

# **I Shall Seal the Heavens #Chapter 4: A Copper Mirror - Read I Shall Seal the Heavens Chapter 4: A Copper Mirror**

## **Chapter 4: A Copper Mirror**

The Treasure Pavilion was indeed filled with treasure. Upon entering it, one's eye would be dazzled with brilliant lights. Neatly arranged jade shelves were filled with a dazzling display of bottles, swords, ornaments and jewelry. Meng Hao began breathing heavily, and his heart started pumping. It felt as if all the blood in his body had rushed to his brain. He stood there, dumbfounded.

In Meng Hao's short life, he had never seen so much wealth. He felt as if it had submerged him. His brain spun, and he inadvertently thought about grabbing all of it and running away.

"The value of these treasures..." murmured Meng Hao, "... they're priceless. The compensation for working for Immortals, it's incredible." He walked past one of the jade shelves, his expression filled with excitement, unconsciously stretching his head forward. He wondered if the third floor of the Treasure Pavilion was the same as the first, or if it perhaps had even more valuable treasures.

"Immortals... they're so rich!" Meng Hao heaved a deep sigh. Suddenly, his eyes fell upon something strange. On one of the jade shelves he noticed a copper mirror.

There were traces of corrosion on it. It didn't seem very special, nor did it glitter. It didn't seem like it could compare in any way to the treasures around it.

Surprised, Meng Hao picked it up and looked at it closely. It seemed quite ordinary, like something from the mortal world. Nothing about it seemed the least bit unique. And yet, here it was in the Treasure Pavilion, so he assumed it must have some value.

"Junior Brother truly has insight," said a voice from behind him. He didn't know when the shrewd-looking man had entered, but he stood there looking at the copper mirror. His voice filled with praise, he continued, "The fact that you picked up that copper mirror shows that you were destined to do so. There are many legends regarding it. The strangest thing is, only those with good fortune and accumulated good deeds in past lives can acquire it. It seems Junior Brother is just such a person. With this mirror, you can lord it over heaven and earth. You definitely have this opportunity." As the man spoke, he sighed over and over. His voice seemed to contain some strange power which forced Meng Hao to listen to him.

"This mirror..." Meng Hao looked down at it again, a strange expression on his face. It was not covered with complicated carvings, but instead, corrosion, making it very unclear.

"Junior Brother, don't look at the mirror's blurriness. You should know that true treasures of a spiritual nature often conceal themselves in ordinary things. The more humble they appear, the more precious they are." Meng Hao was about to put the copper mirror back onto the shelf when the shrewd-looking man took several hasty steps forward to prevent him. He looked seriously at Meng Hao.

"Junior Brother, the fact that you picked up this object shows that you were destined to do so. Will you really put it back just because it looks ordinary? I have been responsible for the Treasure Pavilion for many years, and I know the origin of all the items here. Many years ago, this copper mirror caused a huge commotion in the State of Zhao. It was created from a ray of light which fell from the Heavens. After acquiring it, Patriarch Reliance studied it in secret, believing it to be a treasure of the Heavens. In the end, he couldn't unlock its mysteries, and came to the conclusion that it was predestined to fall into the hands of someone who would use it to trample upon heaven and earth."

It startled Meng Hao to hear the name of Patriarch Reliance. He had just entered the Outer Sect, and there were many things he wasn't familiar with. He began to hesitate.

"Patriarch Reliance studied it, but couldn't understand it. I..."

"Your words are incorrect, Junior Brother. Allow Elder Brother to explain: Patriarch Reliance's lack of success in his studies proves that there is something unique and unusual about this treasure. Before you, ten or more people took it to study it, and though none of them succeeded in understanding it, none of them regretted their decision.

"What if... what if you are the person destined to possess the mirror? In any case, if you take it, you can rest at ease. Of your fellow disciples who took the mirror in the past, most came back within three months, and I let them exchange it for something else. After dealing with me for some time, you will find that I am very easy-going. I don't want to give fellow disciples a hard time.

"If you take it, but are unable to unlock its mysteries, then you can return it at any time and exchange it for something else. But if you abandon it, and it turns out you were destined to take it, then you will regret it for your entire life." The shrewd-looking man stared intently at Meng Hao. When he saw Meng Hao hesitating, he laughed to himself. The new disciples were always the easiest to toy with. All he had to do was tell them the story of the mirror's legend, and the grand words would seduce them. Their hearts would begin to boil.

"But..." Meng had studied and read from childhood, so he was quite intelligent. From the shrewd-looking man's seemingly earnest expression, he could conjecture that the mirror was not exactly as had been described. But, the man stood there in front of him, clearly determined to prevent him from putting back the mirror. Even dropping it to the ground would be of little use. He began to regret picking it up in the first place.

"Junior Brother," he said, his face stern, his voice low, "don't violate the rules on your first day. When you pick something up in the Treasure Pavilion, you are not permitted to put it down." The shrewd-looking man felt that enough was enough. This was his usual method to get people to take the mirror. He waved his wide sleeve, and a whistling wind picked up Meng Hao, flew him out of the Treasure Pavilion, and deposited him outside.

There was a crashing sound as the main door of the Treasure Pavilion slammed shut.

The voice of the shrew-looking man echoed from inside: "I'm soft-hearted when it comes to fellow disciples. If you truly are not destined to have the mirror, then you can return it in a few days."

Frowning angrily, Meng Hao looked up at the closed door. Then he sighed and looked back down at the copper mirror in his hands. He thought back to the words in the first chapter of the Qi Condensation Manual and hesitated. If this truly was something that Patriarch Reliance had studied, then it must have some value. Shaking his head, he put the mirror into his robe. Then, with a final hateful glare at the Treasure Pavilion, he turned and left.

