

The Quest 861

Chapter 861: Gold Marrow (3)

Even this little monster, which could be called a devilish creature, couldn't do anything about itself.

The Sheep-Horned Demon Monster was being tormented by Mo Hua, yet felt proud because of its own devoutness and the Divine Lord's blessing.

It sneered, "Don't waste your effort, you milk-nosed little ghost, mere riffraff, how could you understand the power of the Master of the Great Wilderness?"

Mo Hua was a bit angry.

He frowned, and suddenly his eyes rolled playfully, and he said with a smile,

"Let me show you something nice."

The Demon Monster was startled, and it wouldn't believe for the death of it that Mo Hua would really show it anything "nice."

The Demon Monster snorted coldly, "Stop playing any cunning schemes, in front of the Divine Lord, everything..."

But Mo Hua didn't listen, and before it could finish speaking, he grabbed it by the back of its neck and dragged it in front of the Taoist Stele.

It was past 1 p.m., and the Taoist Stele could now manifest.

Mo Hua pressed the Demon Monster's head against the Taoist Stele, and commanded,

"Take a look."

Although the Demon Monster didn't believe there was anything that could break the Divine Lord's protection, it was still apprehensive of Mo Hua and kept its eyes tightly shut, daring not to look at anything.

Mo Hua thought for a moment and then said,

"Your Divine Lord is like a mouse, sneaky and disgraceful without any sense of shame..."

"Always hiding behind others, like a shrinking turtle."

"No, you said it hasn't awakened yet, so it must be hibernating..."

"Living so long..."

"Thousand-year tortoise, ten thousand-year turtle, is your Divine Lord a tortoise or a turtle?"

Infuriated by Mo Hua's "sweet nothings," the Sheep-Horned Enforcer finally couldn't bear it anymore.

It abruptly opened its eyes and immediately froze.

Before its eyes was a stark, deadly Thunder Pattern.

The rage in the heart of the Sheep-Horned Demon Monster instantly dissipated, and boundless fear surged forth.

Robbery Thunder...

Robbery Thunder?!

It widened its eyes, unable to believe.

What kind of monster was this little ghost?!

How could his Sea of Consciousness contain Robbery Thunder?!

"You?!"

The Sheep-Horned Enforcer couldn't finish its sentence when it saw the Thunder Pattern flicker slightly, revealing just a hint of its aura, which spawned a faint Thunder Flow that instantly erased its consciousness.

At the same time, its "indestructible" ram horns, protected by the Master of the Great Wilderness, also had any "immortal" Divine Thoughts instantly obliterated.

Ram-horned Skull bore several cracks.

Mo Hua quickly took it away from the Thunder Pattern, and with a simple twist, he easily broke it open, and from the skull oozed a streak of pale golden Divine Thought fluid...

Mo Hua was surprised, "Is this...bone marrow?"

The pale golden bone marrow!

Mo Hua stared at the "bone marrow," hesitated for a long while, but couldn't restrain himself, dipped his index finger in it, and tasted it.

It was tasteless.

But the texture was good...

The Divine Thoughts contained were not strong, but after eating, there was a very mysterious sensation.

As if he were a deity residing above the ninth heaven, mighty and overlooking all living beings.

And all these living beings were mere ants, mere riffraff.

They were his sacrificial offerings...

Mo Hua quickly shook his head, casting away these bizarre and absurd thoughts, and then carefully examined himself.

Only then did he discover that his Divine Consciousness Entity, without knowing when, had gained traces of pale golden blood.

Although very faint, so faint that only he could notice.

Mo Hua frowned.

"Could this golden bone marrow truly be 'Divine' Thought?"

Could this trace of "Blood of Divine Sense" come from those Demon Monsters' Divine Lord, also known as the "Master of the Great Wilderness"?

And why were these Demon Monsters fixated on Yu Er?

Were they... planning to use Yu Er as a sacrificial offering?

Mo Hua's gaze grew solemn.

In the midst of it all, he always felt that a huge conspiracy loomed over Yu Er, the Shangguan Family, and even the entirety of Qian State...

But what exactly it was, he still had no clue.

"Never mind, one step at a time..."

Just do what I need to do...

Adhering to the principle of "not wasting," Mo Hua drank all of the remaining pale golden "bone marrow."

Since it had been struck by Robbery Thunder, even if the "bone marrow" had truly contained the Divine Thoughts of the Wild God, they would have been eradicated, leaving only pure, somewhat divine Divine Sense.

It was a great tonic!

Mo Hua held the ram-horned skull, drank the "bone marrow," licked his lips, and felt completely satisfied. His body's traces of pale golden blood also increased slightly.

Thus, all the Demon Monsters were completely devoured by him, leaving not even bones and marrow.

After having his "fill," and eating well, it was already late, and Mo Hua prepared to go out.

...

Mo Hua exited from his Sea of Consciousness, and as soon as he opened his eyes, he noticed a soft blanket covering him.

A gentle woman was by his side, looking anxious—it was Aunt Wan.

In the distance, several Cultivators resembling elders were quietly arguing.

"It must be an Evil Fiend!"

"With so many Great Cultivators guarding the Gu Family, how could an Evil Fiend appear?"

"You don't understand..."

"Evil Fiends are not all the same..."

An elder snorted coldly, "Don't be mysterious, I've lived for several hundred years, what haven't I seen? How could there be some 'invisible Evil Fiend'?"

"It's not 'invisible,' it's undetectable by Divine Sense..."

"Ridiculous! Divine Sense of Golden Core and Feather Transformation, still undetectable?"

"It's casting pearls before swine, I can't reason with you..."

"...Heavenly Secret Cause and Effect..."

"That child..."

"Must have encountered a hiccup in his Cultivation..."

Chapter 862: Golden Marrow (4)

"What are you talking about?"

"...It must be an Evil Fiend that has invaded, harmed the Sea of Consciousness, and clouded the Divine Sense. Look at his darkened brow and the gloomy shade on his face; he is unconscious and if we don't treat him soon, I'm afraid the danger is significant..."

The man's words halted abruptly.

Because he saw Mo Hua had woken up...

Everyone else was also stunned and speechless.

Only a worried Wenren Wan showed joy, "Mo Hua, are you alright..."

Mo Hua nodded, "I'm fine."

Wenren Wan hesitated for a moment, then asked softly,

"Did you just..."

Mo Hua said, "I just had a nightmare. There were a bunch of demon monsters that entered my dream, wanting to eat me, but they were no match for me and I slaughtered them all!"

Wenren Wan's expression was complicated, unsure of what to say.

The Elders nearby also had varying expressions.

Some were expressionless, taking Mo Hua's words as mere dream talk; some chuckled and shook their heads, treating it as 'childish talk'; and others scoffed, thinking Mo Hua was just spouting nonsense.

None of them believed that what Mo Hua said was actually true...

Mo Hua noticed their expressions and felt a bit helpless.

There was no helping it, telling the truth wasn't believed these days.

Wenren Wan still spoke with concern:

"Are you... really alright?"

Mo Hua smiled, "Don't worry, Aunt Wan, and moreover..."

He turned his head, looking at Yu Er lying on the bed, her brows relaxed and her countenance peaceful, and said softly:

"...Yu Er also had a good sleep..."

Wenren Wan was startled, then looked toward Yu Er, her expression soft and beautiful as water, and the stone in her heart slowly fell.

"Yes, Yu Er finally... had a good sleep..."

She then looked back at Mo Hua, her eyes filled with gratitude.

Everyone still remained by Yu Er's side.

The incident with Mo Hua had been shocking but harmless, and they couldn't figure out the details, so they no longer questioned it.

Only a few Elders gazed at Mo Hua, their eyes focused, as if deep in thought.

