

The Heavens 911

Chapter 911: Changes in the Dao of Alchemy Division

When four hundred apprentice alchemists all challenged the Medicine Pavilion together, and over a hundred succeeded, the news didn't cause a huge stir in the inner mountains, but in the outer mountains, a tempest erupted.

To any apprentice alchemist, passing the first level of the Medicine Pavilion was a major step in life, and something incredibly important. That was even more so for those who had been studying for dozens or even more than a hundred years, and yet still could not pass. They were on the verge of going crazy.

Then there were the apprentice alchemists who hadn't been studying for very long. When they saw others who had been studying for a similar period of time suddenly succeed, and not because they were naturally gifted, but rather, because they had studied with Fang Hao, and listened to his lectures, it is easy to imagine how violent of an uproar it caused.

Even more so, the apprentice alchemists who had chosen not to pay merit points to listen to Meng Hao felt intense regret, and couldn't help but think about how a few hundred merit points over the course of three months could have gotten them past the first level of the Medicine Pavilion. Then they would have been pre-qualified to become tier 1 alchemists, which could not be bought with merit points, no matter how many they offered to pay.

Meng Hao didn't make an appearance for three days. In the meantime, the storm among the outer mountain apprentice alchemists continued. Tens of thousands had gathered outside of Peak #7191 to wait for Meng Hao. Some people even got into magical combat in order to get a good seat.

On dawn of the fourth day, Meng Hao appeared in the Dao of Alchemy Division. As soon as people spotted him, word spread like wildfire.

Meng Hao was quite pleased about all this. Murmuring to himself about how his methods really were effective, he eventually reached Peak #7191. When he saw how many people were waiting, he immediately got excited.

"There have to be about 40-50,000 people here," he thought, panting. "At one merit point a piece for a two hour lecture, I would get around 50,000 merit points! If I lecture for four hours, it would

be 100,000. If I lectured for eight hours, 200,000!!” Eventually, he took a deep breath. Smiling the whole way, looking like a preeminent Daoist master who viewed material wealth as filth, he slowly strode forward.

When all of the apprentice alchemists gathered around the mountain saw him, they clasped hands and bowed. Then, they joined voices in greeting.

“Greetings, Professor Fang!”

The combined voices of all the apprentice alchemists echoed out like thunder. Meng Hao stepped foot onto the platform, looked out at the audience with shining eyes, and then cleared his throat.

“Today, I will lecture for eight hours,” he said.

Immediately, Fang Xi flew out of the crowd with a jade slip in hand, and called out, “Professor Fang is kind and generous. To him, material wealth means nothing. In previous months, we had to force him to accept our payment. Now, because he cannot bear to watch the clan’s apprentice alchemists fail the examination of the Medicine Pavilion, he has come here to lecture about plants and vegetation. We can’t let him down!

“Come come. Everyone put some merit points into this jade slip. Even if Professor Fang doesn’t want it, we’ll force him to take it!” At the same time that Fang Xi yelled out these words, a group of several hundred apprentice alchemists flew out from the crowd in various areas, jade slips in the hand. They immediately began to accept merit points from the other apprentice alchemists in their area.

This time, not a single one of the 40-50,000 people departed. All of them paid their merit points, and then the several hundred jade slips were placed in front of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s face darkened.

“What do you people think you’re doing!?” he snapped, flicking his sleeve and looked very displeased.

Yet again, Fang Xi took the lead in crying out.

“Professor Fang, this is only what should be yours by right. Sir, please accept!” When Fang Xi finished speaking, his hundreds of companions began to shout.

“Accept it, Professor Fang. If you don’t, we’ll be very upset!”

After listening for a moment, Meng Hao hesitated, then let out a long sigh and collected up the jade slips.

“Very well,” he said emotionally. “Since you demand it, all I can do is work as hard as possible to help you pass the examination of the Medicine Pavilion.

“Material wealth is nothing,” he said, shaking his head. “What I care least about in life is just that, money.” Inwardly, of course, he was extremely excited and was shouting about how he was rich now.

The eight hour lecture ended quickly. Meng Hao again talked about the key medicinal plants from the medicine pavilion. After a while, he would wave his hand, causing a thousand medicinal plants to appear, just like the examination in the Medicine Pavilion. Many of the apprentice alchemists who were experiencing this for the first time were instantly enlivened.

In the following days, Meng Hao was engrossed in lecturing about plants and vegetation. He lectured for eight hours a day, and as time progressed, more and more people came to listen, until the audience exceeded 100,000!

The area was packed full of people, and no end could be seen to the massive crowds. This only spurred Meng Hao on to put even more energy into his lectures. He even employed his cultivation base and some divine abilities to broadcast his voice out into the distance so that every person could hear him

He was now making hundreds of thousands of merit points every day. To Meng Hao, that income was a powerful motivating force. Eventually, his lectures became the center of attention of all the outer mountains.

As Meng Hao got more and more merit points, he was able to get more and more valuable medicinal plants. As such, the ingredients he needed for the Spirit Elixir were all replaced by what could be considered treasured items. Soon, the efficacy of the Spirit Elixir reached a terrifying level.

As for the leftover merit points, he would acquire other medicinal plants, which he would take to his Immortal's cave to concoct medicinal pills. This enabled his Dao of alchemy to steadily improve with each passing day.

He would also exchange merit points for spirit stones, which he would use to duplicate the Spirit Elixir. The life force in the Nirvana Fruits continued to grow stronger.

Of course, not a few people saw what was happening, and their eyes went bloodshot. The other alchemists gazed over at Meng Hao like ravenous wolves. Although they had never thought to use a method like his, when they saw how much he was profiting, many of them began to imitate him. There were even tier 5 alchemists who left the inner mountains and began to lecture about plants and vegetation, all in order to earn merit points.

Because the Alchemist Council didn't oppose what was happening, it meant they tacitly approved. In fact, they were happy that more alchemists were opting not to spend all their time concocting pills, but instead, were going to the outer mountains to speak to the apprentice alchemists about plants and vegetation, as well as the Dao of alchemy.

It was as if the entire Dao of Alchemy Division was invigorated, and now bustled with activity. Things were very different than before. Now that more alchemists were coming out of the inner mountains and charging to give lectures, some of Meng Hao's audience was being drawn away. However, there were a million apprentice alchemists in the Dao of Alchemy Division, so even if a few left, others would take their place. The Dao of Alchemy became a place where numerous viewpoints and expressions were now being heard, and everyone was struggling to promote their own perspective.

Alchemists began using all sorts of methods to attract more apprentice alchemists to their lectures. Some would even lecture about their top secret methods. Gradually, because they were able to attract more and more attention, everyone was able to make a handsome profit.

Soon, tier 6 alchemists and even some tier 7 alchemists were moved to the point of emerging from the inner mountains. The atmosphere in the Dao of Alchemy Division had reached a peak, and even the main clan was affected, and the Grand Elder, shocked, made a personal visit.

That event caused quite a stir, and word soon spread throughout the clan.

As the apprentice alchemists began to run low on merit points, they chose to perform service for the sect, all to get more merit points. People even began to compete over the tasks assigned by the Dao of Alchemy Division. Everything was flourishing.

“What a change in the Dao of Alchemy Division!” Even the nineteen tier 8 alchemists were very excited. They watched the developments in the atmosphere in the Dao of Alchemy Division, and could tell that if things kept going on this way, the Dao of Alchemy Division would definitely experience a great rise, and a new generation of alchemists would soon come forth.

All of it started with Meng Hao, and because of it, everyone was once again speaking his name!

Back in the ancestral mansion, the Grand Elder sat silently in the temple, his face dark. It had already been several months since he gave Meng Hao the Nirvana Fruits, and there had been plenty of time for him to concoct whatever type of Spirit Elixir he wanted. And yet, Meng Hao had not suddenly died. By this point, the Grand Elder was starting to put the pieces together.

“I underestimated him,” he thought with a sigh. “He must have detected something somehow. What a pity.... In any clan, clan rules are everything. All clan members must respect the clan rules. As for him....” The Grand Elder shook his head, and within his eyes could be seen a glint of killing intent.

In another temple in the ancestral mansion, Fang Xiushan and his father sat there, extremely grim faced because of the huge name Meng Hao was making for himself.

“That damned son of a bitch!” grumbled Fang Xiushan, frowned. “He actually thought up a scheme like this to earn large amounts of merit points!! The amount he’s earning on a daily basis is enough to cause even my eyes to turn red.... With things like this, it’s going to be impossible to constrain his development.” He looked over at his father.

The old man opened his eyes, and a cold glimmer could be seen within.

“What are you losing your head over?” he said coolly. “He’s just a child. The only reason he came up with this method was because someone from the direct bloodline is coaching him. Even still, it doesn’t matter.

“I have my methods to cut off his source of merit points!” With that, he produced a jade slip, imprinted it with some divine sense, and then flung it out the door.

“Just wait and see,” he said, closing his eyes once again.

As Meng Hao rose to prominence, Fang Donghan, who was a member of one of the neutral bloodlines in the clan, was watching. From the very beginning, he had been paying attention to Meng Hao and Fang Wei, and now that he saw Meng Hao becoming famous in the Dao of Alchemy Division, his sense of anticipation was growing.

“It won’t be long now before he and Fang Wei fight each other!” he thought. He took a deep breath and then smiled.

In the ancestral mansion, in the subterranean Immortal’s cave, Fang Wei sat cross-legged in meditation. Yet again, there were nine old men surrounding him, who trembled as their Immortal qi was absorbed by Fang Wei.

Fang Yunyi kneeled in front of him respectfully, eyes shining with zeal as he looked at Fang Wei.

A moment later, Fang Wei opened his eyes and finished his session of cultivation. Of the surrounding nine old men, three of them coughed up blood, and then their bodies rapidly withered away until they were desiccated corpses.

“What’s the matter, Yunyi?” Fang Wei asked coolly.

“Cousin,” replied Fang Yunyi, “your Cultivation base is incredible. You’re just a step away from the Immortal Realm. When you finally become Immortal, you’ll be able to sweep across all of the Chosen of the Ninth Mountain and Sea!”

Fang Wei’s expression was the same as ever, and he didn’t respond. He just looked at Fang Yunyi.

“Cousin,” continued Fang Yunyi, “do you remember Fang Hao? He’s that bastard who was disrespectful to you in the temple a while back. You are generous and open-minded, and would never sink yourself to his level, but he’s not like that. He is narrow and petty-minded, and already views you as a thorn in his side.

“Recently, he’s been using despicable methods to make a name for himself in the Dao of Alchemy Division, and he’s even started spreading harmful gossip about you. Cousin, he’s tarnishing your name, which really makes me mad. Unfortunately, I can’t beat him. I can only watch as he rises to prominence in the Dao of Alchemy Division.” Fang Yunyi chuckled bitterly.

Fang Wei's expression was the same as usual. He seemed neither joyful nor angry. He looked calmly at Fang Yunyi, as if he could see all the way through him, as if he could tell exactly how much of what he had just said was true or false.

Seeing that Fang Wei was studying him, Fang Yunyi suddenly began to tremble in fear. He had no idea what Fang Wei was thinking, so he didn't dare to say anything further. He was just considering leaving, when Fang Wei finally spoke.

"Tell me about it."

Fang Yunyi was immediately enlivened, and began to explain in detail everything Meng Hao had done in the Dao of Alchemy Division.

After listening to everything, Fang Wei closed his eyes for a few moments. Then he opened them and coolly said, "There are a lot of people in the world who like to get things for free. When you have the option of getting something for free, or paying, most people will opt for the first. Fang Yunyi, do you get my meaning?"

Fang Yunyi gaped. After a moment of thought, his eyes grew bright, and he rose excitedly to his feet, laughing.

Chapter 912: Hardships Prompt Changes!

The Dao of Alchemy Division was undergoing a renaissance in the form of competition. One high level alchemist after another came out from the inner mountains to give lectures, all to get merit points from the apprentice alchemists. The Dao of Alchemy Division was booming, and the bustle was incredible.

Furthermore, competitive fire is something that exists in all people's hearts, and although the alchemists didn't pay too much attention to it, everyone knew that the number of apprentices that could be attracted to any given alchemist's lecture would show how much influence that alchemist had, as well as the level of their Dao of alchemy.

Soon, competition between various parties formed. However, the resulting conflicts proceeded according to the Dao of Alchemy Division's rules governing competition. The result was that in the outer mountains, the apprentice alchemists had to make a daily choice: which alchemist would they go listen to?

Of course, Meng Hao wasn't very happy about this. More and more of his audience was being stolen away. In the end, he was only able to keep about 50,000. That was about half of his original audience, which meant that he was losing out on over 100,000 merit points per day.

It was as if someone was slicing off his skin.

He could endure it though. After all, his lecture was something unique, and in the end, the apprentice alchemists who listened to his lectures had exponential increases in their confidence in being able to pass the first level of the Medicine Pavilion.

However, it wasn't long before Meng Hao became furious. The reason was because, on the mountain just across from him, Peak #7192, a tier 7 alchemist had suddenly appeared to give lectures.

