disrupt the introduction of the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood was real. To put it frankly, this was jealousy, causing trouble!

Except, Qiao Baishi didn't even look in the Pill King Garden's direction. He wore a faint smile and his tone rang out powerfully. "The Hall of Healing has always endeavoured to research and develop pills in order to benefit all practitioners under heaven. We have had great achievements in the past few years. The first type of pill we're introducing today - which is also a healing panacea - is called the 'Heavenly Karma Pill'. Coincidentally, the Heavenly Karma Pill was an ancient lost pill recipe. The pill's effects are as its name, almost to the realm of perfection.

Everyone, I am very delighted to tell you that this Heavenly Karma Pill is a shuffling of the cards, a revolution, a historical breakthrough, that we are bringing to the healing panacea market! Its effects are three times, five times, and even ten times those of similar products!"

Three times, five times, and even ten times!

Qiao Baishi's powerful voice was like large bell, bearing down on the chest of everyone present, resonating so that it caused everyone's eardrums to ring.

How.. how was this possible?

A sudden increase in healing properties to three, fives times and even ten times!

This was practically the healing panacea of legends.

Was the Hall of Healing serious? Was it purposefully causing trouble?

But with the Hall of Healing's large brand, how could it crack a joke that would destroy its own brand on such an occasion?

"In addition, if applied externally, this pill can cause wounds to immediately stop bleeding, and heal at a rate visible to the naked eye. If taken internally, it can strengthen connections between muscles and bones within an hour.

For internal injuries, even if the patient is someone who had been so severely beaten that they find it hard to move from bed, taking this pill will guarantee the vigor of dragons and ferocity of tigers, and allow recovery to one's initial condition from the least amount of one day to at most three days!"

Qiao Baishi's every word was like a cavernous bell or large drum, shaking every single person present.

With his descriptions, this Heavenly Karma Pill was absolutely outside the realm of everyone's imagination. If this pill was introduced, then what would that make all similar products on the market, including the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood?

Your Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood only doubled the healing properties, whereas the other person's pill had increased three, five times, and even ten times!

You could thoroughly heal external injuries in three days, whereas the other's healed external hurts immediately and recovered immediately - it was absolutely a stroke of perfection.

As for internal injuries, your Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood needed ten days before the patient could recover, but the other's Heavenly Karma Pill would guarantee the vigor of dragons and ferocity of tigers and recovery to their initial condition from the least amount of one day to at most three days!

No matter from what aspect this was approached, the Heavenly Karma Pill was an absolute instant kill!

Yes, instant kill!

Instant kill without mercy!

Courtmaster Wang couldn't hold it in and called out loudly, "Qiao Baishi, beware of popping from your own bluster! When did your Hall of Healing

operate at such a level? Forgive me for being out of touch with the outside world.”

“Indeed, who doesn’t know how to bluster? Whether it’s a donkey or a horse, haul it out for a walk.”

“Such a great healing panacea, bring it out for a look. Only what the eye can see is the truth!”

The senior executives from the Pill King Garden started attacking verbally, jeering at Qiao Baishi. They obviously thought that Qiao Baishi was bluffing.

Qiao Baishi’s facial expression was composed, and his face was as if it embraced the wind in the face of the jeers raining down like wind and rain from the Pill King Garden.

“Courtmaster Wang, one of your sentences was true just now. You are indeed out of touch and ignorant of the outside world, like a frog at the bottom of a well. You couldn’t contain yourself and impatiently hopped out as soon as you’d received a so called Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood, creating high profile media play. The Hall of Healing has always been practical. If it wasn’t for your Pill King Garden’s malicious provocation this time, our Hall of Healing originally made no plans to respond.”

When his words finished, Qiao Baishi waved his hands and a few trusted administrators walked out from the back. Everyone held a jade box, and the boxes numbered eight in total.

“Sirs, it is said that what the eye sees is true. These eight jade boxes contain eight Heavenly Karma Pills. One of them is an inferior rank and at three times effectiveness of similar pills. Four of them are middle rank, reaching five times effectiveness. Three of them are upper rank, reaching ten times effectiveness. If one day we are able to develop the supreme rank Heavenly Karma Pill, its healing properties are conservatively estimated at twenty times that of current similar products!”

Qiao Baishi strongly held in his internal agitation and introduced the Heavenly Karma Pill. When he had finished the introduction, he naturally walked off stage.

“Sirs, eight display tables. Please take turns in inspection and discussion!”

Whether it's a donkey or a horse, haul it out for a walk.

By now, the Hall of Healing was a sharp, unsheathed sword that was displaying its towering loftiness.

The guests present were all incredibly excited. If this Heavenly Karma Pill was truly as miraculous as Qiao Baishi's words, then who would care about the Pill King Garden's previous marketing?

One was not afraid of not recognizing value, but was rather afraid of a side by side comparison!

The senior executives over at the Pill King Garden side who were still caught up in their anger also set aside their face and their modesty, and actually wormed their way into the lines, wishing to personally see this so called Heavenly Karma Pill that the Hall of Healing had brought.

