

Three Realms 181

Chapter 181: Dan Fei with Her Emotions in Disarray

"Heh heh, little Dan, what's wrong? Your face doesn't look too good. Did Jiang Chen run afoul of you somehow?" Tutor Ye asked with a chuckle.

"No, I just don't like his strutting figure. Who does he think he is! Teacher, that little brat dares reject your intention to take him as a disciple although you are a personage of such character!"

"Little Dan, this doesn't seem like you." The old tutor smiled. "When did our little Dan become so irritated by matters like this?"

Dan Fei was a bit irked, "Teacher, Dan'er is being a champion for your cause out of the goodness of my heart, yet you laugh at me."

"Haha, to think that the Dan Fei all the young men in the capital are infatuated with also has the side of a young girl. Little Dan, if they saw your current state, it would surely completely overturn their understanding of you."

"Then let them overturn! Who asked those silly children to think of me?!" Dan Fei was obviously very spoiled in front of the old tutor, and was acting markedly different from her coolly composed and competent exterior during the banquet.

"Alright, little Dan, all jokes aside, Jiang Chen turned me down because he understood the principle of right and wrong. To be honest, although I can give him a few pointers on the road of martial dao, but I truly may not have the qualifications to be his teacher in long run."

Shock was revealed in Dan Fei's beautiful eyes. "Teacher, this... isn't this assessment too high?"

Although Dan Fei had been adopted by Tutor Ye since she was young and had served by his side ever since, she had never heard him give a word of high praise to anyone. In the eyes of the old tutor, some of the young folk didn't even warrant any words of praise at all.

Those who the old tutor would occasionally mention would only merit an ordinary compliment.

"It wouldn't be too much to highly praise a young man who, in the vicinity of the sixteen kingdoms, can easily talk about the origins of the Phoenix-Dragon and take out the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine."

"But... he's just been a bit luckier to make the acquaintance of an uncommon expert, that's all!" Dan Fei argued, unwilling to accept that.

The old tutor smiled. "Little Dan, do you think that there are many uncommon experts in this world, and that they're all sitting there twiddling their thumbs, waiting for someone to make their acquaintance and strike up a friendship? There are so many people within the sixteen kingdoms, so many billions of people so why doesn't such a fortunate encounter happen to Ye Dai? Or to Ye Rong? Why didn't it happen to anyone else; why was it Jiang Chen who was so lucky?"

Dan Fei's red lips twitched, "He's just lucky."

"Haha, luck! Things such as luck do exist. But for Jiang Chen to receive the favor of an uncommon expert, it's not just a matter of luck." The old tutor chuckled.

"Anyways, I just think he's too cocky and will surely suffer in the future. To say nothing of anything else, the first prince's group of people will surely hate him for what transpired today."

"Ye Dai?" The old tutor laughed. "If Ye Dai was smart, he shouldn't have antagonized Jiang Chen to begin with. If he's not smart enough, then I'd say his dreams of being Crown Prince are just about at their end. Rather, although that child Ye Rong has always kept a low profile, who would've thought that he would have such resolve this time to travel tens of thousands of li to the Eastern Kingdom to recruit Jiang Chen. That kid Ye Rong is not simple alright."

"Teacher, do you also think Ye Rong is not bad?" Dan Fei had the best impression of Ye Rong out of all the princes.

Although Ye Dai looked quite charming, graceful, tall and strong with the demeanor of a gentleman, but Dan Fei was quite sharp and extremely intelligent so her observations skills were very strong and she actually didn't admire the traits that Ye Dai were displaying.

It was rather Ye Rong who was shrewd, but had a stately air in his bones.

"Ye Rong actually made a good move in placing his bet on Jiang Chen." The old tutor glossed over things as he changed the topic. "Little Dan, make a trip to the Southern Palace and prepare a few items for me. My Phoenix-Dragon, ai, it's inadvisable to wait longer!"

The old tutor was worried about his Phoenix Dragon. Although the process of castration wasn't complicated, he still wasn't at ease handing it over to someone else.

He decided to do it himself, but some things had to be prepared first.

"Yes, Dan'er will do so immediately." Dan Fei knew what the old tutor was going to do, but she was a girl and wasn't at liberty to participate in something like this.

"Don't be in a rush, I'll write a list for you. How else will you do it?"

...

Dan Fei had some ties to Elder Ning of the Southern Palace.

Therefore, when she needed to do something, she would always look for Elder Ning. Unfortunately, Elder Ning happened to be out when she arrived at the Southern Palace.

Dan Fei handed the list over to the associate and said, "These are some items that Tutor Ye wants. Choose the best ones and pay no heed to price."

"Yes Miss Dan Fei. Your servant knows that even without your instructions. Please wait momentarily Miss Dan Fei, these items will take a while to prepare."

Dan Fei nodded, "Please prepare them as soon as possible."

She walked to a corner of the lobby and found a seat to sit down on. She didn't like to stand at the counter because people always walked past it.

Particularly the men who walked back and forth, their gazes were always quite dishonest as they swept them back and forth over her body. Although Dan Fei's disposition was good, she never liked looks that reminded her of hungry wolves.

