

## The Quest 931

Chapter 931: Forbidden Technique (2)

The classes could be attended.

But apart from that, Spiritual Power was not to be used, and Formations were not to be drawn.

Mo Hua just took this time to research "Fireball Fusion."

Whenever he had time after his Cultivation classes, he pondered how to steadily collide fireballs, causing the Skill Pattern to collapse and the Spiritual Power to fuse.

As long as the Skill Pattern was controllable, even a little less damage was acceptable.

However, after several days of research, his progress was extremely slow.

Mo Hua couldn't think of any methods to stabilize the structure of the Skill Pattern, control its collapse, and direct the fusion of Spiritual Power.

Only then did Mo Hua realize that he was somewhat conceited.

Such alternative, counterintuitive Spell Patterns were definitely not something he could create in a stroke of inspiration, let alone stabilize and refine.

Even the simplest Spell would need generations of Cultivators to practice, study, and finally perfect it through practical experience.

With his own shallow mastery of Spells and limited time, seeking to invent a Skill Pattern was truly a pipe dream.

Mo Hua sighed but was not discouraged.

Since working in isolation wasn't effective, he should find ways to study other Fire Spells more and seek potentially useful aspects from their Skill Pattern structures...

Improving his own Spells by standing on the shoulders of predecessors.

Mo Hua nodded, feeling that the idea was feasible.

Mo Hua didn't believe that the concept of "Fireball Fusion" was exclusive to him.

With so many prodigies in the Cultivation World, some would have undoubtedly thought of this and summarized it already.

In the Taoist Court's twenty-thousand-year history, countless great masters of Spells were certain to have more mature research, and perhaps, there were even established Skill Patterns for him to "copy."

However, such variant Spells were clearly both difficult and dangerous.

Thus, few Cultivators learned them, and the inherited Skill Patterns were probably scarce.

"Copy a bit..."

The first person Mo Hua thought of was Elder Yi.

After all, it was Elder Yi who had told him about the underlying principles.

The Yi family, a lineage of Spell masters, might not actively use such Spells, but they had definitely studied them.

Thus, with his arms in bandages, Mo Hua went to seek Elder Yi.

As soon as Elder Yi heard, he promptly shook his head, "No, no, no..."

Mo Hua had previously injured both hands by fiddling around on his own, and for that, Elder Master Xun had given him several days of cold stares.

If he truly taught something to Mo Hua... and Mo Hua continued to practice it until he injured his arms and legs,

Elder Master Xun might dock his entire Sect stipend.

Thinking this, Elder Yi added again, "No, no..."

Mo Hua expected this response and curiously asked,

"Is it because it's too dangerous?"

"It's not just generally dangerous..."

Mo Hua blinked, "How dangerous?"

"Well..." Just as Elder Yi started to speak, he suddenly paused, looking at Mo Hua warily, "You aren't trying to trick me into revealing secrets, are you?"

Mo Hua smiled sheepishly, "Elder, what are you saying? I'm just a kid without much guile, how could I trick you?"

Elder Yi silently stared at Mo Hua, clearly not believing him at all.

"I'm just a little curious..." Mo Hua said.

"Being curious doesn't cut it."

"Alright then..."

Mo Hua sighed, feeling a bit disappointed.

Seeing Mo Hua's dejected face, Elder Yi felt somewhat sorry for him.

After a moment of thought, he bit the bullet and said,

"I'll tell you just a little. Just listen, don't speculate on your own, much less practice it yourself, and definitely do not hurt yourself..."

"Alright," Mo Hua nodded. "I won't practice it recklessly."

Elder Yi then relieved, nodded, and said,

"This type of Spell involves 'Spiritual Transformation,' naturally, it's extremely dangerous..."

"It's powerful and prone to loss of control, harmful to others and oneself, and after practicing, it can easily cause irreversible damage to one's own meridians or Qi Sea."

"As such, these types of Spells are often labeled as 'Forbidden Techniques' and their transmission is either broken, sealed, or destroyed."

"Forbidden Techniques?!" Mo Hua exclaimed. "Does it prohibit cultivation?"

"Eh," Elder Yi nodded.

Mo Hua, feeling somewhat guilty, whispered, "If I practiced it, would the Taoist Court send officers to arrest me, handcuff me, and lock me in the Taoist Prison?"

Elder Yi sighed, "Well, it wouldn't go that far..."

"Although it's labeled as a 'Forbidden Technique,' there are many kinds..."

"Replenishing from others, Evil Techniques, Corpse Manipulation, Ghost Arts... These Demon Sect's practices are categorized as Forbidden Techniques because they recklessly take lives and pose great dangers."

"While Spiritual Transformation Spells are labeled as such because of their powerful, uncontrollable nature."

"As long as it's not used to slaughter en masse or kill innocents but merely practiced in secrecy, if at most the Spell goes out of control and injures oneself—as you did blowing up your hands— the Taoist Court wouldn't bother..."

After saying this, Elder Yi immediately became alert,

"I'm not telling you to secretly practice it!"

"Don't practice it!"

"Alright," Mo Hua nodded, "Please continue..."

Elder Yi slightly nodded and continued, "But even so, since it's listed as a 'Forbidden Technique,' such Spells still hold severe consequences."

"Like burning of the meridians, Spiritual Power backflow, Yin and Yang imbalance, and so forth..."

"Some Cultivators even turn to Evil Cultivation or Demon Cultivation in an attempt to overcome the drawbacks of 'Forbidden Techniques'..."

"Therefore, the Taoist Court had to enforce a blanket prohibition on all 'Forbidden Techniques' to prevent extensive hidden dangers..."

"Unstable Spells should not be widely propagated, otherwise, they become major risks..."

Chapter 932: Forbidden Technique (3)

Elder Yi said with a solemn expression.

Mo Hua whispered, "Does the Taoist Court secretly collect 'Forbidden Techniques'..."

Elder Yi was startled, but he did not conceal it from Mo Hua, "The Taoist Court does collect them, after all..."

Elder Yi did not say it, but Mo Hua understood.

With the Taoist Court unified, the Cultivation World was theirs.

The status of the Taoist Court was naturally revered, and no one could interfere with what they wanted to do.

Mo Hua then asked, "Does the Sect also collect them?"

Elder Yi immediately shook his head, "No."

Mo Hua looked doubtful, equally unconvinced.

With Mo Hua staring at him, Elder Yi sighed.

He looked around, saw no one around, coughed, and then whispered, "The Sect also... cough, also collects some..."

"Of course, not the Demon Skills and Evil Techniques kind of 'Forbidden Techniques.'"

"Evil Techniques involving demons, corpses, and ghosts that harm the harmony of heaven—such are definitely sealed without any leeway."

"The kind of Forbidden Techniques the Sect collects are generally those involving the rules of the Great Dao, extremely powerful, but essentially impossible to cultivate, extremely difficult to control, or if cultivated, have very serious consequences..."

"These Forbidden Techniques are deliberated and judged by the Sect Leader, Elders, or the old ancestors."

"Some techniques, which could be cultivated in the past, might have too great a cost and are not suitable to be passed down—then the old ancestors would decide to list them as 'Forbidden Techniques' and seal them..."

Finishing his explanation, Elder Yi solemnly looked at Mo Hua again, "You must absolutely not think about practicing these kinds of 'Forbidden Techniques.'"

"Although these techniques are collected in the Sect, they are strictly forbidden for disciples to cultivate."

"Our Taixu Gate has strict sect rules. Any disciple, regardless of the reason, who clandestinely cultivates 'Forbidden Techniques,' will be directly expelled from the Sect!"

Mo Hua's heart tightened, and his expression became serious.

Elder Yi patted Mo Hua's shoulder and sighed,

"Elder Master Xun values you so much; for your own sake, and for Elder Master Xun's sake, you must not entertain any improper thoughts that would dishearten Elder Master Xun..."