It was an old woman who rode an enormous five-colored peacock, and whose expression was haughty and arrogant. She was a tier 7 alchemist, someone the apprentice alchemists could only hope to meet in person on accident, and could never go to seek out. She was like a supreme entity to them.

Up to now, there had only been one tier 7 alchemist who had come out to give lectures. Furthermore, that alchemist did not come out on a daily basis. The 100,000 seats available for those lectures were always the subject of fierce contention. In fact, were there even more seats available, it was certain that more people would attend.

Now, another tier 7 alchemist appeared. She was very famous in the Dao of Alchemy Division, and when she came to give a lecture right across from Meng Hao, a lot of the alchemists in his audience immediately went over to listen to her.

In a single day, Meng Hao lost more than half of his current audience, leaving him with only about 20,000 apprentice alchemists. He stood there on the platform, looking at the 100,000 people crowded around that old woman, and ground his teeth angrily.

"That old granny is doing this on purpose!" he thought with a cold harrumph. The outer mountains were vast, and the lecturing alchemists would always distance themselves from each other, and would certainly never get very close. Considering the old woman intentionally selected this particular location, if someone tried to convince Meng Hao she wasn't doing it to target him, he would refuse to believe them.

Any apprentice alchemists who came to listen to Meng Hao would look the scene over and then be forced to make a decision. Would they listen to Meng Hao, or would they choose the tier 7 alchemist? Meng Hao was furious, especially because the old woman only charged one merit point for four hours of lecturing.

That was half as much as Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's audience continued to shrink. Three days later, only about 10,000 remained to listen to him.

Were that all there were to the matter, it wouldn't be a big deal. Although his audience had been significantly reduced, he was still making tens of thousands of merit points per day. But over the following days, Meng Hao gradually came to the realization that someone had been imprinting his lecture information onto jade slips, which they were distributing for free! Information people had to pay three merit points to hear personally, could be acquired without charge in this fashion.

This was a near-fatal blow to Meng Hao's lectures. Soon, his audience dwindled from 10,000 down to only about 1,000.

Meng Hao could only watch helplessly as the enterprise he had created was ruined. His audience had started at a peak of 100,000 members, in which he was making hundreds of thousands of merit points per day, and was slowly reduced to only 1,000. Now, he was only making a few thousand merit points per day.

One day, Meng Hao took a deep breath and ended his lecture. Then he flew over to the old woman, paid some merit points, and began to listen to her speak.

The old woman sat cross-legged on the platform, her five-colored peacock circling through the air above her. The peacock would occasionally spread its beautiful tail feathers, making it even more magnificent than normal. The old woman spoke indifferently about plants and vegetation, and occasionally mentioned some things about certain techniques of the Dao of alchemy, which would provoke a buzz of comments from the audience. Every single thing the old woman said was original and distinctive.

Naturally, she noticed Meng Hao arrive, and an expression of scorn appeared on her face. There weren't even a hundred tier 7 alchemists in the Dao of Alchemy Division, and although she was not the most powerful among that group, but more toward the middle of the pack, she still possessed the skill of a tier 7 alchemist. She had passed the seventh level of the Medicine Pavilion, so it was a simple thing for her to speak on the subject of plants and vegetation.

Her command of knowledge regarding plants and vegetation was terrifying, and normally speaking, she would never show her face to target Meng Hao in the manner she had. However, a member of her auxiliary branch, someone who she could not easily refuse, had made a request. Of course, she was a member of the Dao of Alchemy Division, which operated under their own system. But when all was said and done, she was still a member of her clan division, and thus had emerged from the inner mountains.

In her opinion, the gap between herself and Meng Hao was as vast as that between Heaven and Earth. She didn't even actually have to try; all she had to do was give random lectures, and that would be enough to completely destroy Meng Hao.

Meng Hao hovered there quietly, listening to the woman speak about plants and vegetation. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, his eyes flashed, and he turned to leave. The woman glanced over at him making his way off, and then completely ignored him.

In her opinion, Meng Hao's lecture audience would be whittled down until only a few hundred people remained. Eventually, he would be incapable of making any big waves whatsoever.

The main reason for her confidence was that she had heard a rumor that the rules of the examination in the first level of the Medicine Pavilion were going to be changed.

Sure enough, three days later, an announcement was made in the Dao of Alchemy Division that the Medicine Pavilion's first level rules had been changed. All of the 1,000,000 medicinal plants had been replaced. Now, the examination content could be taken from 10,000,000 plants of various varieties. It was really a terrifyingly high number.

In addition, another rule change had been made. Now, the test was to determine how many medicinal plants could be identified in a given period of time. That change instantly caused Meng Hao's lectures to be thrown into chaos. To top it all off, and prevent any unforeseen problems, each apprentice alchemist would only have one chance per month to enter the Medicine Pavilion.

These changes completely foiled any of Meng Hao's cheating techniques.

All of this was a critical blow to Meng Hao. Within two days, his audience dropped from 1,000 to only a few hundred.

Most of those were the people who had been his audience all along.

However, after some time, many of those also chose to leave. After all, the situation was different than it had been in the beginning, when Meng Hao was outshining anyone and everyone. After all, they now had the chance to hear tier 7 alchemists speak, and who would turn down an opportunity like that?

In the end, Meng Hao was left with a bit more than 70 audience members....

All of these blows had struck like lightning, leaving Meng Hao panting. He looked out at his sparse audience of several dozen apprentice alchemists, and suddenly a bright light appeared in his eyes. Then, he turned his head to look over at the nearby mountain with 100,000 people circled around it.

“Coz, what do we do?” Fang Xi asked quietly from off to the side. “Even Lord Third and Lord Fifth headed over there....” Unexpectedly, the parrot and the meat jelly had rushed over to the other mountain to listen to the tier 7 alchemist’s lecture. It was impossible to say whether they understood what she was talking about, but from the look of it, they were entranced.

Meng Hao, of course, knew that the parrot was actually hung up on the five-colored peacock. As for the meat jelly, it was completely oblivious, and had merely been dragged along by the parrot.

“Hardships prompt changes, changes bring solutions!”

Fang Xi gaped.

“Somebody is trying to restrict my path to wealth, to cut off my path to riches! It’s like they’re trying to chop me into pieces with a knife!” Meng Hao clenched his jaw and then flicked his sleeve as he flew into the air.

Fang Xi followed as he made his way off into the distance. He didn’t really understand what Meng Hao had just said, so he quickly asked, “Coz, what’s the plan now?”

“There’s no plan,” Meng Hao replied, “My name is going to rock the Dao of Alchemy Division, and END this predicament!” As his voice echoed out, he pushed his speed to the maximum. Rumbling sounds could be heard as he shot into the inner mountains. Avoiding any restricted areas, he headed directly toward the Medicine pavilion.

It didn't take long to reach it.

There were a few apprentice alchemists gathered outside, hesitating as to whether or not to enter. There were even some full alchemists off to the side. They all noticed Meng Hao arrive, and suddenly seemed energized, and began to talk amongst themselves.

"I heard word spreading outside that the rules of the first level have been changed. It was all because Fang Hao memorized the entire first level, and figured out some way to cheat. That's how all those apprentice alchemists were able to pass so easily!"

"Could it be that he's shown up to try to figure out a way to cheat on the first level again?"

"Interesting. Although, considering the way the rules have been changed, it would be difficult to do that. He can only go in once per month."

Meng Hao didn't pause for even a moment as he headed toward the Medicine Pavilion. The two ancient old men sitting outside the pavilion opened their eyes and looked at Meng Hao. Although they didn't normally pay attention to what went on in the outside world, the occasion in which Meng Hao had charged through the first level 140 times had left a deep impression on them. Combined with the rumors they had heard, they now knew that Meng Hao's efforts back then had been a deliberate effort to study the level for the purposes of cheating.

The two old men looked at Meng Hao solemnly.

"This is the Dao of Alchemy Division," one of them said. "How can one always think of getting in via alternative paths? Your latent talent is excellent, as is your skill in plants and vegetation. You should tread the straight and narrow path."

Meng Hao, apparently directly accepting the advice, clasped hands and bowed to the two old men.

"Elders," he said immediately, "I am aware of my mistake. Now is the time for repentance and reformation. I am not here to research cheating methods. I am here to truly test myself!"

The two old men nodded and closed their eyes.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. As everyone in the area looked on, he stepped into the Medicine Pavilion. As soon as he entered, a few among the Dao of Alchemy Division's nineteen tier 8 alchemists immediately noticed. They ceased their pill concocting and sent out divine sense, which coalesced outside of the Medicine Pavilion.

It was three white-haired old men who materialized.

“Don't tell me this Fang Hao has showed up looking for ways to break the system again? Is he addicted?”

“How can the little bastard be such a slow learner? We spent a lot of effort to make the first level completely flawless, and yet he shows up again?!”

“If this kid gets up to troublesome things again, I have half a mind to pull him out and smack him around. I wouldn't be scared even if his father showed up. I concocted pills for his father once, you know.”

Although they seemed angry, they were actually very excited. In all their years, no one had ever appeared who could cause so many problems for them. To them, the whole situation was very amusing.

No one was able to detect their presence except for the two old men keeping guard outside the Medicine Pavilion, who merely glanced at them.

Chapter 913: Changes Bring Solutions!

“Hardships prompt changes, changes bring solutions!” Meng Hao's eyes shone with the light of obsession. This saying was something he had come across in a book he had read when he was a scholar living at the foot of Mount Daqing.

Nowadays, he had not forgotten the true meaning of the phrase. However, because of his personality, he had come to a new understanding. To him, the first character of the expression... referred to being poor!

“If I can't make a profit when it comes to merit points, then it means I'm poor... therefore I need to think of some ways to change the situation. That's the only way to make it through the impasse. After I make it through, then I can start earning merit points again.”

After stepping into the first level of the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao was surrounded by mists. He took a deep breath, and his eyes began to shine brightly.

“In the past, I didn’t have a lot of spirit stones, but with over 100,000,000, it couldn’t count as being in short supply.... But, dammit! The Nirvana Fruits basically consume spirit stones! I barely have thirty percent of my original stockpile....

“It’s like a bottomless pit! Considering I’ve spent so many spirit stones on them, I definitely can’t stop now. I have to keep going! I wonder if the Grand Elder knew all along that I had a lot of spirit stones, and wanted to use this method to force me to go broke!

“A tier 7 alchemist sitting next to me, lecturing about plants and vegetation, cutting off my path to wealth! That’s outright bullying! Unbelievable!” Meng Hao was actually very angry.

Fueled by obsession and anger, he stalked into the first level of the Medicine Pavilion and was surrounded by swirling mists. In the blink of an eye, three incense sticks materialized in front of him.

Black smoke rose up from the first incense stick, swirling through the air to surround Meng Hao. Shockingly, a brilliant light appeared, as well as the images of countless medicinal plants.

At first glance, there appeared to be at least 10,000,000, packed together endlessly. It was only by looking closely that it was possible to clearly make any of them out.

In the space of a single breath, before Meng Hao could imprint any of them with divine sense, the 10,000,000 medicinal plants suddenly flickered with light, and then began to superimpose over each other. In the blink of an eye, they all merged together in the form of an ancient tome.

The book seemed archaic and old, and three characters were written on its cover.

Classic of Plants and Vegetation. (草木经)

Next, an ancient voice echoed out through the first level.

“In the time it takes three incense sticks to burn, identify the first 10,000 medicinal plants in the Classic of Plants and Vegetation. If you make a hundred mistakes or more, the result will be failure.”

“Now that the rules have changed,” thought Meng Hao, “this test is certainly a bit more impressive.” He sent out his divine sense to open the Classic of Plants and Vegetation to the first page. Visible there was a single medicinal plant.

“Quickspirit Flower!” he thought, identifying it immediately, branding it with divine sense, and also providing a quick description of its properties and use in medicines.

The tome flickered, and the second page appeared. Meng Hao made another divine sense imprint with incredible speed. Gradually, it began to appear as if a strong wind were blowing across the tome in front of Meng Hao. The pages flipped rapidly in quick succession.

Meng Hao stood there, not speaking, his divine sense covering the tome. To him, identifying these medicinal plants was a simple matter.

Before the incense stick had even finished burning, it seemed as if the tome’s pages were flipping by so fast they couldn’t go any faster. Dozens of pages would flip by in the blink of an eye. By the time the incense stick had burned to about 90%, Meng Hao had already identified 10,000 medicinal plants without making a single mistake.

However, he didn’t stop there. If his goal was simply to pass the level, then it wouldn’t matter. But if he was going to take this exam, he would do so in shocking fashion. He would make sure his name spread far and wide. That was the only way he could ensure that his lectures on plants and vegetation were profitable.

Therefore, he continued to identify medicinal plants. Soon, hundreds of pages flipped by in every blink of an eye. As soon as Meng Hao scanned them with divine sense, the profiles and information regarding these plants and vegetation appeared in his mind.

10,000. 30,000. 50,000. 100,000.

Faster and faster.

In the time it took an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao had identified 1,000,000 medicinal plants without a single mistake. The mist around him churned, and brilliant rays of light flickered. It was just barely possible to see countless magical symbols swirling around in response to Meng Hao's miraculous performance.