In the entire process, Jiang Chen was as steady as Mt. Tai, a small smile on his face as he watched this theatrical scene.

He also rather admired Qiao Baishi's move. He'd waited until the Pill King Garden had jumped to its highest before smacking it down with one slap. The higher you were, the harder you fell!

The Pill King Garden fools want to give a slap to the face? In the end, they'll tragically discover that their laboriously planned face denying gesture had landed soundly on their own faces!

Chapter 48: Upgraded Face Slapping

Another hour had passed, but the area before the display tables was still full of guests. Each guest had a great attachment, and were reluctant to part with the contents on the tables.

"Incredible, it truly is 'one who's not afraid of not recognizing value, but rather is afraid of a side by side comparison'. This Heavenly Karma Pill, whether in terms of potency, spiritual aura, or outward appearances, are all an instant kill towards the Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood."

"The Hall of Healing is truly worthy to be called such. The first heavyweight in spirit medicine in the kingdom absolutely doesn't hold an unearned reputation."

“The Pill King Garden wanted to make use of this opportunity to suppress the Hall of Healing. Who would’ve thought that after creating such a large hubbub, the Hall of Healing still had superior tactics. Looks like the Pill King Garden has failed in face slapping, and rather slapped their own instead.”

“Such exquisite perfection, absolutely exquisite perfection. I’ve decided to choose this Heavenly Karma Pill in the future. To be honest, after seeing the Heaven Karma Pill, I feel all other healing panaceas are complete trash.”

“Hallmaster Qiao, when can this Heavenly Karma Pill be purchased?”

Some senior executive from the Pill King Garden left the Hall’s display tables with a darkened face, returning to the Pill King Garden’s side.

“Grand Courtmaster, it’s too abnormal!”

“What’s going on? Is that Heavenly Karma Pill really that good?” Courtmaster Wang’s breathing became hurried.

“Grand Courtmaster, that pill is likely even a bit better than what Qiao Baishi described it as. Grand Courtmaster, we were played by the Hall of Healing!”

“What?!” It was as if Courtmaster Wang’s chest had suffered a heavy impact, his face abruptly becoming ashen white.

Master Violet had been sitting there without the slightest stir when those fey eyes also suddenly opened, shooting out blue light.

“What did you say? The Hall of Healing’s pill is better than my Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood?” Master Violet absolutely didn’t believe that such a pill could exist in a common kingdom like the Eastern Kingdom.

But the truth, irrefutable like metal, had fully answered this question.

In the span of a moment, the guests and stores that the Pill King Garden had invited had all surged towards the Hall of Healing’s side. There were no exceptions.

They were all planning on ordering from the Hall of Healing, and in fact, were striving to be first and feared to lag behind.

This was in stark contrast to the Pill King Garden's side. Apart from a few staunch supporters, it was cold and cheerless - a deserted house that was possible to catch sparrows on its doorstep.

"How can this be?" Courtmaster Wang found it difficult to accept the situation in front of him.

He had planned so much for today, and prepared so long for this day of glory.

Finally, the historical moment had arrived today. He thought that the Pill King Garden being disadvantaged towards the Hall of Healing would become a thing of the past starting today.

Starting today, the Pill King Garden would advance triumphantly, and rebuff the Hall of Healing every step of the way!

Yet, harsh reality had dealt him a severe slap, causing him to suddenly fall down when he had climbed to the highest peak.

The Hall of Healing had used a way that they took the most pride in, to severely fling a slap at the Pill King Garden!

The Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood?

Dominate the healing panacea market?

Their hopes and dreams were quite full, but their reality was quite shallow!

The Hall of Healing's "Heavenly Karma Pill" had easily demolished all of their previous preparations. Their long fermented attack had been easily dispelled.

How was this a battle between equals? This was practically knocking on their door and asking to be tortured.

Courtmaster Wang suddenly understood why Qiao Baishi looked completely at ease. It turned out that he had long prepared a severe counterattack, and was only waiting for the Pill King Garden to hop in with both feet.

Failure, a complete and utter failure!

"Courtmaster Wang, we must not be dejected. The Hall of Healing had an advantage in the healing panacea market to begin with. It doesn't mean much that the advantage is in their hands right now. We still have the Qi

Replenishing Pill and the Crane Heart Pill. We still lead the Hall of Healing in these two areas!”

“Right, let them strut for a while this time. Our Pill King Garden still has our advantages!”

The senior executives of the Pill King Garden started comforting themselves.

However, their self comforting didn’t last too long. Qiao Baishi suddenly stood up again on the hall exhibition stage, and spread his hands downwards. “Sirs, we will not be accepting preorders for the Heavenly Karma Pill today. If everyone is still interested, you can apply to preorder it at the Hall of Healing starting tomorrow. Moreover, I have another piece of good news to tell everyone here.”

More good news?

The fervent guests present had calmed down somewhat. The “Heavenly Karma Pill” that the Hall of Healing had introduced was simply too shocking. Therefore, they wished to see what other surprises the Hall of Healing would have for everyone?

