

SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

Chapter 8: Shocking the Hall of Healing

Chapter 8: Shocking the Hall of Healing

One had to say, the engraved dragon medallion held quite a bit of influence. Whether it was the Hall of Healing's third hallmaster, or its elders, none of them dared to slight a holder of the dragon medallion.

It wasn't that they didn't dare to insult such a character; it was more that they didn't wish to.

Jiang Zheng was swiftly invited inside. Apart from the third hallmaster, there was a male and a female elder present as well, fully demonstrating the depths of the Hall's sincerity.

It wasn't the first time that Jiang Zheng had come to the Hall of Healing. The highest ranked person he'd seen before was an administrator, and that was only in passing. He hadn't even had the opportunity to start a conversation.

But, today, a hallmaster and two elders were standing in front of him and treating him as an honored guest.

Wasn't this a drastic change in fortunes?

Jiang Zheng felt really damn good inside, but didn't let it go to his head. He resolutely told himself to calm down and to avoid showing fear. He knew that these folks were not giving him face, but the medallion instead.

Since he had the medallion up his sleeve, what did he have to fear?

One had to give it to him, Jiang Zheng was something else alright. The three hallmaster still couldn't get a read on him after three rounds of tea. He chuckled and said, "This noble sir carries a medallion granted by the king

himself. Sir must be an uncommon individual. May we glean a bit of your purpose here today?”

Granted by the king himself? Jiang Zheng almost flung the teacup from his hand in fright.

When Jiang Chen had given him this medallion, he'd only said that it would be useful, but hadn't breathed a hint that it had been bestowed by the king himself. He finally understood why the Hall of Healing was being so polite.

“To be honest, it wasn't any major thing. I had come to obtain some medicine ingredients, and to discuss a bit of business with your Hall.”

Buying medicine ingredients was a small thing in the eyes of the hallmaster and elders, something they wouldn't inquire further about. They were much more interested in that 'spot of business.'

“May we know what business this might be?” The hallmaster inquired noncommittally. He wouldn't rashly agree to something before gaining a full understanding of this stranger's background.

“I have a pill recipe here, one that has been lost since ancient times.” Jiang Zheng didn't bother with small talk and cut straight to the chase. “I won't sell this recipe, only share the profits. 50/50: you're in charge of the medicine ingredients, I'll just hold ownership.”

Holding ownership and asking for a 50/50 split, this was asking for a lot.

Even if it was an exclusive pill recipe, it wasn't as if the Hall of Healing had never seen it before. This fellow was really demanding far too much. A 50/50 split, this was sheer robbery!

“Heh, the Hall has seen our share of pill recipe trade before. We've always bought out the previous owner, and have no precedent for sharing profits. And

not to mention the fact that we bear the costs. This 50/50 split is... it really is... Let's put it this way: May I take a look at the recipe first?"

The third hallmaster didn't shut down negotiations, but it was obvious that he wasn't too enthused. As for perusing the recipe, he did so out of a sense of professional courtesy.

"You can take a look alright, I'm just afraid you won't be able to understand it. Ah whatever, you can have a look. I have the refining method anyway, and I've left out some of the most important ingredients. Feel free to go through it, but don't even think about stealing it."

Jiang Zheng generously flung out the list and spoke with a careless, indifferent manner. He was as serene as a mountain. It was obvious to see that he was fully comfortable with the situation by now and was interacting with the Hall's authority figures with ease.

The third hallmaster took the recipe, cast a glance and slightly creased his brow. How was this a pill recipe that had been lost for ages?

A regular piece of paper, ordinary handwriting... his first impression was that this was a scam.

If you wanted to counterfeit an ancient pill recipe, at least find a yellowed piece of paper and write in sagacious calligraphy.

What the heck was this?

This counterfeit seriously lacked effort. Did he intend to use the dragon medallion to swindle the Hall of Healing?

The two elders also looked at the recipe with odd expressions on their faces. Their gazes met, and both could read "fraud" in each other's eyes.

The third hallmaster took back the recipe and scrutinized it again. His brow furrowed, "The Heavenly Karma pill. I've never heard of this pill."

“It’s a pill recipe from ancient times. Isn’t it normal that you haven’t heard of it? If you have, would it still be a long lost recipe?” Jiang Zheng calmly wet his lips with a sip of tea.

He put the teacup and lid onto the table with one smooth movement. “You’ve seen the recipe now but can’t recognize its true value. There will be others who can. I know your thoughts. You’re thinking that this paper and handwriting looks too commonplace, and that its a fake. Ah, whatever. One cannot talk to summer insects about ice. If you understood, you wouldn’t need any words of explanation. If you didn’t, then it would make no difference if I talked until I was blue in the face. I won’t bother you anymore. Good day.”

Although Jiang Zheng spoke with a free and easy attitude, his heart was pounding like a drum. This was his final scheme: playing hard to get. Pretending to be a deep character, faking carefreeness.

If they didn’t fall for it, then he was really out of ideas.

“Ai. I hope that the Temple of the Farmer God or the Pill King Garden recognizes value where it lies. Let us hope that there is not an abundance of pill amateurs and not a single master worthy of his title in this great capital.”

Jiang Zheng displayed flagging interest as he carelessly stood up and prepared to leave.

The third hallmaster felt Jiang Zheng was a bit mysterious as the latter was quite inscrutable and inexplicably free and easy. If their guest left just like this, that meant the Hall of Healing had not offered any insult. Logically speaking, they should be quite happy with this turn of events.

But for some reason, the third hallmaster felt that if they let this guest go like this, the Hall would be losing out on something.

His curiosity peaked, the third hallmaster called out, “Sir, please hold your steps! My Hall’s lord hallmaster and second hallmaster will return in just a few days. Although I do not know this pill, perhaps they...”