Dawn brightened, the morning glow filled the sky, pouring in through the window.

Yu Er slowly opened her eyes, her gaze somewhat hazy, then remembered something, quickly turned her head, and saw Mo Hua indeed by her side.

A radiant smile appeared on Yu Er's face.

Mo Hua also smiled gently.

...

Yu Er slept peacefully through the night, looking much better and even had an appetite to eat, though she only took a few bites before she would look up at Mo Hua and then squint her eyes in a smile.

It seemed much more reassuring to be by Mo Hua's side.

Mo Hua didn't work on Drawing Formations, and instead, took the time to play with Yu Er for most of the day.

By evening, Mo Hua was again by Yu Er's side.

The night was calm and peaceful.

Mo Hua felt reassured yet somewhat regretful.

Reassured because Yu Er could sleep well again.

Regretful because his own "ration" of Divine Sense had run out...

And Yu Er, having slept sweetly through the night, was more spirited, her face no longer so pale.

But the next day, Mo Hua had to return to the Sect.

His ten-day leave was only for two days.

Yu Er hung his little head, somewhat reluctant, following Mo Hua all the way to the door.

Mo Hua promised him he would visit again when he had time, and only then did Yu Er cheer up a bit.

Wenren Wan gave Mo Hua lots of tasty food, some Formation Books, and brushes to express her gratitude, but she seemed to have something on her mind, hesitating for a long time before slowly starting to speak:

"Mo Hua..."

But she was unsure how to continue.

Mo Hua knew what Wenren Wan was worried about and said with a smile:

"Aunt Wan, if Yu Er has another nightmare, I'll come and check on him..."

Wenren Wan was taken aback, then relieved, looking at Mo Hua with even more gratitude.

...

Afterward, Mo Hua rode in the Gu Family's carriage back to Taixu Gate.

Upon returning to the Sect, he spent two days refining and absorbing a group of demon monsters and the Evil Thoughts of the Sheep-Horned Enforcer.

He then meditated to consolidate his Taoist Heart.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense finally broke through the realm, reaching Sixteen Patterns!

Sixteen Patterns were the limit of Divine Sense in the Qi Foundation Middle Stage.

Seventeen Patterns would be for the Foundation Establishment Late Stage.

The barrier from Sixteen to Seventeen Patterns was thick, not so easily broken through.

But Mo Hua was not in a hurry; his realm of Divine Sense was now very high, and he could afford to consolidate for a while.

Reaching the realm of Sixteen Patterns, he now had enough Divine Sense to study the "Beacon Fire Yuan Magnet Formation," a Second Rank Sixteen Patterns!

But his problem now was he lacked enough Merit Points to exchange for the Formation Diagram.

"I need to work hard, earn more Merit Points..."

Mo Hua then went to ask Senior Sister Murong.

Murong Caiyun thought for a moment, then said, "There is indeed a task, not very difficult, and the Merit Points are not that many, probably just over eighty, but you can go if you want."

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly, smiling:

"Thank you, Senior Sister Murong!"

Over eighty points, still not a small amount.

Certainly better than him creating First-grade Formations.

Murong Caiyun said gently: "This task is located outside the Qian Xue State Boundary, in Bishan City, where the mountains are steep and surrounded by many rivers and streams..."

"The specific map and task information, I will send to you."

"If you have time, you can check it out in the Taixu Token..."

"Uh-huh!" Mo Hua nodded again and again.

Bishan City...

After he got back, he checked the task information and looked over the map of Bishan City, pondering what he should prepare...

As he looked, Mo Hua suddenly paused.

He noticed that on the map, outside Bishan City, there was a desolate mountain that looked very familiar.

Mo Hua recalled in his mind and then realized that this desolate mountain was indeed "Mount Huang," the broken mountain of Lord Yellow Mountain.

The temple of the Downcast Mountain God, Lord Yellow Mountain, was located on the summit of this desolate mountain.

"Hanging Dry Mountain..."

Mo Hua silently noted down this mountain's name, deciding to visit Hanging Dry Mountain after completing his mission, to pay a visit to Lord Yellow Mountain.

Regarding the matter of Taixu Divine Thought Sword True Jue, Lord Yellow Mountain certainly had something to hide from him...

He had to go and get it clarified!

Chapter 863: Kneel Down

Life in the Sect was uneventful, and eight days later, it was time for the ten-day rest again.

Because Bishan City was a bit far and traveling back and forth was complicated, it took extra time, so Mo Hua asked for one more day off.

With Elder Master Xun backing her, the Elders from the Sect were easy to talk to.

Therefore, she got her day off without any trouble.

Three days in total!

Mo Hua packed up her luggage and happily went to find Senior Sister Murong with her Storage Bag slung over her shoulder.

The mission was still taken by Murong Caiyun, and Mo Hua just tagged along.

Knowing that Mo Hua was collecting Merit Points to exchange for a Formation Diagram, Murong Caiyun said,

"This mission isn't difficult, so including you, there are only three people. You will also be able to get a larger share of the Merit Points."

Mo Hua smiled and replied, "Thank you, Senior Sister!"

The two set off for the exterior of the Taixu Gate. Mo Hua walked briskly, chatting sporadically along the way.

"Three people..."

Mo Hua thought for a moment and asked, "Senior Sister, who else is going?"

Murong Caiyun answered, "Senior Brother Feng from the Tai'a Sect as well."

"Senior Brother Feng..."

Mo Hua nodded her head.

Senior Brother Feng was gentle and polite with deep cultivation. It seemed that he held a high position in the Tai'a Sect, and indeed, he was one of the predetermined Inner Sect Disciples—a true "big leg."

"What about Senior Brother Xu and Sister Qianqian?"

"Senior Brother Xu is recovering from an injury, and since the mission isn't difficult and doesn't offer many Merit Points, it's better not to trouble him with it."

"As for Qianqian..."

Murong Caiyun paused, "She's quite busy, so let's forget about it this time..."

"Oh, oh," Mo Hua nodded.

Murong Caiyun sighed softly.

Qianqian had been urging her every day, wanting to partner with Mo Hua on a mission and had prepared a "gift" for Mo Hua—all sorts of girly skirts, hairpins, and rouge.

She said that making Mo Hua dress up, looking pretty as a piece of carved jade, would definitely be very attractive...

Murong Caiyun was afraid she'd go too far, so she didn't call her this time.

But Hua Qianqian had been nagging her ears off, and as she looked at Mo Hua, she couldn't help but visualize Mo Hua wearing a splendid Taoist Robe covered in an array of flowers, and for a moment, she was lost in thought.

"Senior Sister?"

Seeing her distracted, Mo Hua was a bit curious.

Murong Caiyun came back to her senses with flushed cheeks and coughed lightly, "It's getting late, we should hurry..."

"Oh..."

Mo Hua looked suspicious but did not ask further.

Soon, the two met up with Ouyang Feng, who was dressed in a Tai'a Taoist Robe. They hired a horse carriage and left the Qian Xue State Boundary, speeding along the broad mountain path toward Bishan City outside the Qian Xue State Boundary.

Outside the carriage, the sound of horse hooves was rapid, while inside, it was quiet and comfortable.

Mo Hua sat by the window, lying on a soft blanket, admiring the scenery along the way, and conversed with Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng.

"This time, we're going to capture a disciple who has betrayed the Sect..."

Murong Caiyun said, "Over ten years ago, this disciple stole a legacy, murdered a fellow disciple, and fled the Sect. He has been pursued for a long time and has never been caught..."

"Over ten years ago?" Mo Hua was somewhat surprised.

Murong Caiyun nodded, "He stole only some minor legacies, and the 'fellow disciple' he killed was actually just a servant. The incident didn't cause much of a stir, so it didn't make any waves."