Qiao Baishi smiled, “This time, the Hall of Healing is prepared to introduce en masse the pill medicines that we have been researching the past couple of years. Apart from the Heavenly Karma Pill, we will also be introducing two more pill medicines. One of them is the qi replenishing Vast Ocean Pill, the other is the heart calming One Buddha Powder.”

Qi replenishing arena, heart calming arena.

Those present were all smart people and immediately understood that the pill medicines the Hall of Healing was introducing were very targeted. It was patently obvious that they were targeting the Pill King Garden.

Those two arenas were the two that the Pill King Garden were originally most adept in.

Could it be that the Hall of Healing was also planning on intervening in these two arenas this time? Was this the tempo of thoroughly beating down the Pill King Garden?

The faces of the senior executives of the Pill King Garden changed drastically. Their confidence had already been crushed to pieces by the Heavenly Karma Pill earlier. They immediately had a sense of danger that the wolf was coming when they heard Qiao Baishi's words.

Courtmaster Wang only felt a cold draft on the back of his head as cold sweat suddenly poured out. A bad premonition started rising uncontrollably from his heart.

He had a bad feeling. Not only had the setup that he'd prepared painstakingly, been completely dissolved by the Hall of Healing, but the Hall had also prepared a quick and forceful retaliation and was about to lure the Pill King Garden into a fatal trap by random blows!

Courtmaster Wang was well aware that if the two areas of the Qi Replenishing Pill and the Crane Heart Pill were defeated by the Hall of Healing, then armageddon undoubtedly awaited the Pill King Garden.

After all, a large part of why the Pill King Garden could find its footing in the capital and become the third heavyweight in the spirit medicine field in the Eastern Kingdom was due to the Qi Replenishing Pill and the Crane Heart Pill.

More than sixty to seventy percent of their revenue was derived from these two pill medicines.

If they lost their advantages in these two pill medicines, then the Pill King Garden would have utterly lost all of its advantages, and be no different from those small stores.

Except, the workings of this world was that whatever you were afraid of would be what came your way.

Under the gazes of all present. Qiao Baishi wore a smile that exuded confidence, and had a measured tone that was neither too hurried nor too slow. "Sirs, everyone knows that the pill medicines currently on the market can at most only recover thirty percent of true qi. The Vast Ocean Pill that the Hall is about to introduce can, in the worst case scenario, recover forty percent true qi, and fifty percent under normal conditions. If it's an upper rank Vast Ocean Pill, then it can even recover sixty percent! And dosage can be repeated after just an hour, while repeated dosages will not impact effects in the slightest."

“What, recover at least forty percent?”

“Recover fifty percent true qi under normal conditions? Is... is this a joke?”

“An upper rank Vast Ocean Pill can recover sixty percent? My gosh, if this is in battle, a few upper rank Vast Ocean Pills will greatly increase battle strength!”

Everyone know that the technical requirements of a qi recovery pill were high. The most expensive pill medicine on the market was the Pill King Garden’s Qi Replenishing Pill. It could recover thirty percent, with its effects being slightly adversely impacted with repeated dosage after an hour.

But the Vast Ocean Pill that Qiao Baishi spoke of could recover forty percent under the worst conditions, fifty percent under normal conditions, and even sixty percent with an upper rank pill. This was basically a disruptive breakthrough.

One had to know that the Qi Replenishing Pill had occupied the advantage for more than two hundred years in the arena of qi recovery. That was to say, no technical advancement had occurred in this arena for a full two hundred years.

One could see how incredibly difficult it was to obtain a breakthrough in the qi recovery arena.

But the Hall of Healing’s breakthrough had come too quickly and was too frightening! It was absolutely a disruptive innovation.

“Hallmaster Qiao, since this Vast Ocean Pill is so amazing, will it come with a whoppingly high price?”

“Indeed, ordinary folk will be unable to use it if it’s too expensive.”

Qiao Baishi smiled. “According to the calculations of our cost of goods sold, the Vast Ocean Pill that recovers forty percent of true qi will be priced the same as the current best product on the market - the Qi Replenishing Pill. Prices will double for pills that recover fifty percent, and double yet again for those that recover sixty percent.”

Every ten percent increase in effectiveness would lead to a doubling of price.

This price was quite reasonable. To recover an additional ten percent of true qi in battle was incredibly meaningful to a practitioner in battle.

“Hallmaster Qiao, you’re not joking are you?”

“Indeed, a pill that recovers forty percent true qi is priced the same as one that recovers thirty percent? Then we only recognize the Vast Ocean Pill!”

“Hallmaster Qiao, I want to preorder a hundred pills!

“I want two hundred pills!”

“And me...”

It was a scene of chaos as everyone realized a new era had arrived in the qi recovery arena! With such fabulous effects, why would one wait for its price to rise after it had cornered the market, instead of fighting for it now?

Everyone thought that the reason the Hall of Healing had set such a low price for the Vast Ocean Pill was surely because of them suppressing the Pill King Garden.