Outside the Medicine Pavilion, it was impossible to tell what was happening on the inside. Many of the full alchemists and the apprentice alchemists were discussing and speculating about the matter. None of them believed that Meng Hao would fail to pass the level, but then they considered how the rules had been changed, and figured that even he might have to expend some effort.

The three old tier 8 alchemists looked at each other and then began to talk.

“How come the kid is taking so long?”

“If he's really interested in taking the examination, then he should be able to pass the first level in the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Since he hasn't come out, does it mean... that the kid is actually going to try to crack the test?”

Back in the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao was frowning.

“Time's running out. It seems I was going a bit slow before.” His eyes flickered, and his right hand suddenly reached out to grab the tome's right cover. At the same time, his divine sense exploded out, entering the tome. Meng Hao closed his eyes.

In that moment when his eyes closed, his divine sense filled the tome completely. It was as if countless medicinal plants had appeared in front of him, which he immediately began to identify and imprint at top speed.

1,000,000. 1,500,000. 2,000,000!

In the blink of an eye, rumbling sounds could be heard, and the mists surrounding him were churning in a violent and shocking manner. Brilliant light shone out, and more magical symbols appeared, with Meng Hao seemingly at the center of them all.

3,000,000. 4,000,000. 5,000,000!

The second incense stick was almost completely burnt out. Meng Hao's skill in plants and vegetation was extremely deep and profound, so much so that it had even left Pill Demon shaken back in his days in the Violet Fate Sect. When you added in his later experiences, his mastery had only increased. By the time he went to the ancient Demon Immortal Sect's illusory world, he had been able to master much of that sect's Dao of alchemy as well. Due to that, his skill in plants and vegetation had risen even higher, reaching an indescribably terrifying level.

Right now, all of that accumulated knowledge was exploding out, causing the tome's pages to flip by at incredible speed. It was now impossible to even see the pages moving. Several thousand pages would flip by in the time it takes to blink an eye.

The second incense stick finished burning, and the third incense stick ignited. Meng Hao grabbed the other side of the tome with his left hand. It was at that point that eighty percent of the power of a true Immortal exploded out.

Glittering light shone out in all directions, and the mists were seething. A sound like thunder rumbled, and the magical symbols swirled around him endlessly. As of now, this place didn't resemble the Medicine Pavilion, but rather, some bizarre world in which Meng Hao was the nucleus of everything.

By now, 10,000 pages flipped by with each blink of an eye. Not a single medicinal plant caused the slightest problem for Meng Hao. Each and every one of them was already encompassed by Meng Hao's skill with plants and vegetation.

Outside the Medicine Pavilion, expressions of bewilderment could constantly be heard. Although they couldn't see the shocking scene on the interior of the Medicine Pavilion, they felt that something was amiss. Even though some of the people present had ill feelings toward Meng Hao, everyone felt that it would be a simple matter for him to pass the first level.

And yet, enough time had passed for two incense sticks to burn, and yet Meng Hao still hadn't emerged from the first level. Everyone was astonished.

However, the three tier-8 alchemists had serious expressions on their faces. As they looked at the Medicine Pavilion's first level, expressions of shock became visible on their faces. Although they couldn't see what was happening inside, these three men were gradually coming to realize that the first floor was building up with incredible pressure.

“What's this kid doing?!”

“That pressure appears when someone identifies more than 1,000,000 medicinal plants. Is it possible that this kid has identified more than 1,000,000 medicinal plants in the time it takes two incense sticks to burn?”

As the old men looked on in shock, Meng Hao had his hands planted firmly on the tome. His eyes shone with brilliant light as he thoroughly identified all of its contents.

6,000,000. 7,000,000. 8,000,000....

The third incense stick was still burning, but still had about halfway to go. Finally, a tremor ran through Meng Hao’s body, and he looked up. His hands slowly released the tome. He had finally reached the very last page!

10,000,000!!

The entire first level of the Medicine Pavilion was rumbling, and brilliant light shone out in all directions. Magical symbols swirled about, and something that sounded like Immortal music could be heard drifting about.

Usually, when someone passed the first level, a beam of light would appear on the outside. However, when Meng Hao reached the last page of the tome, what people on the outside saw was the entire first level shining with unprecedentedly bright light!

It was as if the first level was completely bathed in boundless, unfathomable light that spread out in all directions, and even up into the Heavens. The Heavenly bodies trembled, and strange colors flashed through the sky.

Each and every person in the Dao of Alchemy Division, in all 10,000 inner mountains and all 100,000 outer mountains, could now see what was happening.

“What’s going on!?!?”

“Why are there such transformations in Heaven and Earth!? What is that pillar of light!?!?”

All of the apprentice alchemists listening to lectures were thoroughly shocked as they looked up into the sky at the boundless light. As for the alchemists, their faces flickered with shock.

“Could it be that some member of the Senior generation is concocting pills?”

“No, that’s not it! Look at that light! It’s rising up from the location of the Medicine Pavilion!”

Even the clan members in the ancestral mansion could see the bright light coming from the Dao of Alchemy Division. Many clan members left their residences and looked in that direction, expressions of shock on their faces.

Everything was shaking, and the countless apprentice alchemists of the Dao of Alchemy Division, as well as numerous full alchemists, were all staring in shock. When they realized that the light was coming from the Medicine Pavilion, they began to fly toward it.

In a brief moment, innumerable beams of colorful light filled the Dao of Alchemy Division.

The crowd outside the Medicine Pavilion was panting, and their minds trembled. They were shocked, and completely ignorant of what exactly was happening. They didn’t understand how Meng Hao passing the first level would cause such a boundless light to appear.

The three tier 8 Elders exchanged glances and could see the shock in each others’ eyes.

“He identified 10,000,000 medicinal plants! Because the rules have been changed, it’s something that nobody has ever done before! The result of his passing the first level in this way is this incredible pillar of Dao Light!!”

“I can’t believe this Fang Hao... has such an incredible foundation in plants and vegetation!!”

“That’s comparable to a tier 4 alchemist! Perhaps even beyond that! However, it’s still not quite at the level of a tier 5 alchemist.”

Chapter 914: First in Level After Level

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The Dao of Alchemy Division was in a tumult. More and more people were showing up outside the Medicine Pavilion to stare with astonishment at the brilliant light that shone up into the sky. Eyes wide, they immediately began to ask others in the area what was going on, and when they heard that Meng Hao had entered the Medicine Pavilion, giving rise to these transformations, their expressions were that of incredible shock.

“I can’t believe it’s Fang Hao!!”

“So, he’s the one going through the Medicine Pavilion. His... his skill in plants and vegetation actually made the Medicine Pavilion shine with that much light!?!?”

“I listened to one of his lectures on plants and vegetation once.... But, is the person who caused such shocking transformations really Fang Hao?” By now, more than 10,000 people were present. Even as everyone was staring in shock at the bright light, some people turned their attention to the stone stele outside of the Medicine Pavilion.

Hundreds of thousands of names could be seen on the lowest level of the stone stele. As of this moment... all of the names went dim, and then seemed to move backward one space. At the very top of the list... was a new name!

Fang Hao!!

When the onlookers saw the name there at the top of the list, another buzz of conversation rose up.

“It’s really Fang Hao! His name is first on the list!”

“Most people who pass this trial have their names show up in the bottom, and only a few ever make it even to the middle of the pack! And yet Fang Hao is actually in first place!”

“For him to take the first spot means that his skill with plants and vegetation is greater than all of the other hundreds of thousands of people on the list!”

“Of course, all the strong alchemists’ names are higher up on the stele. Who knows whether Fang Hao will actually continue higher in the Medicine Pavilion this time, or whether he’ll try to find a flaw in the system to benefit the apprentice alchemists, just like the rumors said he did last time.”

The conversations continued. Eventually, they realized that Meng Hao had not emerged from within the Medicine Pavilion. That led them to the conclusion that... he was continuing with the examination!

Everyone immediately got even more excited than before. Also, they wanted to know... the exact level of skill Meng Hao had with plants and vegetation, this newcomer who had just recently risen to prominence in the Dao of Alchemy Division.

It wasn't just them who wanted to know. The surrounding alchemists were also very curious.

Inside the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao took a deep breath and waited for the mists around him to slowly fade away. A staircase appeared in front of him, which led to the second level. Meng Hao immediately headed up the stairs.

"If I'm going to shock people, then I might as well do a thorough job of it," he thought. "I'm also curious how far my level of skill with plants and vegetation will take me in the Fang clan's Medicine Pavilion.

"In the Fang Clan, plants and vegetation are the most important aspect of their Dao of alchemy. In order to rise among the ranks of the alchemists, one must first earn qualifications in the Medicine Pavilion. Actually, this system makes a distinction between apothecaries and alchemists!" After reaching the top of the stairs, he found himself on the second level.

Bright light filled the second level, and yet again, 10,000,000 medicinal plants appeared, some of them repeats from the first level. They quickly merged together into the form of a tome.

This time, it wasn't three incense sticks that appeared in front of him, but six.

Yet again, an archaic voice echoed out through the second level.

"You have the time it takes six incense sticks to burn to identify the first 100,000 medicinal plants, in which case you can pass this level. If you make ten or more mistakes, you fail."

Meng hao frowned, then looked around at the second level for a moment.

“So this is the second level,” he thought. He stepped forward and opened the book, then poured his divine sense into it and began to imprint the medicinal plants.

Three incense sticks of time seemed to pass relatively quickly. Boundless light shone off of the tome; Meng Hao had already imprinted all 10,000,000 medicinal plants. Rumbling sounds filled the air, and another staircase appeared in front of him.

He climbed the stairs to the third level without hesitation. After looking around, an expression of disappointment could be seen on his face. The third level again featured 10,000,000 medicinal plants floating around, which then superimposed to create the same Classic of Plants and Vegetation.

However, the requirement to pass this level was not just to identify 100,000, but to identify 1,000,000, and also to list them in order according to a special method required by the ancient tome. Furthermore, just three mistakes would be considered a failure.

To Meng Hao, that wasn't very difficult at all. Shaking his head, he stepped forward and opened the ancient classic.

This time, he only needed two incense sticks' worth of time before the tome began to rumble, and the third level sent bright light outside. Yet again, Meng Hao had passed. When he reached the fourth level, his expression finally brightened.

What he saw on the fourth level was fully ten times as many medicinal plants as he had seen on the third level. There were over 100,000,000 plants, which caused his eyes to glow with a bright light.

“Now things are getting interesting,” he murmured. “Although there are still too few plants.” The 100,000,000 medicinal plants formed together into an ancient tome, which was labelled, yet again, the Classic of Plants and Vegetation.

The requirement for the fourth level was to identify 10,000,000 medicinal plants, without making any mistakes. A single mistake meant failure.

“100,000,000 medicinal plants, huh?” Meng Hao took a deep breath, eager to try. Back in the Violet Fate Sect, he had really enjoyed examinations like this. They reminded him of his scholar's days back in Mount Daqing, and his experiences with the Imperial examinations.

Without hesitation, he placed his hands onto the book, poured in his divine sense, and immediately began to brand medicinal plants.

By now, over 100,000 people were standing around outside the Medicine Pavilion, having been drawn there by the bright lights. Before the light from the first level had even dissipated, a brilliant light already shone up from the second level, and then the third level.

Although the new light wasn't as scintillating and blinding as the light from the first level, it was still shocking. Most importantly, as Meng Hao's name moved up to the second and then the third level, it maintained its position as first in the lists!

Many of the surrounding alchemists were watching with very serious expressions.

"He's gotten to the fourth level!"

"This Fang Hao passed all the way through the third level in a very short time. I wonder if the fourth level will cause any problems for him!?"

"In the Dao of Alchemy Division's Medicine Pavilion, the first three levels are simply foundational. From what I've heard, no more than 10,000,000 medicinal plants will appear. The fourth level is different. The difficulty level is ten times higher!"

Back inside the fourth level, Meng Hao's eyes shone with a bizarre light. His divine sense rumbled as he imprinted medicinal plants at an incredible speed. He immediately recognized every medicinal plant that he saw, causing the tome's pages to flip by rapidly. It turned into a blur that, if any outsider was able to see, would leave them shocked.

Actually, Meng Hao wanted people on the outside to see. If they could watch, it would definitely be a big help in his efforts to earn merit points. After a moment, he retracted his divine sense and then decided to ask the Medicine Pavilion if such a thing was possible.

Everything was quiet for a moment, before an archaic voice slowly spoke out.

"The Medicine Pavilion has no such power now. However, if you can identify all 100,000,000 of these medicinal plants, then I can attempt to do so on the next level."

Hearing this, Meng Hao immediately nodded his head, took a deep breath, and continued imprinting.

“In order to give the people on the outside more of a reason to listen to my lectures, in order to earn more merit points... I’m going to go all out!

“Just wait until I get out of here! I’ll definitely raise my prices! Two hours, two merit points!” His eyes shone with determination, which seemed to affect his divine sense, making it even faster than before.

1,000,000. 10,000,000. 30,000,000....

Meng Hao continuously imprinted the medicinal plants that appeared in his divine sense. The feeling he was experiencing made him sigh emotionally. If he’d had a skill like this when he’d taken the Imperial examinations that year, then he would surely have become a high official in the State of Zhao.