"And that fugitive disciple kept a low profile. After leaving the Sect, he disappeared without a trace and didn't give himself away."

"The Taoist Court Office didn't seem very keen to handle it either..."

"Because there's no profit in it?" Mo Hua whispered covertly.

Murong Caiyun halted for a moment, somewhat helplessly, and shot Mo Hua a light glare,

"Firstly, there aren't many clues, and secondly, the Taoist Court really is... short on personnel, so the matter has been put on hold for now."

"Oh," Mo Hua "understood."

Ouyang Feng then added, "Later, the Xie family's treasury in Bishan City was burglarized. During the pursuit, the thief, cornered and desperate, used a technique from the Sever Gold Sect, giving himself away..."

"The Xie family in Bishan City demanded an explanation from the Sever Gold Sect..."

"The Sever Gold Sect cross-referenced the stolen legacy registers with their records and realized the thief was the same disciple who had betrayed them ten years ago."

Mo Hua frowned, "The Sever Gold Sect?"

Murong Caiyun explained, "It's one of the Twelve Sects within the Qian Xue State Boundary, specializing in the Golden Series Sword Controlling Method of the Five Elements..."

Mo Hua nodded her head.

She had heard this name mentioned by Aunt Wan when she was introducing the Twelve Sects of Qian State, but beyond that, she didn't think there had been any interaction.

However, upon hearing the words "Sever Gold Sect," she vaguely felt that this sect might have some karmic connection with her...

Mo Hua perplexedly asked, "Shouldn't it be the Sever Gold Sect's own responsibility to pursue their fugitive disciple?"

"They did pursue him, but they failed to catch him..."

"Failed to catch him?"

Murong Caiyun nodded, "That fugitive disciple has a very good movement technique..."

Ouyang Feng also remarked, "Indeed, among the Taoist Skills he stole from the Sword Controlling Gate, there is a movement technique called 'Escape Gold Technique' which he learned quite proficiently. The disciples of the Sever Gold Sect couldn't catch up with their own traitor..."

Ouyang Feng sounded somewhat regretful.

The legitimate disciples couldn't compare to this traitor who "stole their legacy"...

"The Xie family in Bishan City, discontented, felt that the Sever Gold Sect was 'letting him off' and secretly sheltering the thief, so they issued their own reward for his capture."

"However, the influence of the Xie family in Bishan City isn't substantial, so the Merit Points offered for the reward aren't that significant either."

"Moreover, with the Sever Gold Sect involved, they certainly wouldn't want their own Sect's traitor to be captured by disciples from other Sects, nor would they want to reward anyone else..."

Mo Hua muttered, "The Sever Gold Sect... turns out to be quite petty..."

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Ouyang Feng chuckled, "Indeed, but be careful with those words. Don't let a Sever Gold Sect disciple hear you calling them 'petty,' they can't stand hearing that..."

Mo Hua smiled and nodded in acknowledgement.

Half a day later, the trio arrived at Bishan City.

Bishan City lived up to its name with steep cliffs thousands of feet high, where the mountains and ridges crisscrossed.

Most of the cave dwellings were built upon the sheer cliffs, presenting a sight both peculiar and splendid.

However, Bishan City was now under lockdown, allowing entry but no exit.

This was because a traitor from the Sever Gold Sect had stolen from the Xie family's clan treasury, and the Xie family had reported the matter to the Taoist Court.

The Taoist Court had sealed off the city, conducting a thorough search for the traitor, making quite a commotion.

Mo Hua expressed his curiosity, "What exactly did the Xie family have stolen from them?"

Murong Caiyun shook her head, "I don't know. The Xie family didn't say, and it's not our place to pry..."

"To lockdown the city in such a grandiose manner, involving quite a number of people, yet to offer such paltry reward points, the Xie family really is stingy..." Mo Hua said, somewhat disgruntled.

He was in need of merit points at the moment, so the Xie family's "stinginess" left him feeling rather "resentful."

And there was something strange about this Xie family...

Logically, a treasury theft followed by a city lockdown and investigation should count as a "major incident" and hence, the bounty offered should be considerable.

Murong Caiyun stated, "We earn our merit points by completing tasks; we don't need to concern ourselves with other matters."

Ouyang Feng also added, "The sooner we finish, the sooner we can return."

"Alright," Mo Hua nodded.

Their mission was to assist the Xie family in capturing the Sever Gold Sect's traitor.

The Xie family was searching the city, but "searching" merely meant deploying clan disciples to patrol the streets and look for suspicious cultivators.

The Xie family lacked the courage and strength to search every household.

Even though Bishan City was only considered a Little Immortal City, within Qian State, it was still possible to encounter a tea-sipping True Man or a wine-drinking Great Cultivator in any teahouse or tavern...

After searching with Murong Caiyun and the third person for a while and finding nothing, they split up to continue their search.

Walking down the streets of Bishan City, Mo Hua secretly extended his Divine Sense to spy around.

He wasn't trying to invade privacy, but rather looking for any peculiar individuals.

Bishan City's cultivators came from all walks of life, a wide array of characters.

Mo Hua's Divine Consciousness had undergone a transformation, and he could perceive most cultivators quite clearly. Nevertheless, he refrained from prying too deeply out of respect for others, merely glancing over them superficially to determine if they were the traitor.

There were some cultivators with obscure and profound auras; Mo Hua immediately withdrew his Divine Sense upon brushing over them.

These Great Cultivators were at least at the Golden Core level or above, not someone he dared to "offend" at his current stage.

However, there were also some cultivators who appeared unremarkable, yet were inexplicably strong. Even with a brief touch of his Divine Sense, they still detected his presence.

Their gaze sharp as a sword, they turned towards Mo Hua, but upon seeing that he was just a boy around ten years of age, they faltered for a moment.

Mo Hua bowed respectfully as an apology.

Seeing his gesture, they did not take offense and responded with a slight nod.

Mo Hua let out a slight sigh of relief but also marveled inwardly:

"The Cultivation World really is a place filled with hidden dragons and crouching tigers. Especially in Qian State, encountering so many experts in such a small Immortal City..."

After a few rebuffs, several bows, and numerous apologies, Mo Hua had become more adept.

Even without the use of Divine Sense to spy, he could discern by "intuition" which cultivators were not to be trifled with.

Just one glance and he knew his limits.

With just the use of his Divine Sense, Mo Hua became much more "circumspect," no longer infringing upon True Men or Great Cultivators...

After searching for most of the day, using the depth of his Divine Sense and acute perception, Mo Hua had swept through nearly half of Bishan City, yet still found nothing.

He had no choice but to look in places that had not been searched before...

Mo Hua thought for a moment and went to a "Brothel."

At first glance, it appeared to be an ordinary tavern, but based on his sole experience drinking floral wine at the Hundred Flower Tower in South Yue City, brought there by Elder Su, he could determine:

This was not a tavern, but a Brothel!

The front served as a tavern, but at the back, there lingered an air inappropriate for minors, hinting at decadence.

The Taoist Court forbade dual cultivation, especially replenishing from others.

To put it bluntly, the ban on "dual cultivation" was mostly to prevent "replenishing from others," stopping people from using the guise of dual cultivation to actually engage in such activities.

This was what Zhang Lan had told Mo Hua a long time ago.

Hence, the Taoist Court enforced strict regulations on places like "Brothels."

Of course, while the Taoist Court was strict, and Taoist Laws were stringent, the execution by local Court Officials varied.

In different Immortal Cities, the reality could be even more complex.

For instance, in South Yue City, the Lu Family relied on Brothels to win people's hearts, to earn Spirit Stones, to exploit Mining Cultivators, and to draw in the Taoist Court Officials.