Such low prices would definitely not continue for long. Prices for the Vast Ocean Pill were sure to inflate after it had thoroughly beaten its competitors on the market.

Everyone was smart, and so were desperately fighting to preorder early!

Qiao Baishi pressed down with his hands and smiled. “Sirs, the same sentence holds. We will not accept preorders today. And, I can also promise that we will not inflate prices without rhyme or reason. Unless the price for the spirit medicine ingredients inflate, we will never increase prices!”

Qiao Baishi was well aware that the Vast Ocean Pill was the result of a superior pill recipe. When it came to the spirit medicine ingredients for the Vast Ocean Pill, its costs were possibly even lower than the Qi Replenishing Pill.

The Hall of Healing’s advantage were actually the advantages that the young duke Jiang Chen had brought.

Never increase prices!

This promise prompted a series of cheers from the gathering and applause sounded like thunder in the span of a moment. One had to say, Qiao Baishi's bearing had conquered all the guests present.

When the Pill King Garden had exhibited that so called Pill of Dragon and Tiger Blood, it had been quite arrogant. The Qi Replenishing Pill had also often opportunistically changed prices, skyrocketing in times of need.

The Hall of Healing was the first heavyweight of the spirit medicine world after all. With these manners, this bearing wasn't something that the Pill King Garden could match!

"Faugh! When I get home, I'm throwing that Qi Replenishing Pill into the latrines!"

"Right? Randomly increasing prices for no reason, as if they're the only ones who know how to refine a qi recovery pill!"

"Standing up well to comparison. Looks like the pill medicine market truly needs the Hall of Healing at the helm. And only the Hall of Healing has this kind of right and bearing."

"I've decided. I'm going to apply for a premier membership card at the Hall of Healing tomorrow and be a customer for life!"

The previously neutral guests all naturally stood on the side of the Hall of Healing after receiving Qiao Baishi's promise.

Even a lot of the Pill King Garden's old clients couldn't resist temptation after seeing such enormous profits. They could also fully see that the Garden's Qi Replenishing Pill was done for!

Chapter 49: Complete Knock Down

Some more meddlesome folks continued asking, "Hallmaster Qiao, I remember that you mentioned introducing three types of pill medicine just now. What else is there apart from the Heavenly Karma Pill and the Vast Ocean Pill?"

"Yes, we trust the products of the Hall of Healing. Out with it, so everyone can rejoice!"

“Hallmaster Qiao, don’t keep us in suspense, speak!”

The crowd of people were all raising an uproar and on their tiptoes in expectation.

Qiao Baishi nodded, smiling with ease. “We have decided to discreetly introduce the third pill medicine after careful consideration. The Hall of Healing will be giving up a great share of profits with the third pill medicine. Our goal is to give back to those who have greatly supported the Hall of Healing over the years.

The third pill medicine is called One Buddha Powder, a type of refreshing, mind calming pill medicine. When compared to the best similar products on the current market, the effects of One Buddha Powder are possibly twice as effective. And yet the price we’re setting for it will be half of the best pill medicine currently on the market!”

Twice as effective at half the price!

Dead silence actually reigned supreme for a moment after Qiao Baishi had spoken. They almost suspected that something was wrong with their ears.

Had they heard incorrectly?

It was already exceedingly odd, and really didn’t make much sense, that a pill medicine twice as effective hadn’t undergone a price increase, but now its price was actually being halved?

This...

Finally, someone couldn’t hold it in. “Hallmaster Qiao, this... you’re not joking, are you?”

“The sign of the Hall of Healing is here, how dare I speak nonsense? Each bit of spittle from the Hall of Healing is as if a nail, please be at ease everyone. To be candid, we hadn’t planned on earning much from the One Buddha Powder.”

This last sentence however, was a bit watered down. In actuality, since the One Buddha Powder didn’t need to be refined, waste of materials didn’t exist and so its cost of goods sold were only a tenth of the Pill King Garden’s Crane Heart Pill.

With such low costs, even reducing the price by one half still raked in money.

To be honest, even if it were sold at the same price as the Crane Heart Pill, that was still absolutely enough to ignite the market, but Qiao Baishi had purposefully slashed the price in half.

The purpose of this was to beat the Pill King Garden down so hard that they had no chance at all in coming back.

In addition, they could make use of this opportunity to craft the image of a virtuous and sincere Hall of Healing, solidifying the Hall's position as the first heavyweight of the spirit medicine.

Qiao Baishi had deployed three successive moves and introduced three kinds of pill medicine. And each was more stunning than the last.

But to the Pill King Garden, Qiao Baishi's three successive moves were the equivalent of three successive heavy punches. Each was more debilitating than the last!

Courtmaster Wang could barely stay on his feet. The skies spun and the ground turned, he was about to faint right then and there as his teeth chattered, betraying his weakness.

He knew that this wasn't a joke. This was a kind of bloodless slaughter in the marketplace. With these three moves, the Hall of Healing had utterly destroyed the foundations of the Pill King Garden.