“Although, not for very long,” he thought. “Several hundred years have passed since then. If I hadn’t started practicing cultivation, I would be long dead.” He shook his head, sighed, and continued to imprint.

The tome couldn’t even be seen clearly. The pages flipped by so quickly that the whole book seemed frozen in eternity, almost unmoving.

40,000,000. 50,000,000. 60,000,000...

Time passed. To Meng Hao, it felt like he wasn’t expending any energy at all. Furthermore, his mastery of plants and vegetation seemed to be growing even more firm.

70,000,000. 80,000,000. 90,000,000....

In the end, Meng Hao let out a sharp breath and slammed the book shut.

100,000,000!!

The Medicine Pavilion trembled, and boundless light shone out in all directions. A staircase appeared, which Meng Hao climbed, filled with anticipation.

Everyone outside the Medicine Pavilion looked on as brilliant light from the fourth level spread out in all directions.

“He passed the fourth level!!”

“If he passed the fourth level, that basically means he’s a tier 4 apothecary! If his pill concocting skill is just as strong, he’ll be a tier 4 alchemist!”

The crowd was in quite a commotion. Of course, there were some people with looks of disdain on their faces. In their view, any tier 4 alchemist could pass the fourth level, which meant that Meng Hao hadn’t accomplished anything unusual. At the most, he had done something special on the first level only.

However, before the discussions could finish, a beam of light suddenly shot out from the fifth level. It flew into the air and then began to ripple out.

Shockingly, within those ripples, appeared... a screen!

Meng Hao was visible within the screen, walking up a staircase into the fifth level.

This scene caused the surrounding 100,000 spectators to stare in shock. Even the three tier 8 Elders were astonished.

The screen was so huge it seemed to fill the sky. There were many people in the Dao of Alchemy Division who hadn’t come to the Medicine Pavilion but, after catching sight of the huge screen, were suddenly curious, and began to head over at top speed.

One of them was the old woman, the tier 7 alchemist who had disrupted Meng Hao’s lectures. Shocked, she flew in from the outer mountains.

Everyone around the Medicine Pavilion began to discuss the unprecedented appearance of the screen. They were all very excited.

“What’s going on? I’ve never heard of a screen appearing when people entered the Medicine Pavilion.”

“Could it be that that this is a new divine ability manifested by the Medicine Pavilion now that the rules have been changed?”

“Hahaha! This is great! We’ll be able to clearly see how Fang Hao passes through the fifth level. This is much better than before!”

The three tier 8 Elders stared in shock and then exchanged suspicious glances.

It was strictly prohibited to reveal what happened inside the Medicine Pavilion. Even though some people might secretly find out some details, they would keep things low key and not spread the information around. That was especially true of the fifth level and higher.

“Pill Elder is in control of the Medicine Pavilion, could it be that he has some secret plan?” Even as the three old men transmitted a discussion, everything around them went quiet. On the screen, it was possible to see Meng Hao, who had just stepped foot off of the stairs and onto... the fifth level.

At the same time, on the stone stele located outside of the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao’s name appeared on the fourth level, yet again first on the list!

Chapter 915: Striving for the Pinnacle of Perfection

In the instant that he entered the fifth level, Meng Hao stopped in his tracks and looked around. Then he took a deep breath, and his eyes began to shine with a brilliant light.

He began to tremble, a trembling that originated from the excitement in his heart, and seemed very difficult to control. Meng Hao would never act like this in a life-or-death battle, but this was an examination, a test of his skill with plants and vegetation.

He truly wished to know the extent of his skill. Therefore, he wanted the examination to get harder, and for there to be more medicinal plants involved.

As of this moment what he saw was... an enormous fifth level, filled with glittering lights and seemingly infinite medicinal ingredients. There were plants of all kinds and types, and even some things that bore the semblance of wild animals.

From the look of it, this level had ten times as many items as the previous level!

“1,000,000,000....” Meng Hao thought, his eyes shining as he looked around. As of this moment, he now had a much deeper understanding of the Fang Clan’s Dao of alchemy. These 1,000,000,000 medicinal ingredients were essentially anything that could be counted as medicinal that had appeared in the Ninth Mountain and Sea throughout tens of thousands of years of history.

These items weren’t just limited to plants and vegetation!

They were not grafted plants either. Everything was whole. Meng Hao glanced over them and saw tens of thousands of items that he didn’t recognize.

He began to breathe heavily. These 1,000,000,000 medicinal resources suddenly superimposed over each other in front of Meng Hao to transform into an enormous ancient tome that was as tall as a person.

Yet again, it was the Classic of Plants and Vegetation.

However, underneath the title of the book were the words ‘volume one.’

“This must be the full first volume of the Classic of Plants and Vegetation!” thought Meng Hao, his heart pounding. “1,000,000,000 medicinal plants. The Fang Clan’s Dao of alchemy truly is boundless and profound!”

The crowds in the outside world were equally shocked.

More and more cultivators were showing up, and when they saw the image on the screen, their jaws dropped.

“Is that... the fifth level?!”

“1,000,000,000 medicinal plants.... The only way to ever be promoted to a tier 5 alchemist is to pass this level! Any tier 5 alchemist in the Dao of Alchemy Division is incredibly famous and powerful in the outside world!!”

As the buzz of conversation filled the air outside, an archaic voice could be heard filling the fifth level.

“1,000,000,000 medicinal plants. Identify the first 100,000,000 in the Classic of Plants and Vegetation to pass this level. One mistake means failure.”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered with a bright light. Expression solemn, he slowly walked forward. As far as he was concerned, this was the first time the test had actually seemed difficult. Even his first cursory scan confirmed that there were tens of thousands of items that he wasn’t familiar with.

One mistake in those first 100,000,000, and he would fail.

“It seems I’ve underestimated the Fang Clan’s Dao of alchemy,” he thought. Expression serious, he reached out, placed his hand on the ancient book, and sent his divine sense into it.

Immediately, countless medicinal plants appeared within his divine sense, which he immediately began to imprint. The pages of the ancient book began to flip at high speed. In the blink of an eyes, several thousand pages had already been turned over.

None of the observers had ever seen anything like this before. Now, though, the scene was playing out right in front of them, clearly visible on the screen. Tens of thousands of observers on the outside looked on in shock. Deathly silence filled the air, and all minds reeled as they watched Meng Hao and the ancient book.

The apprentice alchemists’ eyes went wide, and as for the full alchemists, they began to pant. Even the tier 5, 6, and 7 alchemists were stunned.

The three tier 8 Elders gasped. The scene playing out left even them truly amazed.

They even began to wonder whether they could make the tome’s pages flip so quickly. From the look of things, Meng Hao was simply a natural born genius when it came to plants and vegetation.

“Just how familiar is he with plants and vegetation? He doesn’t even need to think! He recognizes them the instant he looks at them!”

“His foundation in plants and vegetation really is terrifying. With whom did he study the Dao of alchemy to lay such a foundation!?”

“This is unbelievable!”

As the audience’s reaction swelled into an uproar, Meng Hao was inside, concentrating solely on the contents of the Classic of Plants and Vegetation. Time passed, and he identified more and more of the tome’s contents, faster and faster.

10,000,000. 30,000,000. 50,000,000....

It didn’t take long before he had identified 90,000,000. The spectators observed with rapt attention. It was at this point that, all of a sudden, Meng Hao stopped turning the pages of the ancient book. There on the page in front of him, a heart had appeared.

It was a wooden heart, parched and cracked. A few tiny flowers could be seen growing out of it, and when Meng Hao saw it, he stood there quietly.

The alchemists in the world outside were watching the screen closely. Some of the tier 5 alchemists looked at the wooden heart, then frowned and began to wrack their brains to try and identify it. Some of the tier 6 alchemists hesitated, and were unable to determine with certainty exactly what it was.

Even the old woman who had stolen Meng Hao’s business looked on with flickering thoughtfulness.

Only the three tier 8 alchemists didn’t seem fazed. They exchanged glances and began to transmit a conversation.

“Fang Hao really got unlucky. In the fifth level, there are ten types of medicinal plants that have long since become extinct. They are plants no outsider would ever know about. Even we didn’t find out about them until we reached tier 8.”

“He definitely won’t be able to identify the Woodbear Heart.”

“The test is over. What a pity. However, he can try again in a month. Considering the momentum he built up before, as long as he doesn’t run into a medicine plant he’s never seen before, he shouldn’t have much of a problem passing the fifth level.”

“Although, I find it strange that this particular medicinal plant would appear in the first 100,000,000. Yet, there it is.”

The three old men were then lost in thought, and didn’t converse any further.

Back on the fifth level, Meng Hao looked at the image in front of him, muttering. He didn’t recognize the item, and in fact had never seen it before. At first glance, if you didn’t know it was wood, you would probably think it was an actual heart.

Meng Hao extended his right hand and pointed at the page. Immediately, glittering light rose up, and an illusory version of the wooden heart appeared in front of him, then rapidly grew very clear.

He could even sense a faint medicinal aroma emanating out. After inhaling deeply, he closed his eyes and began to make some mental deductions. Although he didn’t recognize this wooden heart, he was still able to use his skill with plants and vegetation to analyze its medicinal properties.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao’s eyes snapped open, and he began to make an imprint with divine sense.

“Effective against chills that enter the body. Is filled with rich spiritual energy, and the power of fire and wood. Contains 9,137 variations. Can be grown using Spirit Extract, and when it reaches maturity, it contains the potential to materialize Immortal qi. When using it to concoct medicinal pills for the Immortal Realm, depending on which variations are used, and which of those is the main ingredient, then, regardless of which medicinal pill is created, as long as you add Apefever Flower, its medicinal strength can be increased by ten percent!” Meng Hao quickly finished imprinting the information. Although he didn’t know the exact name of this medicinal item, the name... wasn’t actually important.

After finishing the imprint of information, the wooden heart vanished from the page, to be replaced by a block of text that thoroughly described the plant’s properties and growth characteristics. The description was incredibly detailed, including information about medicinal effects, details vital to using the ingredient to concoct medicinal pills, descriptions about how to harvest it, and other information.

When Meng Hao saw all the information, he took a deep breath. Although he had determined many correct bits of information about the wooden heart, his information had not been as detailed as the final description. He quickly committed the information to memory.

Then he waved his hand and continued to flip through the pages.

When the spectators saw what had happened, they were shocked. Even the three tier 8 Elders gasped, and stared with wide, astonished eyes.

“He most likely has never seen that Woodbear Heart before. And yet, he just smelled it a few times and then was able to explain its medicinal properties!”

“What an incredible Dao of alchemy! What profound skill with plants and vegetation!”

Deep within the Dao of Alchemy Division was a mountain that was considered to be a sacred location. This was where Fang Danyun resided, the Dao of Alchemy Division’s only tier 9 alchemist!

He had a full head of white hair, and as he sat there cross-legged on the mountain peak, his eyes slowly opened. He then gazed in the direction of the Medicine Pavilion, his eyes shining with a gleam of curiosity.

“I wonder which Grandmaster of the Dao of Alchemy trained a disciple like this.... His skill with plants and vegetation has already reached incredible heights. He came from Planet South Heaven.... I haven’t ever heard of any Grandmaster on Planet South Heaven who could develop such a talented pupil.” The old man sighed.

“Although, Planet South Heaven is shrouded in mystery. It’s possible this kid... has had some unique opportunities.” He continued to look at the Medicine Pavilion in silence.

Back on the fifth level, Meng Hao continued to rapidly flip through the tome’s pages. They moved so fast that the entire book seemed like one connected piece. Soon, he had completely imprinted ten percent of the 1,000,000,000 items inside. However, Meng Hao didn’t stop there.

His mind was completely absorbed in the book, to the extent that he forgot his original reason for drawing everyone's attention to him here. Gradually, the ten percent became twenty, then thirty....

After completing fifty percent, his speed gradually slowed. He would occasionally encounter medicinal plants that he didn't recognize, but in those cases, he actually got excited.

He wanted to see more medicinal plants that he had never seen before. That was the only way for him to experience the sensation of groping for the correct answer. That was when he could truly unleash his skill with plants and vegetation, analyzing the item from various angles and using his best judgement to determine, not necessarily the name, but rather, enough information to imprint it with divine sense. When the full description appeared, he would commit it to memory. He was now getting the feeling that attempting to pass through the Medicine Pavilion was really helping him to learn a lot more about plants and vegetation.

Meng Hao's skill with plants and vegetation had reached an incredible level. By now, there were few types of plants or vegetation within the Ninth Mountain and Sea that he was unaware of. Every single new one that he encountered pushed his skill to an even more refined extent.

Sixty percent. Seventy percent. Eighty percent....

Meng Hao wasn't aware of how much time had passed. However, the closer he got to the end of the book, the more medicinal plants he encountered that he was unfamiliar with, which required even more time. And yet, his excitement only grew.

Outside of the Medicine Pavilion, there were now nearly 200,000 cultivators clustered around, watching the screen with blank expressions. The excitement on Meng Hao's face was clear, and the more medicinal plants he identified, the more everyone's minds reeled.

"Inhuman.... When it comes to plants and vegetation, this Fang Hao is a beast!"