In such situations, many of the Court's Cultivators were regulars of the Brothels themselves, outright indulging in corruption, making enforcement impossible.

But Qian Xue State Boundary was an exception; within the entire state boundary, Brothels were strictly forbidden.

Qian Xue State Boundary was a flourishing ground for Tao Cultivation, attracting the talented Sect Disciples of the Nine States.

Sects did not wish for their disciples to be diverted by sensual pleasures, risking the foundation of their cultivation, wasting precious time, or damaging their Taoist Heart.

Furthermore, they feared that Demon Cultivators might use seduction and charm to lure Sect Disciples, leading them astray, clouding their judgment between good and evil, and sinking into indulgence.

Therefore, not only within Qian Xue State Boundary was there a prohibition against the Land of Fireworks, but the rule also extended to the surrounding state boundaries, including many Immortal Cities.

Chapter 865: Kneel Down (3)

Eating and sexual desires are some of the basic cravings of humanity, hard to prohibit and even harder to curb.

Hence, there came to be establishments with restaurants at the front and brothels at the back—a classic case of blatant bait and switch.

Mo Hua snorted coldly, feeling that this matter deserved criticism, and knowing how the Land of Fireworks often concealed dirt and filth, the traitor might be hiding there, they walked straight into the restaurant.

The waiter saw Mo Hua and was clearly taken aback.

Their restaurant had never been graced by such a clear-browed, handsome-looking Young Master with cherry-red lips and porcelain-white teeth.

"Young Master, you are...?"

"I'm here to eat."

Mo Hua stated as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

"Oh, oh, of course, to eat... Please, this way."

The waiter had thought Mo Hua was oblivious and simply saw their establishment as a typical restaurant for drinking and dining, so with a servile smile and enthusiastic energy, they led Mo Hua inside.

The interior decoration was lavish, with a strong scent of rouge in the air.

The waiter escorted Mo Hua to a table and they sat down.

Glancing at the menu, Mo Hua thought to themselves how expensive it was; not only were the various dishes costly, but even the desserts and beverages were twice as expensive as anywhere else.

But for the sake of "tracking down the traitor," Mo Hua bit the bullet and ordered a table's worth of dishes and drinks.

Having walked quite a distance that day, Mo Hua was hungry. They used their Divine Sense to discreetly inspect the food and drinks, ascertaining there were no issues or signs of drugging, then began to eat and drink while surveying their surroundings.

The front part of the restaurant was relatively "clean."

Those who were dining did so, and those who were drinking did just that, but in the center, there was a platform curtained by pink drapes from where flirtatiously dressed women danced.

There were also women lightly clad, with inviting smiles, accompanying the drinking patrons.

Mo Hua tore into a chicken leg as their Divine Sense expanded, taking in every detail of the surroundings.

After some observation, Mo Hua slowly grasped the situation...

The women dancing on the stage were the "menu."

After the performance, the diners who fancied a particular woman would then "place an order."

The dancing women, having been "ordered," would then come down to accompany the customers in drinking.

During the companionship, men and women whispered to each other, likely negotiating the "meal's price."

Once agreed upon, they would proceed to the back to "have their meal."

And after finishing their meal, that's when they would "settle the bill."

The innocent Mo Hua was shocked.

These cultivators have so many illicit tricks up their sleeve!

All the effort that doesn't go into the Righteous Dao, instead goes into designing these "wine as a color medium" schemes...

And they even have the nerve to charge so much for the food and drinks!

Mo Hua was furious.

They stared for a while at the dancing women in the center and suddenly squinted their eyes in realization.

Amongst the dancers in the corner of the stage, there was a woman of average appearance but slender waist, whose every move seemed questionable...

With a sweep of their Divine Sense, Mo Hua knew instantly.

This "woman" was actually a man!

And with a sudden conviction in their heart, Mo Hua was sure this person was the Sever Gold Sect traitor they'd been sent to capture!

Cross-dressing males in the Land of Fireworks.

Mo Hua scoffed.

Totally unbecoming!

They immediately used their Taixu Token to send a message to Senior Sister Murong:

"Senior Sister, I've found the traitor!"

The Taixu Token was a communicative device among sect disciples.

Senior Sister Murong had taught Mo Hua to use it, and they hadn't made much use of it since they weren't adept at it at first.

But within moments, Murong Caiyun responded:

"Where are you?"

Mo Hua: "In the brothel..."

Murong Caiyun: "..."

After a lengthy silence, as if struggling to understand how Mo Hua ended up seeking a traitor in a brothel, a reply finally came:

"Which brothel?"

Mo Hua sent over the name of the restaurant.

Murong Caiyun said:

"I see, I'll be right there. Take care of yourself."

"Mhmm."

Mo Hua nodded, although they found something strange.

This "take care of yourself" sounded odd...

What do I have to protect myself from?

Some two incense sticks' worth of time later, Ouyang Feng and Murong Caiyun arrived at the restaurant entrance.

The waiter was shocked just as before, and after hesitating for a while upon hearing they were here to find a disciple, allowed them in but couldn't help keeping a cautious eye on them.

The three spoke in hushed tones.

"Junior Brother, how did you end up here?"

Mo Hua waved dismissively. "That's not important."

They pointed to the cross-dressing, waist-slim, heavily made-up "woman" still dancing on the stage:

"This person here is likely the traitor."

Mo Hua was almost certain, but still showed humility by refraining from speaking in absolutes.

Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng both looked surprised, frowning and scrutinizing the "woman" for a long time, their gazes sharp.

"Cross-dressing to dance here, it is indeed a good way to hide in plain sight..."

"There might be more to it than just 'hiding in plain sight'..."

There could be a "side job" at play.

Even a renegade sect disciple, even a wanted Sin Cultivator, has to make a living...

"What should we do?"

"Should we just apprehend them?"

"Would that startle the snake in the grass?"

Ouyang Feng and Murong Caiyun discussed their options.

Mo Hua suggested: "I'll 'order' him over."

Both Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng were taken aback. "'Order'?"

"Mhmm." Mo Hua nodded. "We can order him to come over for a drink, and then seize the opportunity to capture him!"

Senior Sister Murong couldn't hold back, "Junior Brother, do you... come here often?"

How come you seem like a regular...

Mo Hua sternly replied, serious: "I'm a Serious Cultivator! I would never visit such places! Unless absolutely necessary..."

Senior Sister Murong eyed Mo Hua skeptically.

"This is to complete the mission!"

Mo Hua added.

Ouyang Feng gave a wry smile: "Catching that traitor is what's crucial."

Chapter 866: Kneel Down (4)

"Senior Brother Feng is right!" Mo Hua nodded and beckoned to call over the waiter. He pointed toward the stage at the cultivator dressed as a woman:

"I want 'her' to join me for a drink!"

The waiter hesitated, looked at Mo Hua with renewed respect, then went up and summoned that "woman" down.

The "woman," realizing she had been "roll-called," looked somewhat flustered.

The waiter pointed at the three members of Mo Hua's party. The "woman" narrowed her gaze and then, with her head bowed submissively, began walking towards them, though her steps gradually slowed.

Mo Hua said, "He's going to run..."

Ouyang Feng immediately dashed forward, stretched out a large hand, and tried to capture the "woman."

But the "woman" was prepared and retreated rapidly with a movement technique that emitted faint golden light.

Ouyang Feng failed to catch her and continued to pursue her, but he was blocked by a stranger.

The man, with a frivolous smile, said,

"Taoist Friend, you seem like a fine figure of a man, so why are you so ruthless towards the fairer..."

Ouyang Feng, impatient, didn't wait for him to finish and kicked him away, then resumed the chase after the "woman."

The "woman" ran ahead, this time without any pretense, clearly a man with an extremely proficient movement technique.