"Grand Courtmater, what... what should we do?"

"Master Violet, say something. Surely you won't watch the Pill King Garden go bankrupt?"

"Yes Master Violet, we all work for the Duke of Soaring Dragon, you..."

Master Violet snorted coldly and looked at the senior executives of the Pill King Garden with eyes full of disdain. He swept his sleeves up and left.

"Truly unable to accomplish anything, but good at spoiling things!"

The last bit of faith held by the senior executives of the Pill King Garden collapsed with the flourish of his departure.

The senior executives of the Hall of Healing also felt like they were in a dreamscape at the moment. They too hadn't anticipated Qiao Baishi's successive actions.

After all, in an effort to avoid leaks, Qiao Baishi had continuously concealed and not spoken of his intentions with regards to this matter. Even many of the senior executives present hadn't been in the know.

Apart from a few elders absolutely loyal to Qiao Baishi, who had received hints from Qiao Baishi before the matter, many senior executives had had no foreknowledge, including the second hallmaster Yue Qun.

But at the moment, what did Yue Qun care about that. Seeing the faces that had been thwarted on the Pill King Garden side, his old face was smiling so hard that it was about to blossom into a flower.

"Number three, you've played this hand beautifully!" Yue Qun patted Qiao Baishi's shoulder. "I had previously thought it a bit odd that the Lord Hallmaster had trusted you so and cultivated you. In this my regard, my insight is truly inferior to the Lord Hallmaster's."

"Second hallmaster is experienced and steady, there is much more that I must learn from you." Qiao Baishi also responded humbly.

The next step was a showing by the Pill Trial Warriors.

The profession of a Pill Trial Warrior was first and foremost to be impartial and speak the truth.

Of course, the spirit medicines from the Hall of Healing could withstand trials. After the repeated tests by the Pill Trial Warriors, these pill medicines had gained complete certification!

Heavenly Karma Pill, Vast Ocean Pill, One Buddha Powder... they were all genuine goods at a fair price!

Under the guarantee of the Pill Trial Warriors, the last bit of reservations and suspicions held by anyone present were dispelled. All the guests boiled with fervor and surged to the front of the display tables.

“Hallmaster Qiao, I am the son of the Minister of War, Minister Fan. I will be over early tomorrow morning to place my order, remember to reserve a place for me.”

“Old Yue, my brother is Vice Minister Zhang in the Ministry of Revenue. Your relationship with him goes back more than ten years, right? Save a place for a brother tomorrow, I want to place an order!”

All sorts of favor currying and cottoning up to someone came rushing in during the span of a moment.

Although the Hall of Healing had many hands on their side, they too couldn't fend off the press of people for a bit.

As for Princess Gouyu, who had been invited by the Hall of Healing, her charming face was incredibly grave as she looked at the situation that had taken a complete turn for the opposite. She would occasionally throw a rushed glance at Jiang Chen, her heart filled with questions.

She took another look at Jiang Chen. He had been smiling slightly all along, as if the hubbub in front of his eyes had nothing to do with him.

The more he was this way, the more Princess Gouyu resolutely believed that the Hall of Healing's mindblowing comeback had some elements of this person's influence in it.

Just as Princess Gouyu was sifting through complicated feelings, an elder from the Hall of Healing walked over respectfully, holding a luxurious jade box in his hands.

“Your Highness, this is a dry share agreement(1). According to young duke Jiang, the Princess was involved in the One Buddha Powder. Here are dry shares of twenty percent, we hope the princess kindly accepts.”

Twenty percent dry share, this was basically receiving money without lifting a single finger in effort!

Gouyu was dumbfounded, what involvement? What was the brat Jiang Chen playing at? But she immediately thought of the prescription that Jiang Chen had written for her and suddenly thought of what he had said - if she didn't believe him, she could take that prescription and exchange it for several million silver at the Hall of Healing.

Indeed, the kid's hands could be found behind this matter!

Princess Gouyu further affirmed her internal speculation. She was a royal princess and didn't put on airs. She nodded her head slightly, and one of her servants accepted the agreement for twenty percent dry shares.

She was well aware that the worth of this twenty percent dry share was much more than several million. When this One Buddha Powder was introduced, it was sure to storm the market and, without a doubt, corner the sector.

In terms of long term calculations, the profits of this twenty percent dry share would absolutely be denoted in hundreds of millions.

The Pill King Garden's furious build up had ended up benefiting the Hall of Healing in the end. It had also incidentally pushed itself into the abyss of destruction.

This was basically digging a hole and burying themselves!

The guests present finally left reluctantly, after repeated promises from the senior executives of the Hall of Healing.

The Hall of Healing had emerged victorious on all fronts in this campaign, and had returned home laden with spoils of war.

As the mastermind behind the scenes, Jiang Chen had watched the show that he'd come to watch, and was about to leave with his underlings when he suddenly halted as he passed by the Pill King Garden's display tables.