Mo Hua nodded solemnly, "Elder Yi, don't worry."

Elder Yi looked into Mo Hua's eyes, saw his clear and sincere expression, and was reassured.

After Elder Yi left, Mo Hua returned to the Disciple's Residence.

Reflecting on his conversation with Elder Yi, Mo Hua summarized:

Techniques embodying the principle of "Fusion Fireball" must exist, and such techniques are certainly "Forbidden Techniques."

Practicing these types of "Forbidden Techniques" results in side effects.

The side effects vary; some even lead to demonic corruption.

The Taixu Gate definitely harbors "Forbidden Techniques."

But where they are stored, they won't let the disciples know—at least not in the regular cultivation classes or within the Merit Scrolls.

And he himself must not secretly learn the Taixu Gate's Forbidden Techniques.

The sect rules are stringent.

If he were caught, Elder Master Xun, despite his favoritism, would probably have no choice but to relentlessly expel him from the sect.

Elder Master Xun has been so kind to him; he cannot betray his goodwill.

But then!

Mo Hua thought again.

As long as he doesn't steal learn the Forbidden Techniques of the Taixu Gate, there would be no problem!

As long as he doesn't study the demon, corpse, and ghost-type Evil Techniques, the Taoist Court wouldn't care.

Even if there are side effects, he isn't afraid.

He isn't actually planning to "learn" the Forbidden Technique.

Rather, through the Forbidden Technique, he wants to research the principles of "Spell Fusion."

"Copy" their skill patterns, thereby thinking of ways to continuously optimize and improve the skill patterns, perfecting a truly stable and controllable "Fusion Fireball Skill."

According to what Elder Yi had said, any Sect Disciple who secretly learns "Forbidden Techniques" will be forcibly expelled from the sect.

In other words, they become "defectors!"

Mo Hua's eyes brightened.

In that case, among those sin cultivators on Boss Jiang's list, there might very well be one or two who practiced "Forbidden Techniques" and defected from the sect, committing misdeeds outside and becoming sin cultivators.

Boss Jiang is truly his "lucky star!"

His list is just like a heritage "treasure map."

Mo Hua thought with a beaming smile, and then he took out Boss Jiang's list again.

Among them, sin cultivators with the names containing "fire" were marked by him.

These were specifically "filtered" by Mo Hua who originally wanted to learn Fire Spells.

Mo Hua checked the names of these sin cultivators one by one.

"Fireworker Chief, Fire Wolf Head, Fierce Fire Palm, Fire Butcher..."

Mo Hua furrowed his brows.

He looked left and right and didn't feel that these sin cultivators seemed like they had learned "Forbidden Techniques."

Their spells also didn't seem capable of involving collapse of skill patterns or fusion of spiritual power, of relevance to his "Forbidden Technique" research.

More importantly, Mo Hua didn't have that feeling, no heavenly warnings, no karmic forebodings, no sudden heart palpitations.

"None..."

Mo Hua felt a great disappointment.

Mo Hua put the Jade Slip back into the Storage Ring, but then, feeling unwilling to give up, he took it out again and placed it on the table. He carefully observed it with the Calculation merged with the Heavenly Secret.

At that moment, he noticed a faint, red karmic chain on the Jade Slip.

Mo Hua was startled, his heart jumped.

There!

Indicated by the heavenly patterns and karmic forewarnings, the list did contain a lineage similar to the "Fusion Fireball" Forbidden Technique!

Mo Hua hastily looked at it again.

But in the Jade Slip, the names of all the sin cultivators appeared "unremarkable," nothing unusual.

It seemed like the earlier "karmic forewarning" was just an illusion.

Mo Hua performed another calculation, still finding nothing.

"What's going on..."

Mo Hua leaned on the table, supporting his chin, frowning deeply in thought.

"Is there something... I haven't discovered?"

"There's something hidden in the depths of Boss Jiang's list that I haven't decoded?"

Mo Hua read through Boss Jiang's diary again, reading while releasing his Divine Sense, carefully discerning every word.

After one read-through, he found nothing.

Mo Hua read it again...

Until on the third read-through, Mo Hua finally noticed something subtle.

Some of the passages and punctuation were blank, marked with "secret," and the technique was even more covert. Mo Hua had unconsciously skipped over them previously, thus he hadn't noticed.

Mo Hua felt somewhat emotional.

"This Boss Jiang, sure is cunning..."

He almost tricked me!

Mo Hua's eyes brightened as he started to try decoding, but the Secret Patterns in these blank areas were completely different from elsewhere.

With no other choice, Mo Hua had to repeat his old method, patiently using the Secondary Thunder Patterns from the Secondary Thunder Pattern Library, one by one comparing and decoding.

Three days later, Mo Hua finally decoded a new name in the blank place of the Jade Slip.

This name was hidden deeply, covered in heavy ink.

Seemingly entwined with blood, amid a sea of fire, profound murderous aura surged, subtly making one's heart tremble.

Mo Hua's gaze focused slightly, as he slowly said:

"Fire Buddha."

### Chapter 933: Flower Gentleman

This moniker, fierce yet restrained, as if bathed in a glowing fire and bloodlight, gave Mo Hua a feeling completely different from all the other sin cultivators on the name list.

It was as if he was "worse" than the rest by a whole level.

Mo Hua frowned.

"What exactly is Boss Jiang..."

"Where did he get this list from?"

"These colorful sin cultivators don't seem like people he, a mere human trafficker at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, could possibly have come into contact with..."

"Not to mention this 'Fire Buddha,' who is obviously extraordinary..."

And yet, such a list was hidden in Boss Jiang's diary.

Mo Hua always felt something was amiss...

"Could it be that the list isn't Boss Jiang's?"

"If it isn't Boss Jiang's, whose could it be? And how did it end up in his diary?"

Mo Hua thought it over but had no idea, so he could only set aside his doubts for the moment and continued to ponder about the "Fire Buddha"...

Fire Buddha...

All he currently knew was the name.

What was Fire Buddha's background, realm, age, which cultivation technique did he practice.

The "Forbidden Technique" he possessed, which held some referential value to the "Fireball Fusion" skill pattern, what exactly was it.

Also, his position on the "name list" was obviously quite special.

If the list of sin cultivators was an organization.

Then this Fire Buddha, at the very least, must be a "boss."

And not your run-of-the-mill boss at that.

He might even have quite a few "underlings"...

Where could he be now?

Mo Hua was filled with doubts, but with no leads at present, he thought of asking around.

But he had already asked Sister Murong, Senior Brother Xu from his sect, Senior Brother Feng from the Tai'a Sect, and Senior Sister Qianqian from Hundred Flower Valley whenever he could find time.

Even some brothers and sisters who occasionally took on temporary missions were asked, but nobody had ever heard of the "Fire Buddha."

This Fire Buddha seemed as if he didn't exist at all.

It was also possible that Taoist Court had never issued a related mission.

If so, the only thing left was to inquire at the Taoist Court.

The only "acquaintance" in the Qianxue State Boundary Taoist Court was Uncle Gu Changhuai...

Mo Hua made up his mind and, during the next ten days of rest, asked Senior Sister Murong to take on more missions from the Taoist Court.

Murong Caiyun, though unclear why, agreed as it was Mo Hua's request.

When she went to inquire at the Taoist Court and apply to see the archives, Mo Hua also went along, hoping for a chance "encounter" with Uncle Gu.

However, Gu Changhuai was a Supervisor and always busy. Mo Hua went three times only to find that he was out, and it was not until the fourth visit that he ran into him.

Gu Changhuai seemed to have just come in from outside, his handsome face showing signs of fatigue, yet his head was held slightly high, his eyes proud, like a "proud peacock."

But soon, his "pride" turned to "shock."