Murong Caiyun unleashed the Five-colored Spirit Light, delaying the "woman's" escape.

Mo Hua raised his hand halfway, then paused, his mind ticking over, and switched from the Water Prison Technique to the Fireball Technique.

He fired Fireballs at the "woman" one after another without care for accuracy.

His casting of the Fireball Technique was very casual.

Most of the Fireballs missed the "woman" and crashed into the tavern instead, causing a shower of flames and explosions, creating utter chaos.

Such a place, masquerading as fine but really a Land of Fireworks, couldn't be left alone...

Mo Hua made up his mind and unleashed his power without holding back, quickly turning a good portion of the tavern to ruins with his Fireball Technique.

Pink curtains burned, stages collapsed, and from behind the tavern came a cacophony of screams from both men and women.

The tavern owner was pale as a ghost.

He was running a secret brothel near the Qian Xue State Boundary, something that must not be exposed to daylight, or he would suffer the direst of consequences.

But he dared not act.

For he could tell that both Ouyang Feng and Murong Caiyun had high levels of cultivation and were not to be trifled with.

The tavern was a din of uproar and disarray.

The "woman" took the opportunity to escape, running north along the street.

Ouyang Feng went after her.

"Chase her!" commanded Murong Caiyun decisively.

"Right!"

Mo Hua nodded, taking the chance to slip away amidst the chaos.

The noise outside also drew many other cultivators; some from the Xie family and some from the Taoist Court.

The Cultivators from the Taoist Court, seeing the disheveled men and women in the tavern, knew without a doubt what kind of wine was being sold there.

Under the broad daylight, they were obliged to investigate.

The Xie family also recognized the fleeing "woman" as a traitor from the Sever Gold Sect, the very one they were hunting for.

Thus, both parties began the pursuit of the fugitive who had disguised himself as a woman.

But the traitor, transformed into golden light, was swift and sharp, making him difficult to catch.

After several streets, they suddenly lost sight of him.

The Xie family cultivators were enraged and cursed relentlessly.

Both Ouyang Feng and Murong Caiyun furrowed their brows, while Mo Hua watched intently.

He saw everything.

The traitor turned at a street corner, hid in a dark alleyway, and within a few breaths, he had changed his appearance completely, donning an inconspicuous and ordinary male cultivator's attire and yet another visage.

"Is this... Yi Rong?"

Mo Hua's eyes gleamed with curiosity and, pointing with his hand, he whispered to Ouyang Feng,

"Senior Brother Feng, that man!"

Ouyang Feng was taken aback. He was eager to ask how Mo Hua knew, but there was no time for questions, and he instinctively chose to trust Mo Hua's judgment.

Pretending to be casual, Ouyang Feng slowly approached the male cultivator.

But the man, alert as ever, immediately took off at a run the moment Ouyang Feng came within thirty feet of him.

Seeing the golden light on his movement technique, it indeed belonged to that betrayer!

Ouyang Feng drew his sword and continued the pursuit.

Thus, while the betrayer desperately evoked his movement technique, trying to escape, he also searched for an opportunity to disguise himself and evade capture from the hands of Mo Hua and the two others.

Mo Hua wasn't in a hurry to make his move, instead, he looked around and secretly took control, unknowingly driving the betrayer into the uninhabited woods to the east of Bishan City.

They couldn't capture him in the city, otherwise he would fall into the hands of the Xie family, and they would no longer be able to extract information.

Everything went according to Mo Hua's wishes.

There were no other people around.

And that betrayer, he too was cornered by the three of them.

The betrayer, now disguised as a big man, gasped for breath and looked at the three in disbelief,

"You... how exactly did you recognize me?"

Mo Hua replied with a smile, "You guess."

The big man's face twitched, his eyes full of rage, then he scoffed,

"So what if you can recognize me? Before my diligently cultivated Escape Gold Body Skill, honed painfully over ten years, all your efforts are in vain. Think you can catch me? Wishful thinking!"

With a look of disdain, the big man spat and pushed his movement technique to the limit, infusing golden light into his legs and creating a gust underfoot, planning to flee in the blink of an eye.

Mo Hua's finger lightly tapped, and the Water Prison Technique came down instantly.

The arrogant big man was locked up tightly by the Water Prison Technique in an instant, falling flat on his face.

Mo Hua shook his head, "Calling you fat, and you're actually out of breath..."

Using these little tricks in front of me, like showing off in front of an expert...

Ouyang Feng stepped forward, the big man still trying to struggle, but Ouyang Feng struck him on the shoulder with his sword and kicked him to the ground.

He may be skilled in movement, but in terms of cultivation, he was no match for Ouyang Feng.

Ouyang Feng took the big man's Storage Bag and with the Taoist Court's Second Grade Spiritual Lock, tied the big man tightly.

Murong Caiyun glanced at Mo Hua, her gaze flickering, and couldn't help but ask,

"Junior Brother Mo, you lured him here, what do you want to ask him?"

"Hmm-hmm." Mo Hua nodded, "There's no one around, it's convenient to ask a few questions."

Murong Caiyun thought for a moment, then nodded,

"Okay, then you ask."

Catching the person meant the task was complete.

Before that, it didn't matter if Mo Hua had a few questions to ask.

Mo Hua then said to the "big man",

"I'm going to ask you a few questions, you better answer honestly!"

The big man, with his mouth full of dirt, spat a few times and sneered,

"Little ghost, in your dreams!"

Ouyang Feng shook his head, "This guy's got a tough mouth, I'm afraid it won't be easy to pry open."

Mo Hua asked, "Can we use torture?"

Ouyang Feng hesitated, "Torture..." He turned to look at Murong Caiyun, his expression complex as if to say, "Is this how your Taixu Gate junior brothers do things..."

Immediately resorting to torture at the first sign of trouble.

Murong Caiyun helplessly said, "Don't go too far... at least..."

Murong Caiyun, after thinking for a while, helplessly said, "Just don't make it too obvious..."

If the Taoist Court or the Xie family found out that they had used private punishment and extracted information, it would be difficult to explain later on.

"Don't worry!" Mo Hua said with a smile, "I have everything prepared!"

"Prepared... already?"

Mo Hua nodded, "Hmm!"

Considering they might face this situation, he had been prepared long ago.

Mo Hua took out an Iron Plate from his Storage Bag, covered with a densely packed Formation that looked painful at just a glance.

Ouyang Feng and the other couldn't help but twitch at the sight.

Mo Hua placed the Iron Plate on the ground and said to the big man,

"Kneel down!"

Chapter 867: Sever Gold Jade Slip

Big Han angrily said, "I won't!"

The iron plate was densely covered with formation patterns, resembling a realm of knives, needles, and raging fire; one could tell without looking that it was definitely not anything good.

"Are you going to kneel or not?" Mo Hua demanded, his face stern.

Big Han scoffed, "You think I'm stupid... Agh—"

He hadn't finished speaking when Ouyang Feng held him down and kicked his knee.

Big Han's knees buckled, and he knelt down on the iron plate, instantly letting out a painful howl, his forehead covered in cold sweat, his face twisted in agony.

Mo Hua didn't know if he was genuinely in pain or just pretending, and asked with a curious face:

"Does it hurt?"

He really wanted to know...

This iron plate, although designed by him, and with all the formations meticulously drawn by him, Mo Hua was unclear about the specific effects.

He just guessed it would be very painful.

After all, he had drawn not just one formation on this iron plate, but several painful formations...

There was the Gen Mountain MicroFormation; once activated, spiritual power as fine as needles would penetrate the knees, causing pain;

The Bagua Kan Water Formation; spiritual power would seep into the knees, bone-chillingly cold;

And there was the Li Fire Formation; fire elemental spiritual power would gradually burn, causing torment from the scorching pain...