He walked along the green paths of the Outer Sect, using the information from the jade slip as a guide. Around noontime, he found his house. It was along the north border, in a very remote section of the Outer Sect. Several other houses crowded around it.

He pushed the door open, and it slammed against the wall. Inside were a bed and a desk. Meng Hao stood there, feeling quite content. This place was much better than his room in the Servants' Quarter.

He sat down cross-legged on the bed, took a deep breath and pulled the copper mirror out of his robe. He studied it carefully, until the sun began to set over the western mountains. He lit an oil lamp and continued to study it, all to no avail. He had no idea what the purpose of the mirror could be.

No matter how he looked at it, the copper mirror seemed completely ordinary in nature.

When the night grew deep, Meng Hao put the mirror to the side and looked out the window at the moon. He thought about the fat teenager and his snoring. He missed it a little bit.

The bright moon shone outside, its rays touching the eaves of his window. Everything was silent, save for the sound of the wind among the leaves of the trees. Meng Hao took a deep breath, thinking about the moon. He felt emotional, as if he had entered a new age.

He murmured to himself: "I will never again be a scholar in Yunjie County. I've become a Reliance Outer Sect disciple..."

Meng Hao gathered his thoughts, closed his eyes, and sat in meditation, circulating the thread of spiritual energy in his body. He had been living in this fashion for months now, and was used to it.

One difference between the Outer Sect and the Servants' Quarter was that here, no one prepared food for you. You had to take care of your own food needs. If you didn't, you would starve to death and no one would care a whit. Although, in all the years, no one in the Reliance Outer Sect had ever starved to death.

Upon reaching the first stage of Qi Condensation, one could absorb and emit the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth. Though that could not alleviate hunger, it could sustain your life.

Several days passed. One afternoon, Meng Hao sat cross-legged in meditation, when he suddenly heard a miserable scream from outside. He immediately opened his eyes, moved to the window and looked outside. He saw an Outer Sect disciple on the ground, being stamped upon over and over again by another. Blood oozed from a wound in his chest, but he wasn't dead, just wounded. The person who had been kicking him grabbed his bag of holding, then walked off with a cold harrumph.

The trampled disciple struggled to his feet, his eyes filled with violent ruthlessness. He staggered away. Surrounding onlookers stared at him coldly, their faces filled with ridicule.

Meng Hao observed silently. He had watched similar scenes played out countless times in the past few days, and as such had a deeper understanding of the ways of the Outer Sect.

Time blurred as seven days passed. During that time, Meng Hao saw even more instances of disciples being robbed. The fighting and plundering which occurred between Outer Sect disciples caused Meng Hao to grow more and more taciturn. Especially disturbing was when he had seen a disciple of the second or third level of Qi Condensation killed by another in the Public Area. This caused Meng Hao to be especially careful and cautious when he went outside.

Thankfully, his Cultivation base was low, and he didn't have anything of value, so others mostly ignored him.

Actually, Meng Hao had reached a standstill in his Cultivation. The second level of Qi Condensation was different than the first. He still needed spiritual energy, but according to the Qi Condensation Manual, his mortal body had already begun to change. As such, reaching the second level of Qi Condensation would require many more times the amount of spiritual energy than the first level did.

Similarly, Meng Hao now understood what latent talent was. The body's ability to absorb the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth was just that, latent talent. The more latent

talent someone has, the more energy they could absorb. The less latent talent one has, the less energy they could absorb. For someone with considerable latent talent, the more time they spent on breathing exercises, the more spiritual energy they could absorb.

According to his calculations, to reach the second level of Qi Condensation would probably take at least one or two years. The amount of time required to reach the third level would be many more times than that.

Of course, if he acquired some medicinal pills or Spirit Stones, he could use them to amplify spiritual energy, then, he could decrease that time. That was why so much horrific robbery occurred in the Outer Sect; every month, pills would be openly distributed.

“The strong become stronger, the weak become weaker,” said Meng Hao quietly. “This is how the Reliance Sect grooms disciples for the Inner Sect.”

One early morning, when the sky had just begun to grow dim with light, Meng Hao sat in meditation as usual. He had no special resources, except for his determination. Therefore, he did not give up on his nightly meditations and breathing exercises. Bells reverberated throughout the Sect, and Meng Hao slowly opened his eyes.

“These bells...” Meng Hao’s eyes focused, as if he had come to a realization. An excited expression appeared on his face, and he dashed out of the room to see fellow disciples everywhere, rushing off into the distance.

“When these bells sound, the time has come for distribution of Spirit Stones and medicinal pills. It must be today.” More and more people began running in the direction of the bells. It seemed everyone within the Outer Sect was there.

“Pill Distribution Day,” said Meng Hao, breathing heavily. He ran along with the crowds until he reached the square in the center of the Outer Sect. The square was monumental in size, and along its borders were nine stone pillars covered in carvings of dragons. Placed on the foremost pillar was a platform over ninety meters in diameter, over which swirled a multi-colored cloud. Inside the cloud could be seen shapeless forms.

Over a hundred Outer Sect disciples stood there in their green robes, murmuring amongst themselves and glancing frequently at the multi-colored cloud.

Then, the cloud slowly dissipated, revealing a pock-faced old man wearing a golden robe. His face was placid and emitted a calm, natural power and dignity. His eyes shone like lightning. Two people stood next to him, a man and a woman, both wearing silver robes. The man was exceedingly handsome, with an upright appearance, although indifference covered his face. As for the woman, as soon as Meng Hao laid eyes on her, his pupils constricted.

This woman was the woman who had taken him from Daqing Mountain three months ago.