Because he saw Mo Hua's face beaming with joy and his eyes shining brightly.

It was as if a small fox with bad intentions had set its sights on him...

Gu Changhuai's heart "thumped," sensing something amiss.

Mo Hua greeted him warmly, waving and calling out in a crisp voice:

"Uncle Gu, what a coincidence!"

Gu Changhuai's forehead twitched.

He didn't think this was a "coincidence" at all.

It was probably Mo Hua, that little devil full of cunning plans, waiting like a hunter for his prey.

Gu Changhuai wore a poker face, "Are you here for another mission?"

"Uh-huh." Mo Hua said, "It's mainly Senior Sister Murong and the others who take action. I'm just helping out and tagging along..."

Mo Hua was incredibly modest.

Gu Changhuai snorted.

You keep telling that tale.

She's your senior sister, not your real sister. Why would she take you along for no reason?

The importance of merit points within a sect is significant, and so are the missions.

If you're of no use, even real siblings might not bring you along...

Let alone those from the Murong Family or the Ouyang Family, who may appear courteous and mild-mannered but all bear some pride inside as sons of noble families.

If you're not somewhat capable, why would anyone play with you?

Even if you're cute, that won't cut it!

But then...

Gu Changhuai took another look at Mo Hua, puzzled.

What use could this kid possibly be?

With unsatisfactory Spiritual Roots and body, weak Spiritual Power, and just at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, he looked precisely like a little "drag."

What help could he be on a mission?

Gu Changhuai did not understand, shook his head and asked indifferently, "What mission are you 'tagging along' on this time?"

Mo Hua replied, "Catching a rapist!"

"What realm?"

"Just Foundation Building Middle Stage."

Gu Changhuai was speechless.

Just Foundation Building Middle Stage...

Aren't you yourself still at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage? Such bravado, capturing a rapist at the Middle Phase of Foundation Building, you make it sound as simple as catching a chicken...

Reflecting on his cousin's instructions, Gu Changhuai said helplessly:

"You don't need my help, do you..."

Mo Hua was a bit surprised.

Uncle Gu was so eager to help?

He had previously thought that Uncle Gu had some reservations about him and would be a bit petty, not readily offering his help.

It turned out that he was the one being petty.

Uncle Gu turned out to be a kind-hearted person with a "cool exterior but warm interior"!

Mo Hua was somewhat touched and said, "Catching the rapist is a small matter; I don't need your help for that, but..."

Mo Hua smiled shyly, "There's something else I'd like to ask you about..."

Gu Changhuai's eyelid twitched.

This kid's smile meant trouble...

"Go ahead, what is it..." Gu Changhuai replied in a flat tone.

Chapter 934: Flower Gentleman (2)

"Uncle Gu," Mo Hua whispered, "do you know about 'Fire Buddha'..."

After speaking, Mo Hua looked up at Gu Changhuai and saw his body stiffen slightly, a chill emanating from him, and even a hint of fierceness in his eyes.

He looked at Mo Hua with icy eyes.

"Where did you..."

Gu Changhuai paused, his voice low and slightly hoarse, "...hear this name..."

Mo Hua was taken aback.

He hadn't expected Uncle Gu's reaction to be so significant.

Could it be that this Fire Buddha had some old grudge with Uncle Gu?

Boss Jiang's list must definitely remain a secret...

After thinking for a moment, Mo Hua half-truthfully said:

"I heard it from a Sin Cultivator, who said that Fire Buddha knows a very powerful Fire-series Spell, and within hundreds of miles, no one is his opponent..."

Gu Changhuai's gaze was sharp as he stared at Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's eyes were like still water, unfathomable, his expression calm and composed.

Gu Changhuai furrowed his brows and asked, "Which Sin Cultivator?"

Mo Hua shook his head, "I don't know him, just bumped into him occasionally. I overheard a few words, and then they left. I, a minor cultivator, didn't dare to follow..."

Gu Changhuai clearly didn't believe him, his expression grew stern, and he fell silent.

Observing his reactions, Mo Hua asked quietly, "Uncle Gu, is this Fire Buddha very powerful? Do you have a history with him?"

Gu Changhuai was taken aback, seeing Mo Hua's curious face, his attitude and tone indeed did not seem like someone aware of the past events, nor did it seem like he had any dealings with Fire Buddha. This made him heave a sigh of relief, but his brows furrowed even tighter.

"This matter is not for you to inquire about."

Gu Changhuai seemed to recall some past events, his mood became poor, his tone somewhat harsh.

Mo Hua then knew, there must be a story here.

But seeing this, Uncle Gu was troubled and surely wouldn't discuss it.

Mo Hua didn't insist, silently contemplating in his heart, planning to ask someone else.

Although Gu Changhuai couldn't see through Mo Hua's thoughts, seeing his curious expression, he knew that even if he didn't tell him, Mo Hua would continue to inquire.

Gu Changhuai sighed.

This man, Fire Buddha, had committed too many killings, he was a taboo.

If Mo Hua indeed had a hidden agenda, plotting against the Shangguan family and Yu Er, that would still be better.

If by bad luck, he ran into Fire Buddha's hands while investigating the secrets, and died, then he was simply dead.

But if he had just happened to pass by and saved Yu Er, then he was Yu Er's benefactor.

If he didn't make things clear and caused his death, that would be a sin.

Besides, as a small cultivator who had lived only for a little over a decade, it would be a terrible waste to lose his life this way.

Gu Changhuai hesitated for some time before sighing:

"These matters... I shouldn't really be telling you..."

"But I'm afraid you don't realize the severity, and rashly inquiring might involve you in this, attracting the attention of those you shouldn't, and you might lose your life needlessly..."

Mo Hua was very surprised, "Who exactly is this Fire Buddha?"

Gu Changhuai's gaze turned slightly stern, "He is an extremely cruel Evil Cultivator."

Mo Hua's heart chilled slightly, "A Golden Core?"

"Foundation Establishment Late Stage."

Mo Hua frowned, "Foundation Establishment Late Stage... can't he be captured?"

Gu Changhuai sighed, "Fire Buddha is naturally cautious, he only frequents the Second Grade State Border. His cultivation is profound, and his spells are extremely powerful..."

"The Taoist Court has encircled him many times..."

"But this cunning man is sly and ruthless, bolstered by the power of his spells, he kills widely, and beneath the Foundation Establishment, hardly any cultivator is his match."

"Even deploying Golden Core Cultivators, who cannot use their Magical Treasures due to Heavenly Dao restrictions, might defeat him but can't kill him..."

"Once he runs away, he will disappear for a while, waiting until the danger has passed to resume his killings..."

...

Mo Hua roughly understood.

The Third Grade Golden Core Stewards of Taoist Court didn't have time to capture him, and even if they did, with the restrictions of Heavenly Dao, it was very difficult to kill him.

Those from the Second Grade Enforcement Leader who attempted capture would instead be killed...

Mo Hua asked, "The extremely powerful spells of Fire Buddha, are they 'Forbidden Techniques'?"

Gu Changhuai's gaze sharpened, but thinking of Mo Hua being a disciple of Taixu Gate, he might know a little about 'Forbidden Techniques'.

"Correct." Gu Changhuai nodded, "It is a Forbidden Technique..."

"But the spell he practices is an incomplete 'Forbidden Technique'."

"After cultivating this 'Forbidden Technique,' the Blood Qi becomes agitated due to Fire Qi, and the nature becomes violently murderous."

"This urge to kill is uncontrollable..."

"Thus this fiend... often due to pathological Fire Qi, recklessly uses 'Forbidden Techniques,' commences large-scale slayings, and massacres the innocent to vent his 'killing desire'..."

"To this day, how many cultivators have been burned to death by his spell, suffering in agony, no one truly knows..."

A strong killing intent flashed in Gu Changhuai's eyes, his knuckles turning white as he clenched his fist.