These three formations, operating in succession, made the person being punished experience the agony of needles penetrating the bones, bone-chilling water, and burning fire...

It was definitely unbearable...

But exactly how unbearable, Mo Hua had no idea.

He wasn't stupid enough to try it himself.

This traitor from the Sever Gold Sect was the first person to test this "Mountain-Water-Fire Torture" iron plate.

Mo Hua was eager to know his experience afterward to judge whether his design was adequate and if the formations needed improvement.

So he asked sincerely.

But Big Han thought Mo Hua was mocking him, being sarcastic, and couldn't help the anger surging within him, his eyes turning bloodshot, biting his teeth hard, enduring the pain of needle, fire, and water torture without saying a word.

"Speak up, does it hurt?" Mo Hua pressed him.

Finally, Big Han's defenses broke down, and with a trembling voice, he cursed, "You bastard..."

Mo Hua immediately pulled out the Thousand Jun Stick and stuffed it in his mouth, speaking sternly:

"To curse people, your quality is so low..."

With his mouth blocked, Big Han couldn't speak, his eyes glaring wide, filled with resentment.

"It seems it's still not painful enough, the power of the formation is still lacking..." Mo Hua muttered, stroking his chin:

"It seems I need to add a few more formations..."

"Which formations to add though?"

"Golden Needle? Wood Poison? Or..."

Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng opened their mouths.

Hearing this, Big Han's scalp tingled, and with horror in his gaze, he thought to himself, How could there be such a sinister, malicious, and crazy little cultivator in this world?!

Who had he learned all these from?!

Big Han desperately groaned a couple of times.

Mo Hua removed the Thousand Jun Stick, and Big Han clenched his teeth and said, "I'll talk!"

Delighted, Mo Hua nodded and immediately asked what he cared about most:

"Does it hurt to kneel on this iron plate?"

Big Han, wishing he could die from embarrassment, was unwilling to speak.

Murong Caiyun couldn't stand it anymore, and tapped Mo Hua on the shoulder, whispering, "Ask about something else, don't make it hard for him..."

For such a big cultivator to be forced to kneel and then asked if it hurts.

It would drive anyone crazy, and they would have a hard time explaining it to the Taoist Court and the Xie family.

"Oh oh." Mo Hua thought it over and agreed, turning his attention to serious matters. As for the feedback on the iron plate torture, he would find someone else to ask later.

Mo Hua somewhat regretfully suspended the formations on the iron plate by manipulating the Formation eye with his Divine Sense.

The pain ceased, and Big Han took a sharp, deep breath, gradually recovering.

Mo Hua started with serious questions:

"Do you know Boss Jiang?"

After asking, Mo Hua released his Divine Sense, scrutinizing Big Han's eyes to confirm whether he was lying.

Big Han frowned, his gaze a bit lost, "Who is Boss Jiang?"

Mo Hua then asked, "Do you know Bald Eagle?"

Big Han's face turned pale, "Bald Eagle... I have only heard...he is ruthless, not a good person..."

"Have you ever seen him?"

Big Han shook his head.

"Have you seen any other bald men?"

Big Han was dumbfounded, "Bald... bald man?"

Mo Hua described a bit, "Someone like Bald Eagle, possibly bald but wearing a wig, known in the underworld by nicknames containing 'bald,' 'light,' or 'Arhat,' 'Tuo,' or other such words among sin cultivators..."

Big Han grimaced in pain, "Why... are you asking this?"

Mo Hua was displeased, "Am I asking you, or are you asking me?"

Pressured, especially by the recent pain from the dense formation patterns under his knees, Big Han reluctantly said:

"I have been in hiding, mingling secretly for some time. I have heard of some cultivators, quite notorious..."

"Like 'Bald Wolf,' 'Bald Jiao,' 'Koutuo Tuo,' 'Evil Arhat'..."

"But my cultivation is not enough, I only handle petty thefts and small deals, so I have no connections with them..."

Mo Hua silently noted these names, then asked:

"Have you ever trafficked cultivators?"

Big Han's pupils contracted, but he shook his head:

"I wouldn't dare. In Qian Xue State Boundary, many clans gather, I don't have the guts to attract such bad luck, to traffic cultivators."

Mo Hua's gaze slightly sharpened, his thoughts apparent.

Big Han forced himself to stay calm, but was clearly a bit guilty, his gaze drifting slightly.

Mo Hua faintly smiled, not pressing further, and said:

"One last thing, hand over your Disguise Technique!"

Chapter 868: Sever Gold Jade Slip (2)

The Big Han's expression changed, and he stubbornly retorted,

"What Disguise Technique?"

Mo Hua showed displeasure, "Playing dumb with me?"

Seeing Big Han's obstinate expression, Mo Hua's Divine Sense stirred slightly, reigniting the Formation on the Iron Plate to its utmost limit.

Big Han's eyes suddenly widened, his body trembling in pain, and his knees tortured, but he clenched his teeth tightly and remained silent...

Mo Hua felt it was odd, "How can he endure so much?"

Before he finished speaking, Big Han passed out from the pain...

Mo Hua was somewhat helpless, muttering to himself,

"He would rather be tortured than surrender the 'Disguise Technique'"

"Is it because the 'Disguise Technique' is so crucial that he can't surrender it even in death..."

"Or is it because the Formation on this Iron Plate isn't powerful enough to force out the truth from his lips?"

It's a pity that he couldn't use this Iron Plate himself and thus didn't know its full power...

He would have to think of ways to improve it later...

Mo Hua contemplated silently.

Right now, from Big Han's mouth, not enough information had been revealed.

Mo Hua planned to wake him up and make him suffer a little more to get some truth out of him.

He could almost be certain that this traitor from Sever Gold Sect was definitely hiding something.

And he must have been involved in trafficking Cultivators too, just too guilty to admit it.

So it was, Mo Hua saw no need to be polite.

Mo Hua lifted the Thousand Jun Stick, intending to awaken Big Han, but Murong Caiyun stopped him.

Murong Caiyun said helplessly,

"Junior brother, that's enough... Don't 'waste' him, he still has to be handed over to the Taoist Court."

Mo Hua blinked, "Then should I go easy?"

Murong Caiyun felt a headache coming on, "That won't do either."

Mo Hua felt regretful, "Alright then."

The mission was important, Merit Points were important, more information could be gathered later.

However, Murong Caiyun was puzzled, "What about Boss Jiang, the Bald Eagle, and the traffickers? Why are you asking him these questions?"

Of course, it was for the Four Symbols Formation.

And the conspiracy of trafficking Cultivators behind the scenes.

But these things were not suitable to be said outright.

Mo Hua then said, "I suspect he's in cahoots with a bunch of traffickers! I had a little brother who was almost abducted by these traffickers, so I just asked in passing, hoping to find some clues to roundup them all!"

Mo Hua put on a face of hating evil as if it were his enemy.

Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng looked at each other, unsure whether Mo Hua was telling the truth.

Mo Hua quickly changed the subject,

"Can I search his body then?"

The Xie family's goal was to capture, not search the person.

Ouyang Feng thought for a moment, sighed, "Go ahead and search..."

He even took out the Storage Bag found on Big Han and handed it to Mo Hua, "You might want to check this Storage Bag as well, see if you can find any clues."

Mo Hua's eyes lit up; he immediately took the Storage Bag, but a bit embarrassed, he said,

"Senior Brother, is this appropriate?"

Ouyang Feng smiled, "It's fine."

He too was curious to see if Mo Hua would uncover anything.

As for the Taoist Court of Bishan City, and the Xie family, given his background, he actually didn't care much for them.

