

The Gate 1054

Chapter 1054: Different paths lead to the same goal

Seeing the faint smile on the corner of Lu Dongze's mouth, Ning Cheng understood that the other party knew the name of that divine herb.

Everyone seated in this hall had extensive experience. Therefore, seeing Ning Cheng's expression and actions, many guessed that Ning Cheng most likely didn't recognise this divine herb.

Even the purple-robed man presiding over the competition secretly shook his head, thinking Ning Cheng was a braggart. From this, they concluded that Ning Cheng's earlier statement that he had refined the Six Yin Soul Pill should also be false. The divine herbs he had taken out might be rare, but even if that was the case, a pill sage claiming to be at the level of a Dao Essence Pill Sage should be able to name at least one. Continuing the competition would be unnecessary if he couldn't identify the first one.

"Senior Kong, is there a time limit for identifying this divine herb? Or is it that whoever identifies it wins?" Ning Cheng didn't inscribe anything on the jade slip. Instead, he asked about the rules of the competition.

The purple-robed man felt somewhat amused. Facing a divine herb that you couldn't identify, even if you were given a hundred days, you wouldn't be able to identify it. Unless you deduce all the effects of this divine herb, what would be the use of it? After all, you wouldn't be able to identify it.

After Ning Cheng asked this question, almost everyone's gaze turned into contempt and disdain. Jing Han, who stood behind Sichen Qiutian, also felt happy. Ning Cheng had caused a crack to form in his Dao of Alchemy, and now that Ning Cheng had been beaten down, how could he not feel happy about it?

The purple-robed man smiled faintly, "In theory, there is no time limit to identify those divine herbs, nor is the length of the identification time the basis for winning or losing. However, we can't wait for years until you identify a divine herb, right? Therefore, we will limit the time for identifying each divine herb to two hours for this particular round. If you can name it within the two hours, it will count as your point."

The words of the purple-robes man, surnamed Kong, were quite reasonable. If one couldn't identify a divine herb in two hours, there was no point in delaying any further.

"I certainly won't have a problem with it. Besides, what's the harm in giving him one year to identify the divine herbs" Lu Dongze didn't even bother to look at Ning Cheng and spoke coldly.

If it was before the start of this bout, he still saw Ning Cheng as a somewhat decent figurehead. But now, he felt Ning Cheng wasn't worth the dust beneath his feet.

"I don't have an opinion on it either. I hope Senior Kong can bring out all the divine herbs we need to identify. Two of each, if possible. I'll identify mine, and he'll take care of his. We can engrave it on the jade slip and hand it over to Senior Kong when we have identified them all. What do you think?" Ning Cheng offered a suggestion.

There was no way out of this situation. Who let him be less knowledgeable than the other party? As such, he could only flap his hands and feet around.

The purple-haired man laughed but didn't say anything. He took ten divine herbs with a raised hand and sent them to Ning Cheng and Lu Dongze, each with five in front of them. The five divine herbs in front of Ning Cheng and the five in front of Lu Dongze were identical, eliminating the thought of any one of the two being favoured.

Seeing that Lu Dongze had already taken out a blank jade slip, Ning Cheng felt somewhat helpless. He could only weasel his way out of losing by deducing the effects of these divine herbs. Unfortunately, these guys in the hall were all sharp-eyed. Lu Dongze had already started writing down the names of the five divine herbs while Ning Cheng was still deducing their effects. Even if he took advantage of some sophistry, it would turn out to be much more humiliating.

Therefore, Ning Cheng threw everything into the wind, took out a blank jade strip, and randomly inscribed a few names. When he saw Lu Dongze put down his jade slip, he hurriedly spoke up, "Senior Kong, I've finished."

Ning Cheng's words felt like a bomb dropped in the middle of the hall, causing everyone to feel astonished. This was because Ning Cheng's previous performance indicated that Ning Cheng had poor insight into things, making it almost impossible to identify all five divine herbs. Otherwise, Ning Cheng wouldn't have proposed a time limit.

What was going on? Why hadn't Lu Dongze even made a sound while Ning Cheng finished identifying them all? This was too outrageous.

Could it be that Ning Cheng had asked about the time limit before because he was afraid that Lu Dongze would deliberately make excuses and stall for time? Rather than him trying to stall for time for himself?

Lu Dongze also looked at Ning Cheng in astonishment. He couldn't help but feel something wrong with the situation. He believed in his alchemy skills. After all, he would be ranked among the best even in the entire Grand Change Realm. Not to mention that Ning Cheng's alchemical skills couldn't match up to his. Even if Ning Cheng's alchemical skills were comparable to his, Ning Cheng couldn't match him when identifying divine herbs.

But the truth was that Ning Cheng recognised the five divine herbs even before he did.

Even the purple-robed man looked at Ning Cheng in astonishment. Did he misjudge? Was Ning Cheng truly a top-tier alchemist? One should know that the divine herbs he had taken out were not just rare; some were even extinct, obtainable only through lost inheritances. Although he presided over this impromptu competition, he knew he wasn't as good as some people here regarding alchemical skills. But, even in that case, he could confidently say that he knew more about extinct divine herbs than others.

That's because he immersed himself in researching this field every day. Even if Lu Dongze had a copy of Cosmic Botanica, he wouldn't know more than him.

"I've finished identifying them too." Lu Dongze's tone was not as dismissive as before, and this time carried a hint of caution.

The purple-robed man suppressed his inner surprise, looked at Lu Dongze and said, "Since you were late in identifying the divine herbs, can you please tell us the name of this divine herb?"