“Ah forget it forget it. Chance and luck wait for no one. I came to the Hall of Healing on a whim today. I don’t have the patience to wait a few days for you. Who would have thought that the great Hall of Healing would not have a single person who can recognize the value of this recipe. What a shame, what a pity.”

Jiang Zheng progressed through retreating, and stepped up his game of playing hard to get.

The third hallmaster and two elders had nothing to say in response and was about to happily send their guest along their way, when a cold snort pierced the hallway. A haughty voice penetrated strongly through the air, “What recipe? Such empty boasts, bring it in front of me.”

Jiang Zheng hesitated and was about to speak when the third hallmaster smiled, “That would be elder Shun. Elder Shun is a foreigner, but the Hall’s resident expert and a heavyweight in the pill medicine world. Even my Hall’s lord hallmaster would have to pay his respects to Elder Shun.

“Can a resident expert make any decisions?” Jiang Zheng stuck his nose in the air.

“If it was elder Shun doing the appraisal, the Hall would trust elder Shun’s judgement.”

A resident expert could have such influence and sway? What kind of resident expert was this? Jiang Zheng thought it was exceedingly odd, but this wasn’t what he really cared about.

The pill recipe was passed over to another room, where a white haired old man, who had witnessed the passages of time, took possession of the paper.

He glanced at it, and at first thought the same as the third hallmaster. But he then furrowed his brow and settled into deep thought.

His frown grew even deeper after a while, and he muttered to himself, "Can such a pill recipe exist on this earth? Can I have walked the paths of the dao of alchemy for two hundred years, yet still remained so ignorant?"

Elder Shun abruptly stood up and pushed open a door to step into a garden behind the room. There was a girl dressed in pale green silk in the middle of the garden, standing in the midst of a patch of jade green bamboo. She was feeding some birds as the morning mist illuminated her snow white skin, turning it as creamy as suet.

"Huang'er." Elder Shun called.

The girl turned and displayed a stunning beauty that was as mesmerizing as the silver moon, the white of snow, the most exquisite scenery. A few traces of faint sorrow could be found in her brow, adding a hint of desolation to her otherwise enthralling beauty.

To find such beauty on earth, it was a match even for the fairies in the heavens.

"Yes, elder Shun?"

Elder Shun smiled, "I've just received a pill recipe but am unable to place my finger on it. Huang'er, will you cast an eye over it?"

The girl smiled lightly. That smile smoothed her brow and dispersed the gloom, bringing her to life.

"If even elder Shun is unable to make it out, then Huang'er is unlikely to do any better. Let me take a look."

When she handled the recipe, Huang'er did not comment on the paper or handwriting, but involuntarily gave a low gasp, "The Heavenly Karma pill? This is an ancient recipe."

Her expression grew even more astonished the further she read. Finally, she read the recipe from top to bottom again, "I have once seen this pill recipe in a precious classic book, but it was not complete. The ingredients that were listed however, were exactly the same as the ones listed here. The list in the classic book was not as comprehensive as the one here."

It was elder Shun's turn to be surprised, "So this means that the recipe for the Heavenly Karma pill is real?"

"Real or not, Huang'er has never seen the complete recipe before. But following this line of reasoning, it is highly likely that this recipe is real. Elder Shun, where did this pill recipe come from?"

Elder Shun's face suddenly came alive as an animated light shone out of his eyes. But he seemed to think of something sad, and the light slowly faded away again.

"Ai, even if this Heavenly Karma pill were real, it is only the gold standard for physical hurts. It is useless against your sickness, Huang'er."

Elder Shun's excitement abated greatly after he spoke.

However, Huang'er was the one who smiled and said, "Elder Shun, matters written in the stars cannot be forced. Leave it to fate."

The pill recipe made its way back to the third hallmaster and elders, along with a dispassionate sentence from elder Shun, "That recipe is most likely real, and if it goes into production, then all the healing pills of your Eastern Kingdom, and even those of the neighboring sixteen kingdoms, are trash compared to it. Demand will dry up as the Heavenly Karma pill will take the market by the storm. You decide what to do next!"

It was apparent that although elder Shun was just a resident expert, his status was extremely high and even the Hall of Healing fawned on him.

The third hallmaster was gobsmacked. He hadn't anticipated that, after elder Shun's appraisal, that fake-beyond-words pill would turn out to be most likely real.

That was good and all, but elder Shun's words were too frightening. This Heavenly Karma pill would cause all other similar products to be pulled from the shelves? This was simply too intimidating to contemplate.

This was cornering the market! To corner a market meant high profits and extremely high return on investment. Even the mere thought of it was enough to make someone shudder all over.

In complete contrast, Jiang Zheng was able to lay his heart to rest when he heard elder Shun's appraisal. What a lifesaver; what an expert! He was truly family, someone who recognized the true value of things!

Jiang Zheng had been deathly afraid that elder Shun would conclude with "trash" as his judgement. If that was the case, then he, Jiang Zheng, would have been thrown out of the Hall in a dusty exodus.

But now, armed with elder Shun's appraisal and observing the third hallmaster's reaction, Jiang Zheng knew that the young duke had won this bet. He really did have help from the gods!

He had his reassurance and an ace up his sleeve, therefore Jiang Zheng's attitude grew even more superior. He smiled faintly, "Seeing as the Hall of Healing is not willing to express anything, then I shall not waste my time further then. Farewell."

"Sir, please wait!" The third hallmaster became a little stressed out.

He couldn't afford not to, if this Heavenly Karma pill wound up in the hands of the competition, then that would be an extremely bad development. In the future, not only would the Eastern Kingdom's market be dominated by this pill, so would the markets of the neighboring 16 countries.

It was a terrifying thought indeed.