The only reason he adhered to the rules was because of the sect rules of Tai'a Sect and the family teachings of the Ouyang Family, not wishing to disgrace the sect and the Noble Clans in public.

Mo Hua immediately searched Big Han and then frowned.

He discovered that Big Han's flesh was soft, all "fake", like something attached to the body, forging a special form.

Therefore, he could be a woman, a young man, an old crone, or a sturdy man.

Big Han's face was clearly patched up with some kind of skin, looking very strange.

As for what he originally looked like, it was impossible to tell.

Not even with Divine Sense.

Divine Sense "sees" the essence of Spiritual Power of all things in the blankness of space, or the trajectory of Qi Mechanism, not the real appearance.

The flesh and faces are mere outer appearances.

However, the essence of "Spiritual Power" of Big Han was clearly seen by Mo Hua and silently noted in his heart.

This way, if he encountered him again in the future, he would not be able to escape...

Big Han indeed had some hidden items, and Mo Hua, without missing a single one, searched them all out and put them together with the Storage Bag.

Mo Hua went through them one by one.

Spirit Stones, Pills, Spiritual Artifacts...

Mostly things that a common Cultivator would carry.

There were some Cultivation Techniques and Taoist Skills, but they were not rare and were not linked to Sever Gold Sect.

The Disguise Technique was not found...

The only odd thing was a Jade Slip.

This Jade Slip was made of white jade with strands of gold edges.

Mo Hua found it very familiar and after a quick thought, he was startled: the same style of Jade Slip he had seen before!

Boss Jiang!

That trafficker Boss Jiang had two Jade Slips of the same style in his possession, but they were sealed, and Divine Sense could not spy on them, so Mo Hua stored these two Jade Slips in his Storage Ring.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense moved slightly and found that this Jade Slip from Big Han's possession was also sealed, and seemed to be sealed with the same method as Boss Jiang's Slips.

Mo Hua's heart skipped, and he hurriedly asked,

"Senior Brother Feng, do you know what this Jade Slip is?"

Ouyang Feng took it, glanced at it, and his gaze briefly paused on the gold edges of the Jade Slip, expressing surprise,

"This seems to be... the Heritage Jade Slip of Sever Gold Sect?"

"Sever Gold Sect!"

Mo Hua felt a chill in his heart.

So did that mean Boss Jiang was also once a disciple of Sever Gold Sect?

Mo Hua remembered something and then asked suddenly:

Chapter 869: Sever Gold Jade Slip (3)

"Senior Brother Feng," Mo Hua asked eagerly, "is the Sever Gold Sect of the Twelve Streams mainly focused on sword cultivation?"

Ouyang Feng nodded, "Indeed."

"Then, does their Sect possess any formidable Sword techniques?" The light in Mo Hua's eyes sparkled.

"There is one," Ouyang Feng confirmed with a nod, "Sever Gold Sect has a tremendously powerful Sect-Protecting Sword technique of the Golden Series, which is called—"

Ouyang Feng said gravely, "Sever Gold Sword Control Jue!"

Sever Gold Sword Control Jue!!

Mo Hua's eyes gleamed.

Sect-Protecting Sword Mantra!

So, that move that Boss Jiang used, the one so majestic, blazing with golden light, was it the Sever Gold Sect's Sect-Protecting Sword Mantra, the Sever Gold Sword Control Jue?!

Then the Heritage Jade Slip he had on him, could it be...

Mo Hua's heart thumped wildly.

Murong Caiyun quietly glanced at Mo Hua, somewhat puzzled, "Junior Brother, why are you suddenly so happy? Your face is even turning red..."

Mo Hua waved his hand and said with a grin, "It's nothing..."

Then all of a sudden, something else occurred to him, and he asked:

"Senior Brother Feng, how does one look into this Jade Slip? It seems to be sealed..."

"This Jade Slip is a Heritage Jade Slip, especially 'sealed' to prevent the loss of heritage," Ouyang Feng explained. "One must know the 'Secret Pattern' to unseal it and view its contents."

"Sealed, Secret Pattern?" Mo Hua was taken aback. "Is this 'Secret Pattern' a 'Formation Pattern'?"

"This..."

Ouyang Feng hesitated.

His knowledge in Array Formation was not very deep, and he couldn't clarify the intricacies involved.

Murong Caiyun then said, "You could say that..."

"The so-called 'sealing' naturally involves using an array to seal and the 'Secret Pattern' for unsealing is naturally a classified Formation Pattern."

"This is also considered a special application of array formation, just in a different form and different terminology."

Mo Hua understood.

In other words, as long as he grasped the array methods within and cracked the "Secret Pattern" sealing it, he could access the heritage inside the Jade Slip!

Ouyang Feng saw Mo Hua's eyes spinning, unsure of what he was thinking, but still felt compelled to caution:

"This Jade Slip is not meant for learning."

"If I'm not mistaken, what's sealed inside should be Sever Gold Sect's movement technique, Escape Gold Technique..."

"This is the heritage of Sever Gold Sect, unauthorized learning of it would result in them holding you accountable..."

"Moreover, since this Jade Slip is stolen, Sever Gold Sect will undoubtedly have a record of it, and learning in secret won't be allowed..."

Mo Hua nodded and said, "Don't worry, Senior Brother Feng."

It didn't matter if he didn't study this particular Jade Slip; he had two others...

He just didn't know what secrets were sealed within those two Jade Slips...

Mo Hua planned to return to the Sect and quietly study them, to see if he could use his knowledge of array formations to decode the "Secret Pattern" sealing the Heritage Jade Slip, and access the heritage of Sever Gold Sect...

Even if he didn't learn it, studying and critiquing it to deepen his understanding of Sword techniques would still be beneficial.

Perhaps it could even lay the foundation and pave the way for his study of the Taixu Divine Thought into Sword True Jue...

Ouyang Feng looked up at the sky and asked:

"Junior Brother Mo, is there anything else you would like to ask?"

Mo Hua shook his head repeatedly.

He already knew quite a bit.

And what he didn't know, he probably couldn't find out at the moment.

Besides, Senior Sister Murong didn't want him to ask any more questions, for fear that he might cause further trouble for that "Big Han" who could be at death's door...

Murong Caiyun nodded, "Then I'll signal, and call over the Xie family's cultivators."

"Okay," replied Ouyang Feng.

Soon after, Murong Caiyun took out a message paper and set off a firework.

Mo Hua began to tidy up the scene, covering up any signs of his "torture" during interrogation, and the searching of bodies and storage bags.

Ouyang Feng considerately helped him from the sidelines, pointing out any oversights from the perspective of a bystander.

Soon enough, the Xie family's cultivators arrived.

Seeing the Big Han lying unconscious on the ground, their expressions were astounded, and their glances towards Mo Hua and the others had a hint of subtlety.

It didn't seem like gratitude, but rather...

Mo Hua pondered for a moment.

Regret?

Regret for asking for their help?

Or regret that they were beaten to the punch by Mo Hua and the others, who'd caught the Big Han and now felt remorseful?

Mo Hua's gaze sharpened slightly.

There was indeed something fishy about the Xie family...

But it wasn't his place to intervene.

Their task was already complete.

Soon, Murong Caiyun began to negotiate with the Xie family regarding the details of the undertaking and the matters of Merit Points.

During the conversation, many questions were brushed aside by Murong Caiyun.

Questions like, how they caught the Big Han.

How the Big Han became unconscious.

The nature of his knee injury.

Who had forced him to kneel... and so on.

Murong Caiyun's tone was gentle, essentially saying that they encountered him while patrolling and effortlessly knocked him out. During the struggle, a spell had hit his knee, resulting in the wound.

The Xie family wanted to continue questioning, but Ouyang Feng sternly faced them down with a gaze sharp as a sword.