"This kind of fiend deserves a thousand tortures; death is too good for him..."

Mo Hua was somewhat bewildered.

It was his first time seeing Uncle Gu with such deep hatred and overt killing intent.

Mo Hua then tried to reassure, "Uncle Gu, rest assured, 'Heaven's net is vast, loose and unmissable', such evil people will definitely end up with no place to be buried!"

A self-mocking expression appeared on Gu Changhuai's face.

"Heaven's net is vast, loose and unmissable..."

His emotions surged, about to say something else, when his expression suddenly changed, and he realized that he had inadvertently told Mo Hua too much...

Some things should have never been told to him!

"Enough, let's end this," Gu Changhuai flicked his sleeve and advised:

"The reason I tell you this is to make you understand: Fire Buddha is extremely dangerous. You, a young cultivator not yet matured, should not inquire into this any further."

### Chapter 935: Flower Gentleman (3)

Mo Hua frowned, "I'm not young anymore, I'm fifteen!"

Gu Changhuai harrumphed, "I'm over a hundred."

Mo Hua was shocked, "Uncle Gu, you're that old?"

Gu Changhuai felt his teeth ache with irritation, wishing he could twist Mo Hua's ear, "Over a hundred, how's that old? With my mighty Golden Core, over a hundred years old, I'm quite young!"

"Alright, alright."

Mo Hua said soothingly, while muttering to herself, "If you're over a hundred and still considered young, then I must still be a child..."

After thinking for a bit, Mo Hua quietly inquired about the Fire Buddha.

Opportunities were rare, and if she didn't ask more now, Uncle Gu might be in a bad mood later and probably wouldn't answer then.

"Uncle Gu, do you know of the Fire Buddha's current whereabouts?"

Gu Changhuai didn't want to say.

Mo Hua understood.

"There's none then..."

"Will the Daoist Court issue a wanted poster for the Fire Buddha to the Sects?"

Gu Changhuai still didn't speak.

But Mo Hua could see the answer on his displeased face:

"It won't."

"The reward for the Fire Buddha, would it be very high?"

"It looks like it'll be expensive..."

"The Fire Buddha has accomplices, right?"

"I guess so, otherwise he wouldn't have escaped the Taoist Court's encirclement..."

"The Fire Buddha has been out of sight for a long time, hasn't he?"

"It seems so..."

...

Mo Hua stared at Gu Changhuai's expression, reading between the lines while asking and answering herself.

Finally, Gu Changhuai couldn't stand it anymore, he picked up Mo Hua and started to walk out, "You'd better go back to the Sect and focus on your cultivation, stop asking all these unnecessary questions..."

Mo Hua's feet dangled in the air, kicking a few times, unable to break free, then was resigned to be carried by Gu Changhuai, but she said:

"I am waiting for my Senior Sister!"

"I still have a mission!"

"I can go back only after catching the rapist!"

Gu Changhuai had no choice but to drop Mo Hua in the front hall, advising:

"Wait here, don't bother me anymore."

"Oh..."

Gu Changhuai turned to leave.

Yet Mo Hua suddenly called out to him, "Uncle Gu!"

Gu Changhuai turned around, and Mo Hua smiled, "Let me ask one last question..."

Gu Changhuai was about to refuse, but remembering his cousin's admonishments, he sighed:

"Ask then."

"What does the Fire Buddha look like?" Mo Hua asked.

Gu Changhuai frowned, "Didn't I say not to inquire about it?"

Mo Hua said, "I'm afraid I might run into him and need to know what he looks like so I can run away in advance."

"How could you be so lucky to just run into him?"

"I'm saying just in case!"

Mo Hua emphasized, "What if I do run into him, can't recognize him, and end up foolishly getting close to him, and then he kills me?"

Your line of thinking is truly peculiar...

Gu Changhuai silently criticised.

But he couldn't find a reason to refute at the moment.

To avoid danger, one had to know about it in advance, otherwise, how could one avoid it if they are in jeopardy and unaware?

Gu Changhuai felt a headache coming on, eventually, he could only say:

"A tall stature, a compassionate face, wearing a blood-colored kasaya, with a fiery red scar on top of his head, skin slightly red..."

Mo Hua silently noted it in her mind.

Gu Changhuai turned to leave again, but Mo Hua remembered something and stopped him.

"Uncle Gu..."

"What now?"

"Just one last question!"

Gu Changhuai's brow furrowed, "Didn't you just say the last one was the final question?"

"This time it's the real last one!"

Mo Hua stated with conviction.

Gu Changhuai exhaled, saying with irritation, "Speak!"

Mo Hua blinked slightly and asked in a hushed voice, "Uncle Gu, what is the name of the spell that Fire Buddha cultivated?"

Gu Changhuai warned, "I can't tell you that."

"Really, just this last one!"

Gu Changhuai looked skeptical.

Mo Hua insisted, "If you tell me, I won't bother you anymore!"

Gu Changhuai raised an eyebrow, "Really?"

"Mm!"

Mo Hua nodded earnestly.

Gu Changhuai shook his head.

Although he didn't believe it, after thinking it over, he figured knowing the name of a spell shouldn't be too harmful.

It was a Forbidden Technique.

This little rascal surely wouldn't try to cultivate it himself.

If he really did, he would just catch him and throw him into the Taoist Prison for solitary confinement!

Gu Changhuai thought to himself.

Seeing Mo Hua's expectant face, Gu Changhuai sighed and slowly said, "The Forbidden Technique that Fire Buddha cultivated is called..."

"Meteor Fire Skill!"

Mo Hua was taken aback, then his eyes shone brightly, spirited.

"Meteor" Fire Skill?!

Gu Changhuai was startled and immediately felt uneasy.

This kid...

Surely he wouldn't be so rash and reckless as to attempt learning a "Forbidden Technique"...

Yet even if he were that bold and reckless, he wouldn't possibly dare to mess with the Fire Buddha...

Gu Changhuai was very worried and furrowed his brow in admonition,

"This is a Forbidden Technique, you better not learn it..."

Mo Hua nodded, "Don't worry, Uncle Gu, I won't learn it."

I'm just going to take it as a reference, look it over, "plagiarize" the Skill Pattern. I won't "learn" it...

Gu Changhuai, unaware of Mo Hua's cunning thoughts, nodded and then left.

Mo Hua was satisfied.

Those trips had not been in vain after all; Uncle Gu indeed knew about the Fire Buddha.

Forbidden Technique!

Meteor Fire Skill!

The spell sounded very powerful just by its name, and "Meteor Fire"... it seemed to have some connection with the Fireball Technique.

Unfortunately, there was no knowing where the Fire Buddha actually was.

The Taoist Court Officials here also had no news.

It seemed he'd have to plan for the long term...

...

Mo Hua stayed where he was, waiting for Senior Sister Murong, and then joined up with the late-arriving Senior Brother Feng and others outside the Taoist Court. They took a carriage together to Second Grade Luan Mountain City to capture the rapist—Flower Gentleman.

Luan Mountain City was north of Second Grade Bishan City.

Within the city, there were several small families, among which several female disciples had recently become pale and gaunt, with frail breaths.

After investigation by the families, it was discovered they had been drained.

The person who drained them was none other than Flower Gentleman, the rapist wanted by the Taoist Court.

These female disciples, charmed by the sweet nothings and clever words of Flower Gentleman, had willingly become his women and were drained of their Vital Energy. Now, despite their weakened state, they were infatuated with him and insisted on protecting Flower Gentleman, claiming:

"He loves me..."

"Even being drained, I did so willingly..."

"What's mutual consent is none of your business..."

And the like.

These were the words that Murong Caiyun learned after inquiring and then reported back to Mo Hua.

Mo Hua found it eye-opening.

It seemed that some cultivators these days only cared about appearance, not even distinguishing between good and evil.