"Don't tell me he was actually a medicinal plant in a past life? Otherwise, how else could he be so inhuman!!"

"The fifth level has 1,000,000,000 medicinal plants, and from the way he's going, it looks like he's going to identify them all...."

“I just realized something! The merit points I paid to hear him lecture about plants and vegetation were worth it! Definitely worth it!!”

Chapter 916: Lotus With Each Step!

As time passed, a few people noticed that under normal circumstances, the fifth level would have already concluded. However, Meng Hao was still plugging away.

Apparently, the time limit had been cancelled, leaving Meng Hao free to spend as much time as he wanted there.

Slowly, the number of plants and vegetation he identified increased. Eventually, three days went by.

Meng Hao could never have imagined that he would need to spend so much time and energy on the fifth level. His eyes were bloodshot, and he felt that he was on the verge of mental exhaustion. However, he was still excited and his spirits were high.

Among the final twenty percent were many types of the plants and vegetation that Meng Hao didn't recognize. Each one required a great deal of time and energy to analyze and judge before he could identify some clues that would lead him into further levels of investigation. Eventually, he would get enough information to be able to create a divine sense imprint.

Detailed introduction on the plant would appear every time he made his imprint. That was what he truly looked forward to; he was like a dried-up sponge, just waiting to absorb boundless knowledge about plants and vegetation.

Three more days passed.... None of the audience members left, but instead settled themselves cross-legged in the area. Were these ordinary cultivators, they would probably find the affair boring. However, they were alchemists and apprentice alchemists, people who had devoted their lives to the Dao of alchemy. Watching Meng Hao's examination on the screen enabled them to see medicinal plants that they might otherwise never be able to see, which was an incredible opportunity.

Everyone was imprinting the information into their minds, studying and learning.

More and more people joined the crowd. On the tenth day, there were nearly 300,000 people present, densely packed together as far as the eye could see.

On the fifth level, a tremor ran through Meng Hao's body as he woke up from his reverie of plants and vegetation. There in front of him was the final page of the ancient book.

At that moment, all of his exhaustion from the past days enveloped him, and his head felt swollen and began to pulse with pain. To him, these past ten days left him feeling more worn out than when he had fought the three black-robed Immortal Realm cultivators.

And yet, he did not close his eyes. He examined the tome, upon which his results for this level were revealed.

He hadn't paid any attention to the results for the first four levels, because he was absolutely confident that he hadn't made any mistakes. However, on this fifth level, he wasn't so confident.

"I missed more than 200..." he murmured, "all of them in the final 300,000,000 plants." Finally he closed his eyes and rotated his cultivation base to restore his composure

He wasn't happy with his results at all. However, he had been introduced to many, many unfamiliar medicinal plants on this level, and his skill with plants and vegetation had increased by a whole level.

To the outside audience, the results were completely shocking, and that included the three tier 8 Elders. Everyone gasped, and then a huge uproar occurred.

"1,000,000,000 plants and he only missed a bit over 200.... He's definitely inhuman!!"

"Any tier 5 alchemist would pass by identifying the first 100,000,000. But Fang Hao required more of himself! He went through all 1,000,000,000. From the look on his face, he seems a bit disappointed."

The sound of the conversations among the 300,000 audience members was like thunder that spread out in all directions, and was heard by quite a few of the Dao of Alchemy Division's apprentice alchemists and full alchemists. The ground trembled and the clouds in the sky shattered.

The three tier 8 alchemists wore forced smiles on their faces as they exchanged glances.

"When I attempted the fifth level that year, I couldn't have done that."

“Forget about back then. Even right now, we’re probably the only people who could. Even the tier 7 alchemists probably couldn’t pull something like that off.”

Bright beams of light appeared off in the distance as more tier 8 alchemists appeared. Of course, no one present could see them. As they arrived, they looked at the Medicine Pavilion... and their eyes were filled with anticipation.

“Finally, our Dao of Alchemy Division has... a truly Chosen member of the clan!”

Back on the fifth level of the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao opened his eyes. Much of his tiredness and exhaustion had vanished. He took a deep breath, rose to his feet, and stepped forward toward the ancient tome. Then, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Many thanks for bestowing me with such kindness!” he said softly. Each and every word rose up from the depths of his heart. To cultivators of the Dao of alchemy, Meng Hao’s experience just now was truly like being gifted with an amazing Dao.

The tome vanished after Meng Hao bowed, and a flight of stairs appeared up ahead of him. At the same time, his name moved from its previous position up to the fifth level, where, as before, it was now in first place on the list!

His expression was somber as he strode forward toward the steps and began to climb up to the sixth level. When he arrived, what he saw absolutely nothing.

There were no medicinal plants, there was no tome, there was no mist. There wasn’t even any light. There was only complete darkness. Everything seemed empty, as if nothing at all existed there.

Meng Hao gaped in shock, and he wasn’t the only one. The people outside were also staring at the screen, astonished.

The only ones who didn’t were the alchemists who had previously been on the sixth level. Their faces were grave as they stared closely at the screen. The tier 7 old woman looked on, her face grim. Now that she had seen how inhuman he was, she regretted what she had done earlier. She had offended him, but she also knew that there was little she could do about it now, and so she might as well stick to her guns.

After all, from her perspective, he might be inhuman, but he couldn't compare to the people who had sought out her help in the clan. The compensation they had provided was incredible.

"I might not be able to do what he did in the fifth level," she thought to herself, "but that doesn't matter. As an alchemist, you don't need to have such breadth and depth of knowledge regarding plants and vegetation. It's enough to be intimately familiar with the ones that you do know.

"I failed dozens of times at this level before finally passing. There's no way this Fang Hao will succeed on his first try. After all, the sixth level is completely different from the first five." She smiled coldly.

The nearby tier 5, 6, and 7 alchemists were shaking their heads. All of them had challenged the sixth level of the Medicine Pavilion, so they knew how difficult it was.

"This level is a watershed," commented one of the tier 8 Elders, his voice light.

"The first five levels require sufficient knowledge of plants and vegetation. The last four levels are completely different, and it only gets harder and harder."

On the stone stele outside of the Medicine Pavilion, hundreds of thousands of names could be seen on the first level. There were only 100,000 on the second level, 50,000 on the third level, 20,000 on the fourth level, and less than 10,000 on the fifth level.

As for the sixth level, only 5,000 people had ever passed it.

The seventh level had 1,000 names and the eighth level only had a bit more than 200. The last level, the ninth... only had 10.

It mustn't be forgotten that those numbers represented the accumulation of all the generations that had existed since the founding of the Fang Clan's Dao of Alchemy Division. From this, it was easy to imagine how difficult the Medicine Pavilion was.

Furthermore, whenever anyone passed the sixth level, the first thing that would happen would be that a Dao Bell would appear in the sky above the ancestral mansion. No outsider could see that bell, and when it tolled, only the members of the Fang Clan on Planet East Victory could hear it in their minds.

That bell represented true honor and glory!

Meng Hao stood on the Medicine Pavilion's sixth level, looking around at the pitch black around him. Even after sending his divine sense out, he could sense nothing but darkness. After hesitating for a moment, he took a step forward.

As soon as his foot landed, he stopped in place and cocked his head. His expression flickered.

Just now, he hadn't seen anything within the darkness, but had been able to smell the fragrance of medicinal plants. Some of the aromas were faint, some were dense. They all melded together to fill the entire area, and seemed to grow even thicker further on.

It was at this point that the archaic voice echoed out through the sixth level.

“Aroma Scrying is one of the realms of skill with plants and vegetation. You may take up to 100 steps. With every step, you will smell the fragrance of different medicinal plants.

“Determine what each plant is based on its smell, and imprint the information into the darkness. One mistake means failure.”

Meng Hao wasn't the only one who could hear the voice. The audience of more than 300,000 in the outside world could also hear it, and it caused their faces to flicker with expressions of disbelief.

“How... how could you possibly provide all the answers! No wonder this sixth level is considered so difficult. Aroma Scrying is virtually a legendary realm!”

“I never thought that the test would involve Aroma Scrying! I heard about this realm when I first became an apprentice alchemist. To think that over all the past tens of thousands of years in the Fang Clan's Dao of Alchemy Division, 5,000 or so people have actually passed this level!”

The outside world was in a huge commotion. Virtually everyone took this test to be excessively difficult. It was in a completely different league than the previous five levels.

The tier 7 old woman chuckled coldly. As she thought back to the difficulty of this level, she actually felt frightened.

“The seventh level is even harder, for any alchemist,” she whispered to herself. “And then there’s the hell-like eighth level!”

Back on the sixth level, Meng Hao began to breathe deeply, allowing the fragrances of countless medicinal plants to enter his nose. Immediately, his mind exploded as images of numerous medicinal plants appeared, each one of which was associated with one of the fragrances he had detected.

There were no less than 10,000, but in the blink of an eye, his divine sense swept out, and the images of medicinal plants began to appear in the dark void around him.

Furthermore, the outline of an illusory lotus appeared beneath his feet.

He took a second step, and once again breathed in deeply. A tremor ran through his body, and another 10,000 images appeared around him. A second lotus appeared beneath him.

One step after another, and another...

Meng Hao proceeded forward, and with each step he took, he breathed in deeply. Afterward, numerous medicinal plants would appear around him, causing the pitch-black world to be lit up by what looked like a procession of blazing lanterns.

Furthermore, lotuses continued to appear beneath his feet.

After taking 69 steps, 69 lotuses had appeared, and he was surrounded by millions of shining medicinal plants.

To everyone who was watching, Meng Hao almost looked like a holy being, surrounded by swirling plants, lotuses blooming with each step he took.

“Lotuses with each step!!” thought the old woman. Her eyes were wide, and she was panting. She well knew how difficult the sixth level was, and also knew that the only way a lotus would appear

would be if he correctly identified the fragrance of every single medicinal plant, and imprinted it correctly.

When she had passed the sixth level, she had only caused three lotuses to appear. But Meng Hao... shockingly... created lotuses with each step!

She wasn't the only shocked one. All of the alchemists who were familiar with the sixth level were shaken. They watched Meng Hao on the screen, and the image they saw would eternally be imprinted into their minds. It was an unforgettable scene that they would never forget for the rest of their lives.

Chapter 917: Climbing Higher!

The handful of tier 8 alchemists in the area were visibly moved. They looked at Meng Hao on the screen, and their eyes shone with both praise and hope.

The Fang Clan's Dao of Alchemy Division was not a sect, but rather, a division of the clan. All of the alchemists and apprentice alchemists were clan members, and their sense of clan pride and honor was at the core of what had kept the clan from falling into ruin over the ages.

Actually, merit points were one of several methods that kept clan members from becoming estranged from the clan.

Of course, the Dao of Alchemy Division hoped for a truly Chosen alchemy cultivator to appear, to arouse interest in the Dao of alchemy and to bring glory to the Fang Clan's Dao of Alchemy Division once again. However, despite the passage of many years, although other divisions of the clan had produced Chosen, the Dao of Alchemy Division had remained a quiet and desolate place. Chosen alchemy cultivators were something that could only be happened upon, and never sought out.

There were some who had the talent for it, but were not the type who were inclined to study the Dao of alchemy, and instead preferred to focus on cultivation. People like that believed that the road to power would only be obstructed by focusing on other practices.

Today, though, these tier 8 Elders finally had a bit of hope.

On the sixth level of the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao was taking his 70th step. In that instant, he deeply inhaled the dense odor of plants and vegetation. His nose and brain exploded with soundless

rumbling, and a tremor ran through him. All of the blood in his body suddenly began to circulate in reverse.

Images of medicinal plants began to float up in his mind, endless varieties of them. This type of Aroma Scrying did not just test someone's skill with plants and vegetation, it also tested instincts!

To be able to know how many types of medicinal plants there were by simply sniffing, without thinking about it too much.... This was something... that could really only be done by instinct, and by being incredibly familiar with all sorts of plants and vegetation.

This higher level of skill with plants and vegetation was like the Instantaneous Formula Scrying of the Dao of alchemy. They were actually two branches of the same skill and the same realm.

The level of difficulty of this sixth level examination was such that the requirement to pass was that the test-taker successfully take twenty steps. With each of those steps, ten or more misjudgements were tolerated before that step would be counted as a failure.

The reason for the rules being set in such a fashion was because this level was simply too difficult.

Therefore, it was easy to imagine how Meng Hao, who had already taken 70 steps, with lotuses blooming for each step, would be so incredibly shocking to all the alchemists outside who understood how difficult the test was. They could hardly believe their eyes.

71 steps. 72 steps. 73 steps.... Meng Hao didn't pause. He kept moving forward, heading further and further in. The aromas of plants and vegetation grew stronger, and were filled with even more types.

And yet, Meng Hao continued to produce... lotuses with each step.

It wasn't until he reached the 80th step that he finally started to slow down, although to the alchemist watching outside, it still looked fast.

81, 82, 83.... With each step he took, the surrounding void of darkness glittered more and more brightly. Botanical lanterns shone with scintillating light, until the entire sixth level now appeared to be brightly lit.

Having taken his 90th step, he only had 10 more steps to go. He was now moving even slower, as if these ten steps were difficult even for him. Each step took a lot more thought, which was clear to the audience.