The Xie family's cultivators no longer dared to ask.

From this, Mo Hua guessed that the Ouyang Family must carry significant influence.

Once the matter was handled, the trio didn't linger and set out to leave Bishan City.

However, as they departed, Mo Hua looked back at the misty and extraordinary Bishan City, feeling vaguely that this incident was probably not over yet...

...

The carriage left Bishan City, heading towards the Qian Xue State Boundary.

Midway, Mo Hua bid farewell to Senior Sister Murong and Senior Brother Feng and got off the carriage.

"Senior Brother, Senior Sister, I just remembered something I need to take care of, so I will get off here. I'll return to the Sect on my own tomorrow."

Murong Caiyun and Ouyang Feng were both taken aback, looking at the desolate mountains around and couldn't help but ask:

"What business do you have here?"

Mo Hua replied with a smile, "I have a Taoist Friend living alone in the mountains. He's quite lonely, so I'm going to pay him a visit."

"A Taoist Friend?"

"Yes."

"Living in these mountains?"

Murong Caiyun looked around at the desolate wilderness, which seemed uninhabited, and questioned further.

Mo Hua chuckled, "He's a bit shy."

"Well, alright then," Murong Caiyun sighed, her eyes filled with concern as she looked at Mo Hua. "Be careful."

"Don't worry, Senior Sister!" Mo Hua assured with a smile.

After bidding them farewell, he turned and walked towards the deep mountains...

Deep in the mountains, there was a dilapidated temple, and within that temple was a Mountain God.

The Mountain God was fretting, on the verge of tears, and it was soon to be forced to meet someone it absolutely did not want to see...

Chapter 870: Sword of Divine Thought

At this time, it was the afternoon, and the bright sunlight shone in the verdant mountains and forests.

A mossy stone step path led to the mountaintop.

Mo Hua climbed the steps with light and graceful steps, humming a tune all the while.

But when he arrived in front of the dilapidated temple, he stopped dead in his tracks.

"No one?"

The temple was desolate, with no sign of anyone, and Divine Thought detected no presence of the Mountain God.

Mo Hua looked closely and saw that the offerings on the altar table, a few steamed buns, had gone moldy and a few fruits had dried up, not knowing how long they'd been there.

There was no meat on the altar table, only a wine cup.

The cup was full, but not with wine; instead, it held rainwater that had flowed down from the eaves during the drizzling mountain rain, its surface clear but the bottom muddied with sediment.

It looked bleak.

Mo Hua felt a twinge of sympathy.

What a pitiful Mountain God.

"Lord Yellow Mountain?"

Mo Hua called out a few times, but the echo of his voice dissipated as it reverberated through the empty temple and the leaking eaves, with the voice eventually fading into the solitude of the mountains.

"Not at home?"

Mo Hua frowned, feeling a sense of loss, as if after traveling a vast distance to visit a friend, only to find the friend was out.

"But that's not right..."

A Mountain God, where could he possibly go? Abandon his own temple?

Mo Hua looked around the temple, which was small and dilapidated on all sides, but there was still no sign of Lord Yellow Mountain.

Mo Hua narrowed his eyes, suddenly struck by inspiration.

He sensed the few strands of faint golden Blood of Divine Sense derived from refining the "marrow" of Demon Head leaders and Sheep-Horned Enforcers, beginning to tremble within his Divine Sense Incarnation.

Mo Hua realized what was happening and followed the pull of the faint golden Blood of Divine Sense. He stepped out of the temple, circled around the ruined building, and found a small dog statue tucked away in a corner behind the temple.

The dog statue, with its gray and dirty surface, hung its head low, lying in the grass without daring to reveal the slightest breath of life.

Mo Hua squatted in front of the small dog statue, silently gazing at it with his big eyes.

The little dog did not dare to move.

"Hey—"

Mo Hua said softly.

For some reason, the clay eyes of the little dog seemed somewhat panicked.

"Mountain Lord—"

Mo Hua called out again in a low voice.

The clay dog seemed desperate to close its eyes.

"After all, you are a Mountain God, doesn't hiding in a little dog seem shameful..." Mo Hua said.

The little dog felt ashamed in its heart but still didn't show any reaction.

Mo Hua's expression turned slightly unhappy, and he raised three fingers, saying sternly, "I'm only going to count to three, and if you don't come out, I won't be polite..."

"Three..."

"Two..."

Before he could finish counting to three, wisps of smoke rose from the dog statue, revealing Lord Yellow Mountain's narrow and elongated smiling face.

Seeing that Mo Hua did not look very amiable, Lord Yellow Mountain greeted him warmly and affectionately, "Ah, there... It's my young friend. There's nothing happening on the mountain, I was just sunbathing, and I accidentally fell asleep. Forgive my rudeness for not welcoming you from afar..."

Mo Hua looked up at the sky, puzzled, "This place is in the shade, what sunshine are you sunbathing in?"

Lord Yellow Mountain became stiff, forcing a smile, "Sunbathing in the shade is both warm and cool..."

Afraid of being questioned further by Mo Hua, he quickly changed the subject:

"My young friend, did you come to see me for a reason?"

Mo Hua's attention was indeed diverted.

"Mhm." Mo Hua nodded and was about to speak when he looked at Lord Yellow Mountain and curiously asked, "Are you going to stay inside this little dog forever?"

Lord Yellow Mountain muttered under his breath, "As if I wish to..."

"If it weren't to hide from you..."

At this thought, Lord Yellow Mountain suddenly paused and couldn't help but ask, "How did you know I 'hid'... no, that I was sunbathing here?"

Here he had "stooped to a lower level," not even caring about his dignity by dwelling within such a tiny clay dog, even hiding his Mountain God Origin, and yet he had still been found...

Mo Hua answered, "I felt it."

"Felt it?"

"Mhm," Mo Hua nodded, "I felt like you were right here, then I came to look, and sure enough, you were!"

Lord Yellow Mountain's scalp tingled.

It was over, he couldn't elude this little calamity...

It was utterly outrageous...

A bright little ghost wasn't scary, but the scariest thing was a little ghost who was not only clever but also eerily intuitive.

You can't prepare for such unpredictable behavior...

Lord Yellow Mountain sighed and slowly emerged from the clay dog statue, gesturing with his hand in invitation, "Please come to my humble dwelling to reminisce..."

With the Mountain God leading the way, Mo Hua swaggered in, following the Mountain God into the ruins of the temple.

Lord Yellow Mountain transformed into wisps of blue smoke, still inhabiting the center of the altar, in the clay statue of the Mountain God.

Mo Hua sat at the edge of the altar table, chatting "shoulder to shoulder" with Lord Yellow Mountain.

But Lord Yellow Mountain seemed a bit restrained, causing Mo Hua to question, "I'm not going to 'eat' you, so why are you so afraid?"

Lord Yellow Mountain laughed with a "hehe," thinking to himself, "You think I believe that..."

But outwardly he responded with a cheerful laugh, "You, my young friend, are clear-minded and your Taoist Heart is as transparent as a mirror, above the ordinary. I couldn't be more eager to make your acquaintance, so why would I hide from you?"

Mo Hua obviously didn't believe it, and glanced at Lord Yellow Mountain with curiosity, asking, "Mountain Lord, were you very powerful in the past?"

Lord Yellow Mountain paused, his smile fading a bit, "How did you know?"

"I guessed."

Lord Yellow Mountain shook his head, "Do I look powerful?"

Mo Hua's gaze was clear as he spoke calmly, "Body handsman long, claws seven feet, dark brown fur, divine presence shrouding the mountain, breath profound, eyes soaked in fresh blood, infinite ferocity and malevolence surrounding you..."