Someone literally wants to eat your flesh, drink your blood, drain your Vital Energy, and you consent willingly, even relishing it...

Fortunately, the Taoist Law remained merciless.

Draining others was a crime.

Flower Gentleman had been thriving among several female disciples in Luan Mountain City, skillfully managing his time.

But because he scheduled his time too well, too tightly, when the incident occurred, he didn't have time to escape and was now hiding somewhere in the pleasure quarters or perhaps in some spacious mansion.

After the rain, traces remain; where geese fly, their calls linger.

Since he left traces, he shouldn't dream of escaping, especially in front of Mo Hua.

Mo Hua's Divine Sense swept across, observing carefully and making Calculations of cause and effect, quickly finding traces of Flower Gentleman.

Following the traces, they searched until they found... the largest room of the Second Grade Wang family, inside the boudoir of the Family Head's married Daoist partner...

Chapter 936: Teahouse

In the blurry vision of Divine Sense, within the bedchamber of the Wang family's mistress, there were two figures, their actions unknown.

Mo Hua wanted to enter and drag out the Flower Gentleman, but Murong Caiyun forbade him from entering.

"You're still young; don't sully your eyes."

Mo Hua blinked, not quite understanding, but obediently did not go inside.

Thus, Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu stood guard outside.

Murong Caiyun and Hua Qianqian entered the bedchamber.

Shortly afterward, a woman's scream echoed from the room, followed by a disheveled man, who, struck by spells and Spirit Needles, spat blood and fled desperately through the broken window.

Mo Hua was still a bit curious, so he stealthily peeked into the chamber through the broken window.

Inside the chamber, there was a mess, with robes and skirts strewn about.

A disheveled woman, covering her body with a quilt, yelled furiously:

"How audacious!"

"Who are you?"

"How dare you trespass into the Wang family's private quarters?"

Outside, the Flower Gentleman was already intercepted by Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu.

Murong Caiyun sneered coldly at the woman: "You're the Family Head's wife, yet you lure a rapist into your chambers and have the audacity to show no shame!"

The woman glared arrogantly at Murong Caiyun:

"What rapist?"

"You little girl, what do you know? My gentleman loves me. He said that he only replenishes from other women to enhance his cultivation and has no real feelings for them..."

"And he treats me differently; thus, he is only intimate with me and doesn't drain my Vital Energy..."

As the woman spoke, jealousy surged within her heart, "Those cheap women, to be replenished by the gentleman... they're really getting the better part of the deal..."

Murong Caiyun felt a surge of anger, her teeth itching in fury, momentarily at a loss for words.

Mo Hua was eavesdropping outside and "kindly" interjected:

"He doesn't replenish from you because he might be raising you like a 'pig', waiting for your cultivation to improve, then to deplete you in one go..."

Mo Hua's words were piercing, yet his face was sympathetic.

After all, the reality was clear; a dog can't change its eating habits, nor can a rapist stop replenishing.

"Pigs, they're fattened before being slaughtered..."

The woman was stunned by his words, her defenses shattered.

Blood rushed to her face, turning it red, as she pointed at Mo Hua with trembling fingers, "You, you this..."

She was about to curse out loud, when she was silenced by Hua Qianqian using a Spirit Needle, pricking an acupoint, causing her to faint.

Although this woman had attained Foundation Establishment, being pampered and privileged, she only knew how to secretly indulge in lovers behind her husband's back, her strength so weak it was infuriating.

As for how this woman would be dealt with, that was to be decided by the Wang family, and also by the judgment of the Taoist Court.

The urgent matter at hand was to capture the rapist.

The rapist had fled through the window and attempted to escape, only to be caught by Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu waiting outside.

Ouyang Feng's sword was like the wind, and Shangguan Xu's like a mountain.

The two enclosed the rapist, giving him no chance to escape.

When Mo Hua came out and saw, he recognized the man's handsome appearance and sickly pale complexion; he was indeed the debauched "Flower Gentleman."

Like many rapists, the Flower Gentleman was skilled in movement techniques but mediocre in Taoist skills.

During his fight with Ouyang Feng, he was at a disadvantage, but his movements were as graceful as falling flowers, wrapped in pink mist, allowing him to hold off for the time being without any immediate threat to his life.

Soon, cultivators from the Wang family also gathered, each expressing shock in their own way.

Some sneered, watching as if it were a joke; some covered their faces, feeling disgraced; others were filled with righteous indignation...

A number of Wang family cultivators then joined forces to attack, attempting to catch the Flower Gentleman.

But their ineptitude was a hindrance, inadvertently giving the Flower Gentleman a chance to catch his breath.

Mo Hua was initially upset, but noticing the evasive looks of the Wang family cultivators, he realized something.

Catching the Flower Gentleman solidified the scandal; the Wang family's reputation would be damaged.

Having a mistress in the family nurturing a rapist would turn into a massive scandal.

The Wang family would become a laughingstock in the entire Luan Mountain City, ridiculed for hundreds of years.

Ideally, the Wang family would capture the Flower Gentleman and kill him on the spot, destroy the body, and deny everything.

Otherwise, letting the Flower Gentleman escape, making the affair nothing more than "rumors," would be the second best outcome.

The worst scenario would be if the Flower Gentleman fell into the hands of Mo Hua and his fellow sect disciples and was then brought before the Taoist Court, tried and recorded.

That would turn the affair into irrevocable fact, embarrassing the entire Wang family.

Thus, their primary goal was to capture the Flower Gentleman.

Failing that, they must also prevent the Flower Gentleman from falling into the hands of these few sect disciples...

Understanding this, Mo Hua smiled subtly and chose not to intervene but instead sat back to watch the show.

The actions of the Wang family cultivators did not surprise Mo Hua.

Knowing they couldn't catch the Flower Gentleman, they began to deliberately trip up Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu.

Realizing this, Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu became annoyed and began attacking more severely.

Since the Wang family cultivators pretended to help but hindered them, they pretended to "slip up" and struck a few of them with their swords.

Feeling guilty, the Wang family cultivators dared not complain.

However, this chaos served to benefit the Flower Gentleman, allowing him easier chances to escape, and after a few swift movements, he had managed to put several meters between himself and Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu.

This distance was enough for him to make his escape.

Ouyang Feng, slightly angered, whipped up his Spiritual Power and his Sword Qi became fierce, ready to forcefully strike, intending to cut down the intervening Wang family cultivators as well.

Chapter 937: Tea House (2)

He suddenly heard a faint shout by his ear, "Senior Brother Feng..."

Ouyang Feng was taken aback, turned his head to look, and saw Mo Hua standing by with his hands folded, looking calm and even making a gesture at him.

Ouyang Feng understood then, he stopped, and Shangguan Xu also put away his Heavy Sword.

Everyone watched as the Flower Gentleman climbed over the back yard wall, broke through the Formation, and escaped towards the outer wall of the Wang family.

All along the way, there was an uproar, and there was chaos.

The entire Wang family was noisy and chaotic, a complete mess.

And like that, the Flower Gentleman had escaped.

Mo Hua had watched enough of the commotion, nodded his head, then stood up with Murong Caiyun and a few others, to chase after the escapee outside of the Wang family.

The Flower Gentleman was very skilled in movement techniques, but in Mo Hua's eyes, it was merely showing off in front of an expert.

During the time when the Flower Gentleman was using his movement techniques to deal with everyone, Mo Hua had already locked onto him tightly with his Divine Sense.

He would not be able to escape from Mo Hua's grasp.

Even if he did escape, Mo Hua still had the Heavenly secret Calculation to find his cause and effects trace.

It could be said, from the moment he showed himself before Mo Hua, he was a "cooked duck", unable to fly away.