His instincts now felt clouded, and now he needed to spend more time analyzing and deducing each aroma. It was only after painstaking examination that he was finally able to identify all of the medicinal plants.

The outside world was filled with silence. 300,000 spectators were all staring at Meng Hao on the screen. Behind him was a path of lotuses, and he was surrounded by endless numbers of botanical lamps.

As of this moment, Meng Hao was like an Immortal of plants and vegetation. He was the focus of all attention; even that old woman looked on silently.

91, 92, 93... each step now took approximately two hours. Each time, lotuses would bloom, and bright lanterns flickered everywhere.

The 95th step took him six hours; he stood there motionless within the boundless aroma before he finally imprinted all of the plants and vegetation within it.

The 96th step took twenty hours.

The 97th took two days.

By the 98th step, Meng Hao had long since lost track of time. Everyone in the outside world was staring closely at the screen. Five days later, he stepped forward again, and another lotus bloomed.

The 99th step took ten days, but yet again, a lotus bloomed, and the crowds went wild.

By now, approximately 400,000 people had gathered in the area. All of them were breathing heavily as they waited for Meng Hao... to take the final step.

The 100th step!

There on the sixth level, Meng Hao's eyes were closed. He had no idea how many steps he had taken. Without even thinking about it, he took another step forward. Rumbling sounds filled his mind, and his body trembled.

Meng Hao was panting. Every imprint he made forced him to sift through a blur of obfuscating information, and required much analysis.

More time passed. Everyone in the outside world waited. Three days. Seven days. Ten days....

Finally, twenty days passed!!

The outside world was abuzz; no one had ever been able to spend so much time testing inside of the Medicine pavilion. Meng Hao had already taken nearly two months to pass from the first level all the way to the sixth.

Five more days passed, when suddenly, all of the innumerable botanical lamps in the sixth level exploded with scintillating light. Beneath Meng Hao's foot... appeared the 100th lotus!

His eyes opened, and his body shook. Blood sprayed from his mouth. This level was so difficult that Meng Hao only passed it by shedding blood, sweat, and tears. The last step had pushed him to the limits of his skill with plants and vegetation, which, in the end, had enabled him to pass with perfect marks!

Up ahead, the innumerable botanical lamps merged together to form a staircase of vines, something that seemed suitable only for a sovereign of plants and vegetation.

The seventh level was now open!

At the same time, from the view of the outside world, the sixth level began to shine with boundless light. The sky went dim, and all darkness was dispelled. The Dao of Alchemy Division was now the focus of all eyes.

Meng Hao's name appeared on the stone stele, in the first position on the list of names for the sixth level!

The audience was abuzz.

“He... passed the sixth level! Lotuses blossomed with each step! One hundred steps, one hundred lotuses!”

“Could it be that this Fang Hao is going to bring about a renaissance in the Dao of Alchemy Division!?”

“Just wait until he’s finished here in the medicine pavilion! I’m definitely going to go listen to his lectures on plants and vegetation!!”

Meanwhile, an enormous, ancient bell appeared in the air above the Fang Clan’s ancestral mansion. From the look of it, the bell appeared to have seen the passage of ages. It was engraved with mountains and rivers, and as soon as it appeared, it rang loud and sharp.

The sound echoed out through Planet East Victory, to the ears of anyone with Fang blood in their veins. Outsiders could not hear, but the Fang Clan members could!!

The Fang Clan was shaken. Everyone in the Dao of Alchemy Division who was not already at the Medicine Pavilion was aroused. Sensing the light shining up from the Medicine Pavilion, many of them immediately flew in that direction.

Everyone in the ancestral mansion was equally shaken. First, there was the light shining up from the Dao of Alchemy Division, and then there was the bell. All Fang Clan members were shocked, and many flew toward the Dao of Alchemy Division to see what exactly was going on.

The Grand Elder stood silently in the main temple, his expression complex, and even somewhat confused.

“Did I... make a mistake?” he murmured. “No, I didn’t. Everything is for the clan. Everything I have done is according to the rules of the clan!!” The Grand Elder took a deep breath, but he still seemed to be at a loss. He looked over at the Dao of Alchemy Division, and a fierce glint could be seen in his eyes.

Meng Hao sat cross-legged on the sixth level of the Medicine Pavilion. After meditating for a period of time, he opened his eyes, which were still slightly bloodshot.

“From the difficulty of the fifth and sixth levels, I can see the boundlessness of the Fang Clan’s Dao of alchemy,” he murmured. “I made a lot of mistakes on the fifth level, and the sixth level was actually even harder. It’s only because I absorbed the Resurrection Lily that I can have such instincts with plants and vegetation!

“Therefore... my ability with Aroma Scrying is actually a bit of a cheap trick.

“This seventh level will definitely be even harder than all the others!” With that, he stood up, and his eyes flashed with a glimmer of obsession. When he had started in the Medicine Pavilion, his goal had been to amaze the world and become an overnight celebrity. It had all been for the merit points. Now, however, he was doing it to improve his skill with plants and vegetation.

He wasn’t just concerned with passing the level; he wanted to pass every level at the pinnacle. That was the only way for him to increase his skill with plants and vegetation.

He took a deep breath and began to walk up the stairs.

At the same time that he set foot on the seventh level, all of the hundreds of thousands of spectators outside were looking on. Compared to the sixth level, the seventh level didn’t seem very extraordinary. The only things that were visible were two enormous books.

One of them was, of course, the first volume of the Classic of Plants and Vegetation, with its 1,000,000,000 medicinal plants.

The second was empty. It apparently had no content whatsoever.

Even as Meng Hao laid eyes on the two books, the archaic voice rang out through the seventh level.

“Using grafting techniques and your knowledge of the mutual augmentation and suppression between different types of plants and vegetation, you must create... 10,000 unique medicinal plants. That is the threshold to pass this level. If you wish to pass the level with perfect marks, you must create 100,000.”

Meng Hao’s heart trembled. He took a deep breath, and his eyes began to shine with bright light.

“Finally... a level like this!” He knew that having accumulated so much knowledge regarding plants and vegetation, the time had eventually come to step into a new realm. It was a realm which used the principles of mutual augmentation and suppression, along with grafting techniques, to create medicinal plants that belonged to him and him alone.

Using medicinal plants like that to concoct pills would make it very difficult for others to identify the pill formula. Even if they could, it would still be very difficult to create the necessary medicinal plant ingredients. This was also a higher realm of pill concocting.

Back when Meng Hao was in the Violet Fate Sect, he had encountered such things, but not very often. The ancient Demon Immortal Sect’s Dao of alchemy also touched on such matters, but he had never had a chance to systematically study it.

Now, he settled his qi and calmed his mind, then stepped forward toward the tome and closed his eyes to think.

All of the people in the outside world who had never heard of what the seventh level was like, now gasped. Actually, according to the requirements of the Fang Clan’s Dao of alchemy, alchemists began to explore grafting techniques beginning in tier 5. In order to become a tier 7 alchemist, it was necessary to create 10,000 personally grafted medicinal plants.

Among the hundreds of thousands of spectators, the tier 6 and 7 alchemists all began to whisper among themselves.

“I wonder if Meng Hao will be able to pass the seventh level.... How many kinds of grafted medicinal plants will he create!?”

“It’s going to be difficult for him to pass. No one has ever done so on the first try. Not even his excellency Pill Elder was able to; it took him four tries.”

“Only with a profound knowledge base, and significant experience with grafting plants and vegetation, can someone even attempt the seventh level, let alone pass it.”

Chapter 918: Boundless Dao of Alchemy!

On the seventh level of the Medicine Pavilion, Meng Hao stood in front of the tomes for the time it takes an incense stick to burn, thinking. Then, his eyes opened, and he waved his hand, causing the

Classic of Plants and Vegetation to rapidly flip open to a certain page. Instantly, a medicinal plant appeared and floated up into the air.

More pages flipped in quick succession, nine of them, and nine more medicinal plants appeared. Meng Hao made a grasping motion, causing all nine plants to appear on the blank tome's first empty page.

Next, the plants followed his line of thought. Some were stripped of their bark, others had flowers removed. In the end, they formed together within Meng Hao's divine sense, where he used the techniques of mutual augmentation and suppression to graft them together.

The medicinal plant on the first page glittered brightly, whereupon the book seemed to analyze and judge it. After the blink of an eye, the page slowly turned, indicating that Meng Hao had successfully created his first medicinal plant.

He once again waved his left hand over the Classic of Plants and Vegetation, pulling out more medicinal plants and using his divine sense to transform and graft them together, continuing to create different medicinal plants according to his desires.

Time passed. To cultivators who didn't understand the Dao of alchemy, this examination seemed somewhat boring. However, to the cultivators of the Dao of Alchemy Division, it was an unprecedented opportunity for good fortune.

Even the tier 7 alchemists looked on with strange lights glowing in their eyes. As Meng Hao created his medicinal plants, they gained more enlightenment, and were continuously shocked. In fact, their own skill with plants and vegetation was slowly creeping upward.

"I can't believe that you can make cold-type plants that way.... After adding nine hot elements, the original formula was to add one cold element. But instead, he added nine cold elements. According to the law of mutual augmentation and suppression, you would think that the result would be neutral. And yet, the result is like that!"

"That Moonspirit Flower can actually turn into Sunsplendor Leaf through grafting! What an outrageous line of thinking, and yet, it works!"

Even the old woman stared with wide eyes. Subconsciously, she began to imitate Meng Hao, and her own skill with plants and vegetation gradually began to increase.

The tier 5 and 6 alchemists were incredibly excited. When it came to plant and vegetation grafting, they were just in the initial stages of learning. As they watched Meng Hao at work, they committed everything they saw to memory.

To them, this was an extremely rare opportunity.

As for the lower level alchemists, this was a realm far removed from them. However, they all understood that if they wanted to travel far along the path of the Dao of alchemy, then they would eventually have to learn how to graft plants and vegetation. Therefore, they also did as much as they could to take advantage of the situation.

The apprentice alchemists were even less clear about what was happening. However, seeing the intent expressions on the faces of the higher level alchemists, they also realized that what Meng Hao was currently doing with grafting techniques was astonishing. Therefore, they kept their eyes glued on Meng Hao and did their best to try to remember what sort of grafting techniques he used.

The world outside the Medicine Pavilion was completely quiet. Even the two old men who stood guard outside had opened their eyes and were looking at the screen up in midair.

The tier 8 alchemists stood there silently, watching Meng Hao and observing his grafting techniques. All of them were filled with anticipation.

Meng Hao once again lost track of time as he absorbed himself in the grafting of plants and vegetation. His left hand sped over the first volume of the Classic of Plants and Vegetation, seemingly flipping pages nonstop.

Time passed. Meng Hao created more and more medicinal plants. 10. 100. 1,000....

Seven days later, Meng Hao finally created 10,000 medicinal plants. He took a deep breath, but he wasn't finished. Instead, he focused inwardly for a moment, experiencing a similar feeling regarding plants and vegetation to that which he felt when practicing cultivation. He could clearly tell that as he created more medicinal plants, his understanding of plants and vegetation grew more refined.

Although it had been a long time since he had concocted medicinal pills, he could also sense that his pill concocting skill... was becoming stronger.

“My hand is the pill furnace, and I will blend all Heaven and Earth together in my palm to create an almighty medicinal pill!” His eyes shone with a light that originated from his Dao, with his Dao of alchemy. With this Dao, he could corroborate his heart, and then use that heart to concoct pills.

Seven more days passed. By now, Meng Hao had created more than 15,000 medicinal plants. Everyone outside was shaken, and their admiration for Meng Hao had reached the pinnacle.

Even the old woman had to ask herself whether her own skill with plants and vegetation was equal to Meng Hao’s. In the end, she had to sigh and admit that people like Meng Hao were exactly what the Dao of Alchemy Division lacked, and in fact, desperately needed.

As for her... if she continued to comply with the wishes of those in the main clan who wanted her to target Meng Hao, perhaps she would fall out of harmony with the Dao of Alchemy itself.

“Forget it,” she thought, her eyes shining with determination. “After all... I am a member of the Dao of Alchemy Division!” She took a deep breath, and dispelled all thoughts of targeting Meng Hao. All of a sudden, it felt as if a great weight had been lifted off of her. She focused on the screen, and on contemplating plants and vegetation.

15,000. 20,000. 30,000....

A month passed by, during which time Meng Hao created 30,000 medicinal plants. More people gathered outside. By now, there were over 500,000, spread out in all directions.

Everyone was watching Meng Hao create medicinal plants. Occasionally, people seemed to go wild with joy at what they were seeing, and at other times they looked confused. However, in the end, everyone watching was able to gain something.

Unfortunately, Meng Hao was completely absorbed in what he was doing, and had no idea what was going on outside. If he did know, he might well have gone nuts. After all, this was a prime opportunity... to charge merit points.

If at this moment he stepped out of the Medicine Pavilion and bellowed out that he demanded payment, virtually everyone in the audience would instantly pay what he asked.

From the moment he had entered the first level until now, a full four months had passed. Although cultivators had a long lifespan, and often a single meditation session might last years, to them, four months would still seem to pass by slowly if they weren't meditating.