"Oh right, Courtmaster Wang, I gave you a warning out of the goodness of my heart last time that your days were numbered. You treated my goodwill as ill intent. Ai, I don't even know how to comfort you."

Jiang Chen planned on stomping this Courtmaster Wang dead with one foot.

This man had publicly suppressed his Jiang family, and had humiliated Jiang Feng at the Soaring Dragon manor. In Jiang Chen's eyes, this man was destined to be rotten bones in a graveyard, and he didn't have much time left.

Cold killing intent shot out of Courtmaster Wang's eyes as his bloodshot eyes were filled with wildness. He was like a starving wolf driven into an impasse, ready to risk his life at any time.

When he walked out of the Myriad Treasures Palace, Jiang Chen's tone was frosty. "One will fall victim in return if a snake isn't beaten to death. If we're to do something to this Pill King Garden, then we must destroy and pull them down!"

The four Sheng battalion brothers all nodded and felt that Jiang Chen's words made a lot of sense.

"Jiang Chen, wait a moment."

At the entrance to the Myriad Treasures Palace, Princess Gouyu, wearing light green leather body armor embedded with a natural body scent, rushed in front of Jiang Chen.

She pushed the box forward, "I'm giving this twenty percent dry shares back to you."

"What are you giving them back to me for?" Jiang Chen smiled. "Wasn't this a red envelope for you?"

"Humph. Don't think I don't know that you were certainly involved in the Hall of Healing's turnaround. Do you think I don't know the origins of this One Buddha Powder?" Princess Gouyu's face was flushed faintly red.

"If they gave it to you then just accept it, what's with all the extraneous words?" Jiang Chen rolled his eyes. "Besides, you were the first to take this One Buddha Powder. You were a Pill Trial Warrior, receiving a red envelope would be quite normal, no?"

"What? Jiang Chen you brat. How dare you treat this princess as a Pill Trial Warrior!" Princess Gouyu couldn't hold in her inexplicable anger.

"Look at you, you're fine!" Jiang Chen chuckled. Please, he - Jiang Chen - was the most renowned alchemy master beneath the heavens. The pill recipes he took out were advanced recipes from even more lofty realms. They had undergone forging by hundreds and thousands of truths. What need was there for a Pill Trial Warrior?

"Don't be so hot tempered, I know you're internally grateful to me. If you want to pay me back, then send the set of flying daggers to me earlier."

Jiang Chen squeezed his legs after he'd finished speaking and left on a galloping horse.

The four Sheng battalion brothers were under orders to protect Jiang Chen. They could only look with resignation at the princess, before rushing off in hot pursuit.

Only Princess Gouyu was left, staring off in the distance as she clutched the jade box. After the events of today, Gouyu could definitely be certain that Jiang Chen was not as simple as he appeared on the surface.

"Jiang Chen..." Princess Gouyu lightly mouthed this name and sank into bafflingly deep thought in that moment.

Back at the Jiang Han manor, Jiang Chen was not overly excited due to the events of the day. To speak frankly, the events of today were just an interlude for him

Endless martial dao was Jiang Chen's ultimate goal.

"Jiang Zheng, make a trip to the Hall of Healing and tell Qiao Baishi to come here." Jiang Chen thought momentarily and had an idea in his mind.

He didn't want to split a portion of his mental energy to think of the affairs of the Hall of Healing. He needed to concentrate more on the path of martial dao.

One had to give it to him, Qiao Baishi was nearing blind worship now when it came to Jiang Chen. Although a multitude of affairs awaited him in the Hall of Healing, he immediately set off without hesitation when he heard Jiang Chen's summons.

Jiang Chen was quite satisfied with Qiao Baishi's attitude.

"Third hallmaster, I only have one sentence. What I've given to your Hall of Healing today, I can take back tenfold tomorrow. Do you believe me?"

1. Dry shares are shares of ownership awarded to someone who was pivotal to the founding of a company, but when that person wasn't an investor

Chapter 50: Qiao Baishi Acknowledges a Master

Qiao Baishi was aghast and hurriedly stood up. “Young duke, has someone from the Hall of Healing given offense? I will immediately go back and investigate. Whoever has offended the young duke, I will throw them out on the streets immediately!”

Jiang Chen spread his hands downward and smiled, “Don’t be agitated, I was just saying. I’ve asked you to come today because I wish to speak a few words from my heart.”

“Baishi listens most devoutly and respectfully to any instructions that the young duke will give.” Qiao Baishi had humbled himself greatly in front of Jiang Chen. He knew, better than anyone, that the glories and honor of the Hall of Healing which belonged to him today, were all courtesy of Jiang Chen.

It was just as Jiang Chen had said: What he could give the Hall of Healing today, he could take back tenfold tomorrow.

Jiang Chen nodded. “I’ll speak frankly. I have no time to visit your Hall of Healing once, twice, or even thrice a month. I need a confidante, a follower. Or to put it in better sounding terms, a disciple-in-name who will listen to what I say.”

Qiao Baishi’s thoughts raced. How could he be an idiot if he was a Hallmaster? He naturally understood the meaning behind Jiang Chen’s words.