Murong Caiyun and the others left the Wang family, shook off the Wang family cultivators, and after, under the direction of Mo Hua, with just half an hour, they encountered the Flower Gentleman in a secluded cave in Luan Mountain City. He had exhausted all his strength fleeing for half the day, thought he had already escaped to safety and was meditating to rest.

The Flower Gentleman's face was filled with shock, "How did you find this place?"

This cave was his hiding place, which hardly anyone knew about besides himself.

Ouyang Feng couldn't be bothered to answer his question, simply pointed his Yellow Maple Longsword at him, and said coldly,

"You can die now."

The Flower Gentleman let out a cold laugh, still somewhat arrogant, and did not take Ouyang Feng and the others seriously.

If he could escape once, he could escape a second time.

Relying on his movement technique, he had been freely plundering and stealing in this Second Grade Immortal City, untouchable by anyone.

But what he didn't know was that he had been able to escape before because a little cultivator hidden in the dark hadn't made a move...

But now it was different.

Mo Hua no longer planned to let him go.

The Flower Gentleman let out a rebellious laugh, his movements graceful, as he stood up to flee.

From a distance, with a flick of Mo Hua's finger, Water Qi instantly condensed, a Water Prison Technique descended and securely bound the Flower Gentleman, who was trying to step on the wind and leap into the air.

The Flower Gentleman, suddenly trapped by the Water Prison Technique, saw his rebelliousness fade away, his eyes filled with shock and fear.

Afterward, he fell to the ground like a kite with its string cut before it could fly.

Ouyang Feng, who had been holding back his anger, stepped forward with his sword, and flipped the Flower Gentleman, struggling to break free from the Water Prison Technique, back onto the ground.

Shangguan Xu also stepped forward to land a few more blows with his sword.

Murong Caiyun, who abhorred such scum, showed no mercy as she mercilessly burned through his limbs with the Five-colored Spirit Light.

Nearby, Hua Qianqian was also putting on a stern face; she unceasingly attacked him with Spirit Formations...

The Flower Gentleman could only lie on the ground twitching, desperately begging for mercy, looking nothing like the arrogant man from before.

The capture came to an end at this point.

The Flower Gentleman had his legs broken and shackled with Spiritual Locks.

Mo Hua took out the "iron plate" to go through the motions.

He obtained various Jade Slips, one set of Replenishing Cultivation Techniques, one volume of Evil Technique movement techniques, two Spring Palace diagrams, a number of Spirit Stones, several bewitching Pills, and other personal effects of women, such as sachets and undergarments.

These items were just "tortured" out of him, and were immediately "confiscated" by Senior Sister Murong.

Murong Caiyun feared that Mo Hua might learn bad habits.

"I'll give you some more Merit Points later; you don't need these filthy things, and later you can hand them over to the Taoist Court, or return them to their original owners..."

"Oh..."

Mo Hua nodded his head.

He had no use for Evil Cultivator's Evil Techniques.

But he was interested in looking through the Flower Gentleman's secret manual of movement techniques, to study and understand the principles behind an Evil Cultivator's movement technique and any possible flaws.

And to see if there was any information or clues about Sin Cultivators in the Jade Slips.

However, Senior Sister Murong wouldn't let him see them, so he had no choice.

Since it was a rapist, he likely carried things that were not suitable for children and would dirty the eyes to see.

Well, let it go then...

Mo Hua comforted himself.

The following matters were simply wrapping things up.

The Flower Gentleman had been captured and was to be taken to the Taoist Court to await trial.

That was nothing out of the ordinary, but on the other hand, the Wang family was in an uproar.

How a family behaved behind closed doors didn't matter to anyone.

But once it was exposed, matters like lack of family discipline and a degenerate back house were extremely detrimental.

Later, Mo Hua learned that the Family Head of the Wang family and his Dao companion had long been estranged, each doing as they pleased.

He himself was not a decent person, either.

But the Wang family's patriarch had never imagined that his wife was carrying on behind his back to such an extent.

She was "deeply in love" with a rapist, even keeping him in the inner chambers...

Mo Hua shook his head.

This couple, a scum man and a scum woman, were actually quite well matched.

However, Mo Hua was young and not too interested in these licentious tales.

His purpose for this trip was to capture the Flower Gentleman, exchange Merit Points, and learn about Formations.

The rest of the matter, he couldn't be bothered to deal with.

With the Flower Gentleman caught, the mission was over.

Ouyang Feng and Shangguan Xu escorted the Flower Gentleman to the Taoist Court in Luan Mountain City, meanwhile taking statements and completing some procedures.

Murong Caiyun and Hua Qianqian returned the personal items that the Flower Gentleman had stolen or seized, like hairpins, sachets, and intimate garments, to the women they belonged to.

Some of these women had been tricked and willingly allowed themselves to be taken advantage of by the Flower Gentleman.

Chapter 938: Tea House (3)

Some women, however, were forced.

Their personal belongings were stolen or snatched by Flower Gentleman afterward, to be used for extortion and threats.

Such items weren't quite appropriate to hand over to the Taoist Court.

Thoughtfully considering the plights of these women, Murong Caiyun and Hua Qianqian returned these personal belongings privately to those oppressed, pitiful women.

Whether it was escorting them or returning their belongings, both tasks required a bit of time.

Everyone split up to handle their responsibilities and decided to reconvene outside Luan Mountain City before heading back to their Sect.

These affairs didn't require Mo Hua's involvement.

With nothing to do, Mo Hua looked at the scenery outside of Luan Mountain City, waiting for his senior brothers and sisters.

As he waited, Mo Hua grew hungry. He released his Divine Sense and spotted a teahouse not far away, nestled between the green hills and clear waters.

Mo Hua's eyes lit up and he sent a message to Murong Caiyun,  
"Sister, I'll be at the teahouse outside the city waiting for you!"

He then used the Water Passing Step, nimbly leaping down mountain paths, and happily arrived at the teahouse.

The teahouse wasn't large, but they had erected a canopy and set up quite a few tables outside.

A few scattered Cultivators were there, nibbling on dry fruits and sipping cold tea, chatting sporadically.

The owner, an elderly man hunchbacked with age, asked with a warm smile,

"Young master, would you like some tea?"

Mo Hua, mainly hungry, inquired,

"Elder, do you have anything to eat?"

The old man regretfully replied, "I only have some dry fruits for tea, and some pastries, but not many order them. I'm afraid they might not suit the young master's taste..."

"No matter, give me a large bowl of noodles!"

"Very well," the elder replied with a smile, "Just a moment, young master."

Mo Hua chose a table with a pleasant view of the wind and water, and that looked clean to sit at.

Soon, the noodles were brought to him.

They looked decent enough. Mo Hua gave them a taste. While not exactly delicious, they weren't bad either. He wasn't particularly picky, so he focused and slurped up the noodles with gusto.

As he ate, Mo Hua's thoughts returned to the mission at hand.

Flower Gentleman...

If he remembered correctly, the name "Flower Gentleman" was also on Boss Jiang's "list."

So was Flower Gentleman a renegade disciple from a Sect in the Qianxue State Boundary?

Why had he suddenly appeared in Luan Mountain City?

Previously at the Taoist Court, Mo Hua had perused the dossier on Flower Gentleman.

Flower Gentleman was very cautious; he frequented Cities of Immortals outside the Qianxue State Boundary, in more remote areas.

The management from the Taoist Court in those cities was lax, the morals loose, with plenty of red-light districts.

A perfect hideout for rapists.

But why would he suddenly come to a place like Luan Mountain City to prey on female practitioners from minor families?

Was he overrun by his Evil Skills during Cultivation?

Had his cravings overwhelmed him?

Surely he didn't really believe that in a Second Grade State Border, no one would be able to catch him...

Mo Hua held the large bowl, slurping noodles thoughtfully.

Suddenly, voices arose. Mo Hua looked up and saw a group of Cultivators arriving.