Despite that, no one grew impatient. Instead, they continued to make gains by watching.

Meng Hao immersed himself in grafting, and he was happy. There was no other place like this Medicine Pavilion, with 1,000,000 medicinal plants inside that he could choose from.

Although they were all illusory, that didn't really matter to Meng Hao. They could still help him advance to a higher level in his skill with plants and vegetation.

Another month passed, and Meng Hao's eyes were bloodshot. He had now created 50,000 medicinal plants.

In the beginning, it had been relatively simple. However, the further along he progressed, the more difficult it became. Were he content to do a perfunctory job, this level would have been simple. However, he placed high requirements on himself. The medicinal plants he was creating now all were composed of at least one hundred other medicinal plants.

In fact, the past 10,000 he had created were grafted from at least five hundred other medicinal plants!

Exhaustion swelled up within him. The fifth, sixth, and seventh levels had all been quite a mental strain on him. In fact, as a result, he had even unwittingly grown a great deal in terms of divine sense.

Even more amazing to Meng Hao was that over the past months, his cultivation base was nearing ninety percent of the power of a true Immortal.

As the sixth month arrived, Meng Hao trembled. His mental energy was almost completely depleted, and his head felt as if it were swollen. Piercing pain occasionally stabbed through his temples, and even his thinking had slowed.

However, he had now created nearly 70,000 medicinal plants.

Not a single one was a repeat, and any of them that appeared in the outside world would certainly cause a huge stir. That was especially true of the last 5,000.... Each one of those contained more than a thousand different grafting elements.

Medicinal plants like that could be refined into a pill just by adding a few minor ingredients.

The spectators outside were entranced and deeply moved by Meng Hao's skill with plants and vegetation. Another half a month passed. Finally, Meng Hao's energy was spent. His face was ashen, and he seemed to be on the verge of collapsing. Even his Eternal stratum couldn't keep up with the mental strain.

He let out a long sigh and finally ceased working.

He had created over 75,000 plants.

"My mind isn't up to the task," he thought. "If I keep going, I might injure my foundation. Most important of all... my mastery of plants and vegetation isn't good enough, at least not in terms of grafting.

"I think perhaps 10,000 more would be my absolute limit.

"Furthermore, considering my current skill with plants and vegetation, creating an almighty medicinal plant composed of 10,000 grafts, would be too difficult." He took a deep breath and then slowly rose to his feet, his eyes shining with a gleam of obsession.

"I must deeply study the Fang Clan's way with plants and vegetation!" With that, he turned and vanished. When he reappeared, he was outside the Medicine Pavilion. When he saw the packed crowd of 500,000 cultivators, he gaped in shock.

Although he had assumed some people would come to observe, he had never imagined that so many people would show up. He even saw that all sorts of full alchemists were present, many of them still not fully awakened from the reveries of enlightenment they had fallen into while watching Meng Hao.

He was too tired to say anything. The only thing he wanted to do was return to his Immortal's cave and rest for a few days. He immediately flew into the air, transforming into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

As soon as he flew into the air, the crowds began to come to their senses. They looked at Meng Hao making his way off into the distance, and then went completely crazy.

“That was Fang Hao!!” someone shouted. “He came out!!” More people came to their senses, and when they realized that the screen was gone, they understood that Meng Hao had already emerged from the Medicine Pavilion.

“75,000 medicinal plants, huh. He’s a Grandmaster of plants and vegetation! He fully deserves to be called an apothecary!”

“With Grandmaster Fang Hao’s skill in plants and vegetation, if he wanted to simply pass through the Medicine Pavilion, I wouldn’t dare to say he could pass the ninth level, but the eighth level would definitely be no problem!”

Everyone was in a tumult as they watched Meng Hao leave. Their eyes shone with fanaticism and reverence. In the world of cultivation, the strong are respected, and it was no different in the Dao of Alchemy Division.

“He stopped on purpose this time, but in a few months, he’ll definitely keep going!”

The surrounding alchemists watched Meng Hao leave, and they all sighed emotionally. This was especially true of the tier 8 Elders, whose faces were filled with hope and excitement.

Deep in the inner mountains, Pill Elder Fang Danyun had been watching Meng Hao the entire time. Finally he sighed, and a smile appeared on his face. “There is finally a successor for the Dao of Alchemy Division....”

He waved his right hand, within which appeared an ancient book, upon which were written the words “Classic of Plants and Vegetation.”

“Give this to Fang Hao,” he said softly, waving his hand again. A mysterious light appeared, covering over the book and taking it away.

Meng Hao flew out of the Dao of Alchemy Division, not even fully aware of his surroundings. However, a moment later, he suddenly stopped in place, and his eyes went wide. His mind felt as if it had just been struck by lightning.

“Dammit! How could I have forgotten to charge merit points!? There were more than 500,000 people there just now! How many months was I in the Medicine Pavilion!? This... This...”

Chapter 919: Provocation

Meng Hao trembled, his face pale white. At first, he tried not to calculate how much he had lost, but in the end, he couldn't stop himself. His mind filled with a terrifyingly huge number of merit points, and he almost coughed up a mouthful of blood.

“Screwed! Royally screwed!!” He felt like weeping, but no tears would come. All he could do was curse his horrible luck at having completely wasted such a good opportunity to earn merit points.

At this thought, he threw his head back and roared, which caused quite a few nearby birds to scatter in flight.

Trembling, heart bleeding, face ashen, Meng Hao felt completely drained of energy. Listless and depressed, it was at this point that he suddenly noticed that someone was flying through the air behind him.

He turned feebly and saw a young woman; his lifeless countenance caused her to stare in shock.

She was graceful and beautiful, with an entrancing face. She wore a long pink garment, and her fragrance was delicate and pleasing.

She looked at Meng Hao in shock for a moment, before tentatively asking, “Um, are you... Elder Cousin Fang Hao?”

Meng Hao listlessly nodded his head. He was still inwardly tied up in knots over the huge sum of merit points he had lost. In his mind, even the sky had turned completely black.

The young woman's face grew serious as she looked at Meng Hao. She thought to herself that this person was willing to drive himself crazy before giving up, all for the sake of skill with plants and

vegetation. She could see a level of unswerving determination in Meng Hao that she did not possess.

“Elder Cousin Fang Hao, I saw you in the Medicine Pavilion just now, and I, Wan’er, couldn’t help but admire you.” She clasped hands and bowed, then held out a tome toward Meng Hao. “This... is a tome that his excellency Pill Elder wanted me to give you.”

Meng Hao was still in a daze. Face blank, he muttered, “I just had an unimaginable amount of merit points placed in front of me, but I didn’t cherish them as I should have... what a waste!!”

The young woman gaped for a moment, unsure about the meaning of what she had just heard. “Elder Cousin, what did you just say?”

Meng Hao shook his head and dejectedly accepted the tome. Then he turned and, looking incredibly depressed, headed off into the distance. The young woman watched him make his way off, and couldn’t help but feel even more admiration for him.

“He is definitely worthy of being the eldest grandson of the direct bloodline. Elder Cousin Fang Hao is crazy about the Dao of alchemy. He created more than 70,000 medicinal plants on the seventh level of the Medicine pavilion, but he still feels disappointed. It’s almost like he’s lost his faith and ideals. A person like that is really rare. No wonder his excellency Pill Elder wanted me to give him that tome.

“Wan’er,” she said to herself encouragingly, “you have to work hard and study more, like Elder Cousin!” She looked at Meng Hao leaving, and was filled with reverence.

Meng Hao had no idea how much encouragement his expression had given to that fragile young woman. He continued along his way toward the ancestral mansion, drowsy and out of sorts.

As soon as he entered the ancestral mansion, his mood worsened. Even as he transformed into a beam of light and shot forward, a group of seven or eight people strolled out ahead of him, chatting and laughing.

Among that group of people was a young woman who Meng Hao recognized from when he had first arrived at East Heaven Gate. She was a female cultivator named Fang Hong. She was clearly a natural born beauty, and she currently wore a long, pale garment. She held her hand in front of her mouth and laughed as she walked along. Among those walking with her, three had cultivation bases

at the peak of Dao Seeking, similar to false Immortals. There were a few others who were in the Spirit Severing realm.

All of them were people Meng Hao had seen following Fang Wei back in the temple.

Behind them trailed an old man with salt-and-pepper hair and an apathetic expression. He held his hands in front of him, tucked into the opposite sleeves, and followed the group with a slight bow, almost as if he were a servant.

He was not a member of the Fang Clan, but had a different surname, and had taken shelter with the Fang Clan in exchange for acting as a Dao Protector to members of the younger generation.

The young cultivators around Fang Hong chatted and laughed.

“Hong’er, I heard that when you went out for training this time you ended up taking Reverend Shui Yun as your master. Senior Shui Yun might be just a rogue cultivator, but his cultivation base is incredible. Congratulations! Oh, and now that you’re back, don’t be in a hurry to leave again. It won’t be long now before the centennial rising of the East Ascension Sun. Prince Wei will be in charge of the East Ascension Pavilion, and he’s already invited Chosen from quite a few other sects to come enjoy the spectacle. When the time comes, you can meet all of them.”

“Yeah, that’s right! Princess Hong, of all the Chosen in the Fang Clan, there are few whose cultivation bases exceed yours. You’ll definitely be a blazing sun in the East Ascension Pavilion.

In response to what everyone was saying, the young woman smiled slightly and shook her head, although her expression revealed traces of pride.

“Prince Wei and Prince Han both have cultivation bases higher than me,” she said. “And as for you, Prince Tao and Prince Hai, with your cultivation bases, as long as you make the proper preparations, you should be able to use an Immortality Illumination Vine at almost any time.”

“Not necessarily,” said one of her companions. “The clan has Immortality Illumination Vines, but they’re rare. There are only a few available in this generation. Unless you’re one of the top three in the current generation, then the only way to get one is to pay a ton of merit points. It’s really difficult.”

“That’s not the case with you, though, Hong’er. With the help of Reverend Shui Yun, you have a much better chance than all of us.” Sighs could be heard. It was at this exact moment that Meng Hao flew overhead in a beam of light. The people down below looked up, and the three youths with cultivation bases similar to false Immortals all frowned.

Even the young woman Fang Hong was frowning.

In the Fang Clan ancestral mansion, there were only two people who were qualified to fly. One was Fang Wei, and the other... was none other than Meng Hao.

“Sir Chen, I don’t like people flying over my head,” said Fang Hong, her voice calm. In response, the old man who had been following the group looked up, and his previously calm eyes began to glow brightly. He looked up at Meng Hao flying through the air.

“Get down here!” he bellowed. He didn’t attack, he just spoke. His words didn’t echo out very far; they were directed solely at Meng Hao, and appeared to contain natural law that required his orders to be followed. They transformed into something like explosive, muffled thunder that only Meng Hao could hear.

Boom!

Meng Hao suddenly screeched to a halt in midair as an enormous force built up around him. It was as if the air around him had been restricted, and he was suddenly forced downward. Something like a huge hand pushed down, forcing him out of the sky.

His body trembled, and he felt incredible pressure like that of the peak of the Immortal stage, that of a stage 7 Immortal.

“Huh?” thought the old man, frowning. Seeing that he hadn’t instantly suppressed Meng Hao, he gave a cold snort and caused his cultivation base to explode out with power. Massive pressure swelled out, and Meng Hao lost control of his body completely and fell out of the sky.

It wasn’t until he landed on the ground that the pressure faded away. The old man’s face was calm as he lowered his head, almost as if nothing had happened.

Fang Hong and her followers all looked over at Meng Hao.

Immediately, Fang Hong's followers spoke up.

“So, you're Fang Hao, the one who caused all the ruckus in the Dao of Alchemy Division?”

“Don't forget, it doesn't matter if the Grand Elder gave you the qualifications to fly in the ancestral mansion. If you don't have enough power, don't randomly fly over people's heads.”

“You may go now.”

These people didn't know much about Meng Hao. After all, the first thing he had done after returning to the clan was spend most of his time in the Dao of Alchemy Division.

All they knew was that his Bloodline Gatebeam was 30,000 meters. This made them feel a bit self-conscious. When it came to the Dao of alchemy however, they viewed it as a lesser type of Dao that wasn't worthy to share the stage with cultivation.

Having spoken their words, they resumed chatting and laughing, completely ignoring Meng Hao as they brushed past him.

Meng Hao had already been in an abominable mood. He had just been flying along, minding his own business, when suddenly he was forced down to the ground. Considering his personality, how could he possibly accept such a thing? His eyes grew cold, and a smile slowly spread out across his face.

It was a smile, but it was a very cold smile.

“So,” he said indifferently, “you people see me but don't offer formal greetings! It seems you've forgotten all about the clan rules!”

The eight people frowned and stopped in place, slowly turning back to look at Meng Hao.

“Sir Chen,” said Fang Hong, “get him out of here, why don't you.”

Sir Chen's expression was as calm as ever as he nodded, then stepped toward Meng Hao. He pushed out with his right hand, causing an incredible force explode out toward Meng Hao. His goal was to physically push Meng Hao completely away.