This was a desire for Qiao Baishi to prove his loyalty and announce his allegiance!

“Third Hallmaster, you’re a smart man. I’ll only say this: If there comes a day when someone who’s a hundred times greater than you kneels in front of me and licks my toes, I might not even accept him as a disciple then. What I can give you is ten times, a hundred times beyond the limits of your imagination!”

Qiao Baishi’s breathing become rushed. How would he not believe him? Jiang Chen had changed the entire landscape of the Eastern Kingdom’s spirit medicine market with just three random pill recipes.

Given enough time, the pill medicines of the Hall of Healing making their way to the neighboring sixteen countries and making staggering profits was absolutely not out of the question.

And all of this had been bestowed by Jiang Chen.

When his thoughts traveled here, how could Qiao Baishi hesitate? His two knees immediately hit the floor, “Honored master, Baishi kowtows in greeting. Baishi is willing to spend his life following master, and learn of the boundless dao of alchemy.”

Following his words, he kowtowed as respectfully as possible, and fully fulfilled the courtesies of formally becoming a disciple. (1)

Jiang Chen didn’t put on any airs, and fully accepted Qiao Baishi’s ritual.

“Baishi, there will come a day in which you discover that you made a wise and brilliant decision today. If you had hesitated a moment longer just now, you would’ve lost my trust. The aid I’ve rendered you would’ve also halted today.”

Qiao Baishi was exceedingly fearful.

“Since you’ve acknowledged me as your master, I will thus pass to you the core secrets of the three pill recipes. This way, it saves me the trouble of visiting your Hall of Healing every month.”

What?

Qiao Baishi was utterly dumfounded. He hadn’t thought that such amazing benefits would befall him after acknowledging a master. He was directly receiving the core techniques of these three types of pill recipes!

This was an extravagant hope that he hadn’t even dared dream of!

“Don’t be astonished. These three pill recipes are strokes of great fortune in your eyes. In my eyes though, they’re not much better than trash.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t blustering. With his attainments in the dao of alchemy in his past life, these pill recipes were street vendor goods that were ordinary beyond belief.

These words weren’t meant as an empty bluster, but to take Qiao Baishi down a notch and prevent him from overweening pride after receiving the core secrets of these three pill recipes.

Qiao Baishi was even more fearful. “Master, your disciple is afraid that he is unlikely to master these three pill recipes. In the Hall of Healing...”

“Since I am passing them onto you, then I am unafraid of you being unable to master them. Remember, you’re different from before. You have me as your backer. If anyone dares raise a hue and cry at you in the world of spirit medicine, then you have the right to pulverize them to dust. If you are unable to do so, then you have no qualifications towards being my disciple.

You must be quite aware that if I was willing, the line of those who would beg on both knees to be my disciple would stretch from my Jiang Han territory all the way to the capital.”

Qiao Baishi hurriedly said, “Your disciple is a believer. Master possesses marvelous resources, and must be the reincarnation of a great and ancient alchemy master. How could your disciple not believe? Being able to attract the favorable attention of my master is the result of the karma from my hundreds of years of training.”

Jiang Chen laughed lightly. Reincarnation of a great, ancient alchemy master? Qiao Baishi had guessed quite daringly! But he had been too conservative even with such a daring guess!

Of course, Jiang Chen would naturally not reveal his own secrets and only smiled mysteriously. “Great and ancient alchemy master? Baishi, if you have enough good fortune, the longer you follow me, the more you will learn about how high the heavens are, and how big the world is.”

For Qiao Baishi, this was destined to be a sleepless night.

This evening, he had made a decision that would change the trajectory of his life.

Jiang Chen bore no suspicions about his people, and had fully passed on the mysteries and secrets of the three pill recipes to Qiao Baishi. This made Qiao Baishi commit himself even more fully to Jiang Chen.

After sending off Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen entered the Jiang Han secret training room, and continued training.

Although Jiang Chen had been quite busy during this time, he had never neglected his nightly homework of training.

After these last few days of familiar practice, he had fully entered the training state of the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”. Under the aid of this strong method, his vast waves true qi had improved with marvelous speed.

His six meridians true qi were like six hungry tigers - full of hunger towards the next acupoint. They itched for action, and wished to attempt to fight towards seven meridians true qi.

“Who would’ve thought that the power of the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” would be this much greater than I’d imagined. I thought ascending to seven meridians true qi wouldn’t be that easy. Yet, the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans” has enabled the quality of my vast waves true qi to greatly increase. With such a supreme method, breaking through to seven meridians true qi can be a matter achieved without any extra effort or the need for additional buildup.”

Jiang Chen discovered that he had underestimated the quality of the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”. In the days that he’d practiced the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”, his vast waves true qi had noticeably improved by quite a bit.

“Alright, since this vast waves true qi is so hungry, it indicates that there’s no need for me to linger in the intermediate realm of true qi. Let’s give it a go!”