The leader was tall with a kindly face, followed by two stout men and a skinny one.

"Two pots of tea, two plates of dried meat, and four plates of candied fruits..."

They ordered their refreshments and settled in a corner to talk quietly among themselves.

Mo Hua initially paid them no mind, focusing on his noodles, but his keen Divine Sense and hearing picked up, faintly hearing the words "Hua Liulang."

"Hua Liulang?"

Mo Hua paused, thinking he might have misheard, so he slowed his eating and perked his ears to listen more carefully.

After a while, the group mentioned again,

"Hua Liulang..."

"... why hasn't he arrived yet?"

"We agreed on..."

Something in Mo Hua's mind felt amiss.

This Hua Liulang...

Could he actually be Flower Gentleman?

Were they part of the same group?

Mo Hua did not show any change in expression, continuing to eat his noodles with his head down, but his Divine Sense had already extended to the extreme, eavesdropping on their every word.

"...missed the hour... can you afford such a delay?"

"Troublesome thing..."

"As much piss and shit as a lazy donkey grinding grain..."

"Practicing such useless Cultivation Technique, can't control his lower half, truly a waste..."

"Who knows... which whore's bed he's lying in now..."

"Wouldn't die on... some belly, would he..."

"He'd deserve it anyway..."

...

Mo Hua frowned as he listened, finding the more he heard, the more likely it seemed.

He always felt that the "Flower Gentleman" they mentioned was the same rapist he and his brothers and sisters had just captured—Hua Liulang.

What to do?

Find a way to capture them?

Set up the Earth Fire Formation and take them all out at once?

...

Mo Hua shook his head.

Uncertain of the full situation, not knowing the foundation, it would be bad if he hastily made a move and caused a misunderstanding.

Moreover, he had not been able to see their cultivation levels in his haste.

If these several people were all at the Foundation Establishment Initial Stage, it would be fine, but if they were at the Middle Stage, it would be more troublesome.

The Earth Fire Formation was only a Thirteen Patterns formation.

It could hurt those at the Foundation Building Middle Stage but might not be able to kill them.

Above the Thirteen Patterns, following Elder Master Xun's guidance, he had learned mostly production-oriented formations or Trapping Formations, and few Killing Formations.

Furthermore, with his current level of Divine Sense, he was not yet able to instantly form a Killing Formation above Thirteen Patterns.

Acting in a dozen breaths' time was a bit too slow.

It was broad daylight, and the Formation Patterns were too conspicuous and easy to be discovered by others.

He needed to be more prudent.

Mo Hua silently said to himself.

"Finish eating the noodles first, and then..."

"Wait for the brothers and sisters to arrive, get some assistance before figuring out how to capture these cultivators, and ask them clearly..."

Otherwise, it would be too reckless to act alone, and the risk was somewhat high.

Mo Hua made up his mind and continued to eat his noodles in peace.

But knowing oneself and the enemy, one could fight without danger.

Mo Hua still took the time to observe these several people out of the corner of his eye, seeing if he could discern their cultivation level and the details of their Taoist Skills.

This group of cultivators was four in total.

Two brawny men who seemed to follow the Body Refinement path had strong Blood Qi that was well-contained.

Mo Hua was too close, and not knowing the details, he dared not use his Divine Sense to probe too deeply, to avoid alerting them.

Additionally, there was a thin man, looking sullen.

He appeared to be a Spiritual Cultivator, but it was unclear what Spell path he practiced.

Among the four, the leader was a tall cultivator with a benign face.

While the few cultivators at the same table chatted and cursed "Flower Gentleman," he remained silent, just drinking tea and eating candied fruit.

He didn't touch the dried meat on the table at all.

Mo Hua found this very strange and slightly shifted his gaze to take another look at this cultivator.

But with just one look, Mo Hua felt a shock in his heart, an unfamiliar sense of familiarity washing over him as if this person was the one he was looking for.

But he didn't recognize him at all...

Mo Hua frowned, taking another glance at this leading cultivator, his pupils slightly contracted.

Tall stature, benevolent brows and kind eyes...

His robe was the usual attire of a cultivator, but just beneath the sleeve, a small strip of red garment with gold Patterns peeked out.

His head had thick hair tied into a bun, but hidden deeply within the bun were a few fiery red spots...

A red Kasaya, fiery dots as scars...

He was...

Mo Hua's pupils shocked.

The Fire Buddha?!

Chapter 939: Fire Buddha

Foundation Establishment Late Stage, hunted by the Taoist Court for practicing the Fire-series "Forbidden Technique," the murderer known as Fire Buddha!

Mo Hua's heart chilled.

After a moment of contemplation, he knew he was no match!

He was in the initial stage of Foundation Establishment, and Fire Buddha was in the late stage; both were Foundation Establishment cultivators, but the gap in cultivation was too vast.

Formation wouldn't work either.

Such a ruthless villain, heavily burdened by his murderous deeds, would surely be cunning and highly vigilant.

Attempting to set up a formation and kill him in broad daylight would be as futile as trying to steal a bell while covering one's ears; he simply would not be able to deceive Fire Buddha's perception.

Moreover, Fire Buddha had three accomplices.

Two strong men, one with rough palms, one with a face full of meat, and a tall, thin cultivator.

Given they could stand with Fire Buddha, their cultivation must be at least at the middle stage of Foundation Establishment, and possibly even the late stage.

And they would definitely be Sin Cultivators, unscrupulously cruel and ruthless.

Mo Hua instantly deduced that these villains were not ones he could deal with currently.

Especially under these circumstances, with no preparation and a chance encounter...

"Preserving my own life is the priority!"

Mo Hua silently withdrew his gaze, maintaining a normal expression, continued to lower his head, slurping his noodles.

But he quietly quickened his eating pace, his cheeks puffing out, "huffing and puffing," he finished the remaining noodles in no time, and cleaned out the soup as well.

Mo Hua took out two Spirit Stones, placed them on the table, and tried to keep his voice from betraying any oddity, crisply he said:

"Boss, the bill!"

The shopkeeper smiled and said, "Take care, young master."

Mo Hua nodded, stood up, and started to walk away.

But as soon as he took a step, he heard a low and kindly voice:

"Young master..."

Mo Hua's heart tightened, feeling as if a powerful Divine Sense had locked onto him.

Eighteen Patterns peak Divine Sense!

Helpless, Mo Hua put on a puzzled face and turned around to look.

He saw, at another table, a large, kind-faced man who had been silent up till now, staring intently at him.

The man's demeanor was calm, his voice even, but his gaze was profound as he asked,

"Do you... recognize me?"

Without changing his expression, Mo Hua feigned confusion,

"Uncle, who are you?"

The man's gaze slightly hardened, his face showing displeasure, his mind also somewhat perplexed...

By rights, he shouldn't have been recognized...

Anyone who had seen his face, regardless of age or gender, he had killed and then burned to ashes, leaving no survivors.

Those he couldn't kill were either high-ranking officials from the Taoist Court or experienced Supervisors.

Their cultivation was at least above Golden Core.

This seemingly young and naive boy didn't appear to recognize him.

Even more, there was no reason he could have.

The man's brow furrowed.

But indeed, he had just sensed a trace of Divine Sense probing.

Although it was faint and slight, and the method of Divine Sense probing was expert, touching lightly like a dragonfly skimming the water, swept across in a flash.

But it couldn't escape him, who was accustomed to life-and-death battles.

The strange thing was that this trace of Divine Sense was fleeting.

When he checked again, there was no trace of it, the only slightly unusual thing had been this nearby boy eating noodles.

He appeared to have glanced at him from the corner of his eye before burying his head back in his bowl.

The man's gaze darkened.

This peering Divine Sense was profound; logically speaking, it shouldn't be something such a young cultivator could produce.

Such an experienced method of Divine Sense probing couldn't possibly come from this little cultivator either.