As he advanced, the force rumbled out ahead of him. Meng Hao flicked his sleeve, causing a black beam of light to fly out, which transformed into the crocodile. It swished its tail, causing an incredible energy to surge out.

The old man's face flickered as the tail slammed into him, causing a huge boom to fill the air.

"You, a foreign servant, dare to raise your hand against me?!" Meng Hao said coolly. Then he stepped toward the group of eight.

The eight young cultivators' faces fell as they first saw the old man fighting the crocodile, and then saw Meng Hao walking toward them.

"And then, you people! I can't believe you see me but refuse to offer greetings!" He advanced toward them, his energy surging and a cold gleam flickering in his eyes.

The three young men with cultivation bases equivalent to false Immortals immediately stepped forward.

"Why the hell do you think we would offer greetings to you?" said one of them.

"Why the hell do I think you would offer greetings to me? Because I'm the eldest grandson of the direct bloodline! It doesn't matter which bloodline you people are from, or which branch. All members of this generation call me Cousin!" Even as Meng Hao's voice echoed out, he slapped out with his right hand.

The three young men snorted, and were just about to attempt to fight back, when all of a sudden, their faces fell. They were completely incapable of doing anything; Meng Hao's shocking wave of power completely destroyed all of their divine abilities and magical techniques.

Booms rang out as Meng Hao's hand slapped into all three of their faces in succession. Blood sprayed from their mouths as they were sent tumbling backward.

In that same moment, Meng Hao stepped forward, and his leg blurred into a whirlwind as he kicked the three young men over and over again. Booms mixed with bloodcurdling screams as they were sent hurtling backward, where they slammed into the ground.

Cracking sounds could be heard as more than half of their bones were broken.

“What do you think you’re doing!?” said one of them, his face falling. “We’re inside the clan, you —”

“Oh, so it turns out you do know that we’re in the Fang Clan,” said Meng Hao coldly. “Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten that I’m also surnamed Fang!?” He stepped forward again, then waved his right hand, causing Fang Hong’s Spirit Severing acquaintances to cough up blood as many of the bones in their bodies were crushed. Miserable shrieks rang out.

“You see me and actually don’t extend greetings!? I’m the eldest grandson, so I guess all I can do is teach you a lesson about the clan rules. And then there’s you....” He turned to face Fang Hong. As soon as he stepped forward, a voice called out from the distance.

“Stay your hand!”

Fang Hong’s face flickered, and she quickly lifted her right hand into the air, causing a huge, illusory cauldron to appear, upon which the character ‘Fang’ could be seen. It immediately crushed down toward Meng Hao.

Chapter 920: An Exception!

“Ten percent of the power of a true Immortal!? Puny!” Completely ignoring whoever it was behind him, Meng Hao smiled coldly and clenched his hand into a fist. He punched out, causing a boom to echo out as the cauldron shattered. His fist continued on toward Fang Hong.

Another boom could be heard. Blood sprayed from Fang Hong’s lips as she doubled over in pain. Meng Hao’s punch was too fierce, and her qi passageways were shattered as she hurtled backward. It didn’t matter that she was a woman, Meng Hao was as cold as ever.

After punching her, he turned icily to face the group that was speeding toward him in the distance.

“Meng Hao, you twerp! How dare you!” Six people were flying through the air. Three of them were white-haired old men with cultivation bases in the Immortal realm. The one in the middle was clearly more powerful than the others, and was at the peak of the Immortal Realm.

That was the one who had spoken just now.

Behind the three old men were two masked cultivators, one whose cultivation base was hidden, making it impossible to see how deep it was. However, he emanated a desolate, murderous aura that was especially strong, as if his only job in the Fang Clan was to kill people.

The last of the group was none other than Fang Yunyi!

He was the one who had yelled out to Meng Hao to stay his hand.

As for the old man who had just spoken, he appeared next to Fang Hong even as his words echoed out. He immediately picked her up in his arms and gave her some medicinal pills.

Fang Hong’s face was pale, and she was quivering. Blood oozed out of her mouth, and it was with difficulty that she swallowed the medicinal pills.

“Grandpa,” she said with a bitter smile, “my... my qi passageways....”

The old man had already noticed that Fang Hong’s qi passageways had been shattered, and he responded, “Don’t worry. Grandpa will fix this for you!” With that, he turned to glare at Meng Hao, his eyes flickering with killing intent.

“What gall you have! How dare you slaughter people within the clan! There’s no need to send you to the clan dungeon, I’ll execute you here and now!” With that, the other two old men who had accompanied him began to close in on Meng Hao.

“That crocodile too! Kill it!” The two masked cultivators immediately headed toward the crocodile. Sir Chen instantly fell back to Fang Hong’s side, his face anxious.

A cold smile appeared on Fang Yunyi’s face, and inwardly, he was going wild with joy at finally being able to catch Meng Hao off guard. This time, he knew that Meng Hao was going to be killed without a doubt.

“Sixth Grandpa, correct?” Meng Hao stood his ground, completely ignoring the two old men who were closing in on him. “Let me ask you, did you see me slaughter anyone?” He slapped his bag of holding to produce his identity medallion.

“I’m the eldest grandson of the direct bloodline. My dad is Fang Xiufeng, and the Grand Elder is my Third Grandpa. If you people dare to kill me, you’ll be violating clan rules. Anyone who violates clan rules will be put to death!” As his voice echoed out, the two old men who were moving toward him suddenly stopped in place, their faces flickering as they hesitated.

“I was flying happily through the air,” Meng Hao continued calmly, “when these clan members asked this foreign servant to suppress me. And after seeing who I was, they refused to greet me respectfully. Apparently, they aren’t familiar with the clan rules, so I set about to teach them a lesson. Sixth Grandpa, have you suddenly developed a vision problem?” He stood there, his expression stony.

“Kill him!” cried Fang Hong’s grandfather a second time, with a cold snort. Hearing his words, the two old men clenched their jaws and continued on toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s face flickered, and he fell back. Even before the two old men could get close to him, he slapped his own chest with his palm, coughing up a huge mouthful of blood, and then letting out a miserable shriek. At the same time, he ripped open his bag of holding, causing the jade box that contained the Nirvana Fruits to fly out.

Next, he yelled out at the top of his lungs, “You want to steal my Nirvana Fruits! Grand Elder! Third Grandpa! Someone’s trying to steal my Nirvana Fruits!”

Using all the power his cultivation base could muster, he sent his voice echoing out in all directions.

When the Grand Elder gave Meng Hao the Nirvana Fruits, he had sworn an oath that anyone in the clan who dared to steal them from Meng Hao would be exterminated. As Meng Hao’s voice spread throughout the clan, many people heard it. The two old men who had been closing in on Meng Hao to kill him, suddenly stopped in place, and their faces fell.

Even Fang Hong’s grandfather’s face fell, and he gritted his teeth.

“I get it!” continued Meng Hao, backing up, and at the same time, crying out loudly. “You clan members of my generation pulled me out of the sky because you’re... you’re in collusion with that foreign servant to steal my Nirvana Fruits!!

“You Heaven-damned clan delinquents! How could you be so ruthless! How could you try to steal my Nirvana Fruits!

“Grand Elder, save me! Third Grandpa, if you don’t show up quickly, my Nirvana Fruits are going to be taken away! Third Grandpa, Grand Elder, SAVE ME!”

His bellowing caused the enraged three youths with the near-false Immortal cultivation bases to once again cough up blood.

“Stop talking nonsense!” cried Fang Hong, blood oozing from her mouth. She was also getting nervous. “We saw you flying toward us and just wanted you to go around us! We never brought up anything about your Nirvana Fruits!”

“You sharp-tongued troublemaker!” howled Fang Hong’s grandfather. “You’re not from the Fang Clan! DIE!” As he closed in on Meng Hao, it became apparent that the Grand Elder was nowhere to be seen.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered coldly, and he suddenly lifted his right hand. The Lightning Cauldron appeared. In that critical moment, he looked over at Fang Yunyi, whose face instantly fell.

Rumble!

They instantly switched places, and Meng Hao watched from off in the distance as the old man’s palm descended onto Fang Yunyi, who let out a piercing scream.

The old man pulled his palm back at the very last moment, then turned to look at Meng Hao. He was just about to charge toward him once again, when suddenly, several dozen beams of light shot through the air toward them from various directions.

“6th Older Uncle, my Older Cousin entrusted Hao’er to me for safekeeping. If you dare to touch him, I’ll wipe out your entire bloodline. Worst case scenario, afterward I’ll take my entire family to stay with my Older Cousin on Planet South Heaven!” The speaker was none other than Meng Hao’s

19th Uncle, who came to a stop directly in front of Meng Hao. He looked over coldly at Fang Hong's grandfather.

More beams of light descended. Two were middle-aged men, who intercepted the attacks of the masked cultivators against the crocodile, saving it from certain annihilation.

In the blink of an eye, the entire situation had changed. Meng Hao was surrounded by more than a dozen cultivators. However, the man who 19th Uncle had called 6th Older Uncle was also joined by quite a few newcomers.

As they faced off with proverbial daggers drawn, the archaic voice of Grand Elder Fang Tongtian suddenly echoed out from deep within the ancestral mansion.

“That’s enough. Fang Hong, Fang Tao, Fang Hai, and the rest of your companions, you disrespected the rules of seniority. You will be punished in the Fire Smelting Pit for ten days!

“Fang Hao, although clan members treated you disrespectfully, there was no need to attack so viciously. You will also be punished in the Fire Smelting Pit for ten days!

“The sentence will be carried out immediately!”

As soon as the Grand Elder's voice rang out, Fang Hong and the others' faces went pale. The Fire Smelting Pit was also called Hell, and to spend ten days there would be like being skinned alive.

The clan members in the area, both those of Meng Hao's bloodline and 6th Older Uncle's, didn't dare to say another word. 6th Patriarch's eyes flickered and he held his tongue.

However, Meng Hao opened his mouth immediately.

“Third Grandpa, Grand Elder, um... my Spirit Elixir is almost finished! I'm almost ready to absorb the Nirvana Fruits, so I really don't have time to go to the Fire Smelting Pit. Look, if you make an exception, I'll make up the punishment later. What do you think?”

Meng Hao's words were met with utter silence. No one would ever dare to contradict the Grand Elder's orders. Fang Hong and the others looked on with wide eyes. In their opinion, Meng Hao was really far too brazen. Even the other Elders in the area were gaping at him.

Fang Yunyi was elated, and inwardly, started laughing uproariously. In his hatred for Meng Hao, he rejoiced at Meng Hao's words to the Grand Elder, and couldn't wait for Meng Hao to experience even more misery.

"Be quiet!" hissed 19th Uncle. All of the other clan members surrounding Meng Hao also felt that his words were far too crude and rash.

"What?" said the Grand Elder. He had never imagined that Meng Hao would dare to speak up, and when his voice echoed out, it seemed to send a chill through the entire area. However, after the space of a few breaths went by, he spoke further, and the words he uttered caused everyone to gasp.

"Very well. Absorbing the Nirvana Fruits is a very important matter. As soon as you finish, go to the Fire Smelting Pit!"

"Many thanks, Third Grandpa," said Meng Hao, looking very grateful. Everyone else looked on with shock and other strange expressions. In their memory, the Grand Elder had always been unswervingly just, which was how he had earned the clan's respect over the years.

But now, he was clearly being partial toward Meng Hao.

"This... the Grand Elder actually just...."

"He called the Grand Elder by the address Third Grandpa.... Now that I think about it, the Grand Elder used to be part of the direct bloodline!" All of a sudden, thoughtful expressions could be seen on the onlookers' faces. The 6th Patriarch's face flickered, and he gritted his teeth. Finally, he let out a cold snort. His face extremely grim, he flicked his sleeve and carried Fang Hong away.

As Fang Hong was taken away, she looked back at Meng Hao, and she couldn't help but muse about how terrifying he was.

"The Grand Elder actually showed partiality toward him...."

The youths with the near-false Immortal cultivation bases were trembling as they clasped hands and bowed toward Meng Hao.

“Cousin...”

Meng Hao grunted in response, then looked over at Fang Yunyi, who was gingerly attempting to sneak away, and gave an obviously fake smile.

Fang Yunyi’s scalp went numb, and the images of what had happened on Planet South Heaven flitted through his mind. Gritting his teeth, he bowed his head.

“Cousin...”

Meng Hao smiled, then turned to clasp hands and express his gratitude to 19th Uncle and the other members of his bloodline. All of them looked at him encouragingly as he transformed into a beam of light and shot away.

“When the Grand Elder looks at Meng Hao, he must be thinking of Meng Hao’s own grandfather. The two of them were brothers, and were very close!”

“Yeah, that’s right. The Grand Elder is always unswervingly just. In the past several hundred years, he’s never shown partiality toward anyone. He hasn’t made a single exception!”

“Hao’er is really a blazing sun of the Fang Clan. The fact that the Grand Elder is willing to make an exception for him illustrates that point!”

Even as they discussed the matter, Meng Hao disappeared off into the distance.

Eventually, he reached his Immortal’s cave.

As soon as he set foot inside, his eyes turned cold, and a grim expression covered his face.

“Grand Elder. Third Grandpa. Why do you want so badly for me to die...?”