After saying that, the purple-robed man took out another divine herb. This divine herb had half a foot of downy fur on the front end, two narrow leaves, and was entirely grey. The same divine herb had previously been presented to Ning Cheng and Lu Dongze.

He didn't ask Ning Cheng and Lu Dongze to hand him the jade slip in their hands; apart from showing that it was an easy match, it also showed that he trusted both of them. But it was this unconscious act that reassured Ning Cheng even more.

Ning Cheng banked on the hope that if both of them had recognised the divine herbs and tied in the first round, there would be a second match to determine the outcome of the competition. Because of this thought, Ning Cheng took a bold risk and wanted to drag things to the second match.

The first match was a fight to identify divine herbs, but the second match would not be another match to identify divine herbs. In other words, the second match was inevitable since the purple-robed man had not taken away their jade slips. But at the same time, it would also be related to the five divine herbs from the first match.

"That's that Twin-leaved Scale of the Celestial Fox." Lu Dongze said in a soft voice.

Some pill sages in the crowd had also recognised this divine herb and nodded secretly. Lu Dongze did live up to his reputation. It's just that most of them only came to learn about it through accidental opportunities. But when it came to Lu Dongze, no matter how odd or rare the divine herbs were, they couldn't hide from his gaze.

All of them looked towards Ning Cheng. Even if Ning Cheng didn't know about the Twin-leaved Scales of the Celestial Fox, he wouldn't dare to modify the contents of his jade slip just because Lu Dongze identified it. With so many experts here, any modification fluctuations would be noticed immediately.

The purple-robed man looked at Ning Cheng expectantly, "What does Fellow Daoist Ning think this divine herb is called?"

"It's called the Dog's Tail Grass." Ning Cheng replied indifferently.

When the words 'Dog's Tail Grass' emerged, everyone froze. This was too shameless, right? If one couldn't recognise it, they couldn't recognise it; was it necessary to be so shameless?

Even Jing Han, who held a grudge against Ning Cheng, felt ashamed. Who made him and Ning Cheng both come from the Grand Essence Realm? Only Sichen Qiutian remained calm, at least on the surface. He knew Ning Cheng; there had to be an explanation since he said so.

"Hehe, do you still care about shame? Brother Kong, such a shameless person, insults the entire Dao of Alchemy." Che Beiji stood up; the anger on her face could almost burn Ning Cheng to the ground. When she heard that Ning Cheng had refined the Six Yin Soul Pill, she scorned Ning Cheng out of jealousy. But now, she finally understood that Ning Cheng had deliberately come here to cause trouble. Put bluntly, it was a case of being unable to afford to lose.

In all her years of cultivation, she had never seen such a shameless alchemist like Ning Cheng.

The purple-robed man's face sank as his murderous aura blasted towards Ning Cheng. Just because he was amenable while talking did not mean he would allow someone to bullshit in this place. If Ning Cheng

wanted to compete against Lu Dongze, he wouldn't show any bias. But treating everyone else like a fool, Ning Cheng chose the wrong place.

"Alchemist Ning, if you treat everyone else like a fool and dare to fool around here, don't blame me for not being polite. Even Sichen Qiutian can't protect you here." As the purple-robed man spoke, his killing aura leaked and coalesced around him.

"Haha, I've finally seen it all." Lu Dongze laughed coldly. He initially thought that Ning Cheng was quite an amazing fellow, but it turned out that he relied on his thick skin.

Ning Cheng, however, didn't show any emotions and spoke calmly, "When my master taught me, this was called Dog's Tail Grass. Could it be that a divine herb must be called the same everywhere? I once heard that some places call Starry Sky Crystals as Immortal Crystals. Could it be that this is also wrong?"

When my teacher taught me, he told me that all the different paths under the heavens lead to the same goal. Look at any spirit techniques under the heavens; all the daos that make them up lead to the same goal. Getting angry over a mere name, could it be that Senior Kong has not realised such a basic concept?

It was clear that Ning Cheng was talking nonsense, but after listening to it, the crowd couldn't refute it. After all, take the cultivation realms in the Grand Origination and the Grand Essence Realms. Both were very different from the ones in the Grand Beginning and the Grand Change Realms. However, the truth was that they were all the same, just as Ning Cheng pointed out. All the great daos lead to the same goal. Just as Immortal Crystals and Starry Sky Crystals were the same, they are still called differently in the two realms. Who here didn't understand this truth?

In truth, Ning Cheng had not spouted any nonsense. The first part about the Dog's Tail Grass can be considered nonsense, but the latter was his perception of the Great Dao. After all, all the Great Daos under the heaven, no matter how many there were, there was only one goal in the end.

The anger on the purple-robed man's face slowly disappeared, and the hall became silent. Even Che Beiji, who wanted to stand out again to berate Ning Cheng, stopped herself.

"Your teacher is an amazing person, and Dao Friend Ning isn't wrong in saying that all the great daos under the heavens lead to the same goal. I was too preoccupied with superficial changes. The Dog's Tail Grass and the Twin-leaved Scales of the Celestial Fox are merely different names; what matters the most is that their effects are still the same. Now, I humbly ask Pill Sage Ning to name this second divine herb." As he spoke, the purple-robed man took out another divine herb.

This divine herb was a green vine with leaves shaped like a claw. This vine had numerous such claw-shaped leaves giving it the impression that one was looking at waves on the water's surface under strong winds.

"That's the Chicken Claw Vine." Ning Cheng still replied in the same calm tone.