But his years of intuition told him...

Something was off with this boy.

Especially since after he glanced over, he noticeably sped up his eating and then began to leave.

That was decidedly odd.

It was as if...

He recognized him, knew who he was, and wanted to slip away to avoid any risk...

The man's expression was gentle, but his gaze deepened.

In that instant, Mo Hua felt a slight tightening in his heart.

This man, who might be the "Fire Buddha," was suspicious of him!

His alertness was too high, his paranoia too strong...

He needed to find a way to bluff his way through...

Mo Hua kept his expression unchanged, his mind racing.

Another one of the big men glanced at Mo Hua, puzzled,

"Big brother, is there something wrong with this kid?"

The other two also quietly discussed, "No way..."

"Doesn't look like it..."

"Too young..."

"Sect Disciple?"

"A kid, eating alone here?"

Mo Hua wasn't wearing the Taixu Gate's Taoist Robe, just his usual clothes, so they didn't know his background.

The leading man, his eyes contemplative, remained silent.

One of the strong men turned to Mo Hua and said:

"Kid, what family are you from, what's your name, what sect are you from, and what are you doing here all alone?"

After speaking, he smirked mockingly, "Don't tell me, you 'just' came to this mountain to eat a bowl of noodles..."

Mo Hua's face showed some tension, a hint of "fear," putting on a brave front:

"I don't even know who you are, why should I tell you?"

The big man scoffed, "Kid, don't act foolishly."

The other few stood up slowly, their faces showing malice as they glared at Mo Hua.

Mo Hua "frightened," took two steps back.

Then a cultivator stood out from the side and stepped forward, reprimanding:

"You're an adult, bullying a kid, what kind of skill is that?"

Seeing someone dare to meddle in his business, anger flashed across the big man's face, he swiftly closed the distance, his fist cloaked in dusty-colored Spiritual Power, and he suddenly threw a punch.

The punch was heavy with tremendous force, formidable in its might.

"Foundation Establishment Late Stage!"

The cultivator suddenly widened his eyes, hastily crossed his arms to block the punch, but he was still sent flying a distance, spitting blood.

Chapter 940: Fire Buddha (2)

The big man took a big step forward and reached for the storage bag at his waist as if he wanted to draw a blade and kill this meddlesome cultivator.

The leading man's gaze turned sharp.

The big man felt a cold sweat break out on his back, and then he remembered that they shouldn't cause any unnecessary trouble. With an awkward smile, he retracted his hand and cursed at the nosy cultivator:

"Scram!"

Knowing he was no match, the cultivator left in anger and resentment.

The other tea guests, seeing the bad situation, also dispersed.

The teahouse owner, worried, glanced at Mo Hua and sighed, helpless to do anything but hide in the distance.

In a small place like the Second Grade State Border, a cultivator in the late stage of Foundation Establishment was simply not someone they could afford to provoke.

Now only Mo Hua and the four men of uncertain identity remained in the teahouse.

Mo Hua looked tense and asked timidly,

"Are you... bad guys?"

The big man licked his lips and chuckled ominously,

"What do you think?"

The other big man and the gloomy skinny man also showed amused smiles.

"Don't mention it, this kid's got fair, tender skin, and a fine appearance... Not bad at all..."

Just then, the leading man's gaze sharpened and he spoke indifferently,

"Little cultivator, stop pretending. You're not afraid of us."

At these words, the three big men froze, appearing somewhat astonished.

Mo Hua dropped the "frightened" act and asked with curiosity,

"Did I not act well?"

The leading man's brow furrowed.

The two big men felt mocked and could hardly contain their anger.

The demeanor of the skinny man turned even darker.

At that moment, the big man scoffed coldly, "Well, well, the gutter is a hard place to walk, little devils are hard to deal with. To think that after all these years on the Dao, I would misjudge today..."

"You've got guts, kid."

"Tell us, did you recognize us?"

Mo Hua shook his head and honestly said, "I don't know you."

He guessed that the leader might actually be the infamous Fire Buddha, but as for the other three, he truly didn't know who they were.

The leader's gaze sharpened as he looked at Mo Hua, deep in thought.

Mo Hua's expression did not seem to be feigned; he apparently did not recognize them.

Right then, the gloomy skinny man sneered,

"Qiao Laowu, stop wasting words. Just capture this kid. Kill him if we have to, sell him if we can, or keep him as a plaything..."

The big man spat, "You schemer, if you want to catch him, do it yourself."

Qiao Laowu?

Schemer?

One "Qiao" character, one "Yin" character.

Mo Hua checked the list and quickly recognized them.

The one with the "Qiao" was called Blood Woodcutter on the list.

The one with the "Yin" was called Yin Thunder Child.

And there was another big man...

Mo Hua caught a glimpse of him out of the corner of his eye. His face was covered in woad, and when he was angry, he looked ferocious as an Evil Ghost, instantly reminding him:

"Ghost Face Sha!"

Fire Buddha, Blood Woodcutter, Yin Thunder Child, Ghost Face Sha!

These four, indeed, were all on Boss Jiang's list.

And they were all Sin Cultivators with blood on their hands!

Mo Hua's expression revealed a moment of realization, and his eyes also brightened a bit.

In that moment of realization, Fire Buddha instantly caught the subtle expression on Mo Hua's face.

Fire Buddha's gaze suddenly turned piercing, disbelief in his heart.

Recognized by this brat...

All of us were recognized?!

Just how did this kid manage to recognize us?!

Even a Supervisor from the Taoist Court wouldn't likely be able to identify all of us.

This brat...

Just from this brief encounter and a few words of conversation, he was able to identify all four of us?!

What on earth was his background?

Fire Buddha's affable demeanor suddenly turned cold.

Some relationships must not be brought to light.

Now that things had come to this point, this brat couldn't be left alive!

"Qiao Laowu," Fire Buddha commanded in an unquestionable and chilling voice. "Kill this kid!"

Qiao Laowu was taken aback.

At the word "kill", Mo Hua, quick to sense danger, slickly made his escape, leaving behind only a faint water shadow where he had stood.

Seeing this, Qiao Laowu was furious, "Good for you, you little devil!"

He pulled a long, hook-ended cleaver stained with mottled bloodstains from his storage bag and swung out a flash of bloodlight, chasing and slashing at Mo Hua's waist.

But Mo Hua's movements were fluid like water, ghostly in nature, easily evading the attack.

Qiao Laowu struck again.

Mo Hua dodged again.

Like drawing a sword to sever water, but the water's flow continued unabated.

No matter how he slashed, he could not touch Mo Hua at all.

Fire Buddha remained seated, deep in thought, not making a move.

The other two watched the struggle with glee, seeing Qiao Laowu and Mo Hua locked in a stalemate for over a dozen exchanges, still unable to capture Mo Hua, and laughed mockingly,

"Qiao Laowu, are you even capable?"

"A single kid, and you can't catch him?"

"All these years of cultivating the Dao, was it all bullshit?"

...

Qiao Laowu, driven by rage, swung his blade even fiercer.

Mo Hua was "sweating profusely" and floundering, looking quite desperate, but he always managed to dodge Qiao Laowu's attacks just in time.

Fire Buddha was surprised.

"Ghost Face Sha" and "Yin Thunder Child" wore serious expressions.

"This kid's movement technique is something else..."

Although Qiao Laowu had only recently made his breakthrough, he still possessed the strength of the late Foundation Establishment stage, yet he couldn't subdue this brat in a short time.

Granted, it was because Qiao Laowu focused solely on offense, lacking in movement techniques.

On the other hand, it was also because this kid's movement technique was too exquisite.

Fire Buddha gave a signal with his eyes.

The other two nodded, moving swiftly like the wind, pouncing forward like malevolent wolves, flanking Qiao Laowu to corner Mo Hua together.