Jiang Chen was a man of action, and immediately manipulated his six meridians true qi. His six currents of concentrated vast waves true qi were like six rivers converging into the great seas.

It was easier than Jiang Chen had imagined. When the six hungry wolves of vast waves true qi rushed towards the seventh acupoint, a warm current circled the acupoint.

True qi surged forward like electricity in an unstoppable onslaught at that moment, instantaneously clearing the seventh meridian without a hint of hesitation, or the slightest feeling of an obstacle.

“Hoo!”

Jiang Chen slowly exhaled a breath of murky air. Who would’ve thought that breaking through to seven meridians true qi was so much easier than he’d imagined.

“It looks like it’s not that the practitioners of this common world possess inferior potential, but that they truly lack decent training methods. With this Jiang Chen as an example, if he’d been willing to train studiously, then he would’ve been at least at six meridians true qi. Even seven meridians true qi wouldn’t have been a farfetched thought!”

Jiang Chen knew that he had broken through so easily and had entered the advanced realm of true qi at least partially because the potential of this body was quite good, but that the main reason was because of an advanced training method.

If one looked throughout the entire Eastern Kingdom, it would be impossible to find another method superior to the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”.

Even the royal family’s entire founding method of “Eastern Amethyst Qi” would still pale far in comparison to the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”.

A breakthrough in the area of true qi greatly increased Jiang Chen’s confidence.

With the aid of his vast waves of true qi, Jiang Chen began to combine his martial art technique training. With his current true qi foundation, Jiang Chen didn’t choose the techniques that were overly deep.

The set of “Vast Ocean Current Splitter” was the upgraded version of “Wave Breaker”.

And the set of “Divine Aeons Fist” was the upgraded version of “Sea God Fist”.

The original owner of Jiang Chen’s body had previously practiced “Wave Breaker” and “Sea God Fist”. But he’d counted as someone who’d just set foot in the halls of training, and hadn’t fully gotten a handle on the core components.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was basically starting from the beginning, now that he was practicing these two upgraded versions of the martial arts techniques.

There were seven forms in total to the “Vast Ocean Current Splitter”. Once the seven forms had all been successfully practiced, the sword form would be like the currents of the vast ocean, and fully display the true colors of a hero.

It was said that once the seven forms had been successfully practiced and were well versed through a comprehensive study of the subject, that one in the true qi realm would have a fighting chance with an ordinary spirit dao practitioner.

The true qi realm being able to counter the legendary spirit dao... it could be seen from such rumors what a dominant technique the "Vast Ocean Current Splitter" was.

Within the Jiang Han manor training field, Jiang Chen used his hand as a blade beneath the moonlight. His steps were as if stepping upon the backs of waves. Each motion encompassed the concept of roaring waves.

One had to say, equipped with the memories of his past life, Jiang Chen possessed an extremely strong grasp and understanding of martial arts techniques.

At this moment, his palm became a blade, and it was as if there truly was a blade in his hand with each step he took. The concepts layered upon each other, causing his entire body to be filled with the light of brilliant dominance.

"First form of 'Vast Ocean Current Splitter' -- Wave Slash!"

Jiang Chen stepped out and his arm slashed downwards. It was a clean and neat cut without any embellishments, utterly lacking extraneous movements. Simple and fast, charging towards the main subject!

True qi like frost filled the air with frigid light.

Accompanied by a strong metallic sense, true qi flowed straight through where the hand-blade pointed and landed on a stone lock.

After the crisp sound of rock shattering, the stone lock broke neatly down the center. The two sides were as smooth and shiny as a mirror - as if a knife had cut through it like tofu.

It was as if a real blade had cut through it with this move.

Jiang Chen's interest was greatly piqued as he repeatedly moved his feet. His arm continued to slash downwards, like layers upon layers of waves.

Klang, klang...

Jiang Chen slashed downwards nine times in one go.

Nine neat currents of true qi flowed through him, as the row of stone locks successively broke apart down the middle, following a neat rhythm. The sides of each broken stone lock were as neat as mirrors.

“Vast Ocean Current Splitter really is something alright!” Jiang Chen retracted his steps and gazed upon the row of neatly split stone locks. He was very satisfied as he gazed at the surface of the stone locks broken.

“Such power in the first form, and this is still only the first form. If I were to slash seven times in one go, it’s unlikely that there would be many who could take my seven slashes within the realm of advanced true qi.”

Jiang Chen was quite satisfied as he looked upon the amazing destruction brought upon by the first form of the “Vast Ocean Current Splitter”.

“An upgraded method accompanied by upgraded martial arts techniques. In such a small kingdom of a common status, one would definitely have the basis to look upon peers on the same level with disdain!”

“The final exams of the Hidden Dragon Trials are about to arrive. The easy and comfortable days of the capital are likely to be gone without a trace.” Jiang Chen very calmly perceived that, along with the start of the final exams of the Hidden Dragon Trials, great upheaval was sure to occur for the bigger picture of the capital.

The situation of a raging storm had already been formed, and Jiang Chen didn’t dare slacken the slightest bit!