An exceptional girl like her was a unique sight in the Skylaurel Kingdom. Even if she hid in the corner, she was still given many lecherous looks. They swept up and down her body without abandon. If it wasn't for her proper and demure appearance projecting its own awe-inspiring aura, many of them would have come and try to chat her up.

Dan Fei actually rarely showed her face in public. Most of her time was spent studying at the old tutor's side. Most of the males that she had come in contact with the most were the noble sons and disciples of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Although these noble sons were sometimes ridiculous, they would more or less restrain themselves because they knew of Dan Fei's identity, even if they had certain thoughts. They were fearful of the old tutor's presence and they didn't dare step out of line.

However, not that many people in the public knew who Dan Fei was.

Dan Fei felt quite uncomfortable with all these gazes checking her out.

Two more people walked in at this moment. It was actually Elder Ning of the Southern Palace with Qiao Baishi at her side.

"Dan Fei?" Elder Ning was a business person and she had long since formed the good habit of observing everything around her. She scanned the entire lobby as soon as she set foot through the door.

Dan Fei was so extraordinary that Elder Ning's eyes locked on to her immediately, even though she was sitting in the corner.

This was someone that Elder Ning had to curry favor with. She had a smile on her face as she greeted Dan Fei enthusiastically, "Dan Fei, I was wondering why I heard so much chattering early in the morning. We have a honored guest here! Why are you sitting here? My underlings are so incompetent! Come, come! Have a seat in my house."

Dan Fei was startled when she saw Elder Ning. She almost didn't dare greet her. "You're... you're big sister Ning?"

Elder Ning burst out in laughter, "Who would be so bored as to pretend they are me?"

Elder Ning giggled, she in a fantastically great mood. She loved seeing that kind of reaction. Ever since she took the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill, she seemed to have returned to the prime of her youth and she was met with these astonished gazes everywhere she went.

These looks made Elder Ning overflow with even more confidence.

"Sister Ning, you... You..." Dan Fei couldn't find the appropriate words at that moment.

"Alright, if you want to say that I was quite old before, you can go ahead and say it! I won't mind, heh heh!" Elder Ning warmly grabbed Dan Fei's hands and said, "Baishi, this is Dan Fei, my good sister!"

“Dan Fei, this is my newly hired assistant Qiao Baishi. He has a lot of potential.”

“Baishi greets Miss Dan Fei.” Qiao Baishi smiled.

Dan Fei nodded slightly. “Hello.”

The associate had finished preparing the items at this moment and walked over. “Miss Dan Fei, the items have been prepared. Would you like to take an inventory?”

How could Dan Fei take an inventory of the tools and materials needed for castration in front of Elder Ning and Qiao Baishi? It was simply too embarrassing.

She hastily said, “No no, that’s alright.”

She then spoke with a reddened face to Elder Ning, “Big sister Ning, the lordmaster still has some matters to take care of. I need to go back.”

Dan Fei felt that everything was quite odd today.

The perverse existence of Jiang Chen had appeared at the lordmaster’s birthday banquet without warning — this made her feel that things were a bit bizarre.

And now, having met her old acquaintance Elder Ning, it seemed that she had suddenly become twenty years younger. This was even more bizarre.

Just what was going on today? Why was everything so queer and wacky? Dan Fei started to suspect that she was dreaming.

Walking her to the door, Elder Ning spoke wistfully, “Dan Fei, you’re really in a hurry today? I wanted to share my beautifying secrets with you. Look at your skin, your figure, and your body. Tsk tsk, a flawless born beauty. I would want to eat you if I were a man!”

Dan Fei immediately flushed red, “Big sister Ning, don’t make jokes of me. You’ve become so young all of a sudden that at a glance, I look like your big sister. I’m going to envy you if you keep talking.”

“Heh heh, what is there to be envious about? I was lucky and obtained one Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Dan Fei, that pill is truly wondrous. I didn’t dare believe it then, but my entire being seemed to rewind back to twenty years ago in a short two hours.”

“The Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?” Dan Fei’s moving eyes suddenly darted back and forth, and she said rapidly, “Big sister, I really must go!”

Dan Fei apologized with her words and hopped in a carriage, taking her leave like the wind.

“What’s wrong with Dan Fei today? She seems distracted and dejected. It doesn’t look like her style.” Elder Ning was completely befuddled.

Reaching the Tutor Manor in a short amount of time, Dan Fei put the items down as soon as she entered the door. She immediately went to the shrubbery in the front yard, her charming eyes searching seriously.

"It should be here, there should be no mistake. I was angry just then and randomly threw it. It should be here. Why isn't it here?"

Dan Fei was a bit regretful. Why had she been so impulsive?

However, the pill bottle was the size of half a fist. It shouldn't be hard to find in the shrubbery.

After searching for a while, Dan Fei's elegant forehead was sweating slightly, beads of sweat had formed on her nose and her hair was slightly messed up. There were even some blades of grass stuck on her head.

Dan Fei suddenly remembered something.

"Oh no, can it be that, in the time I've been out, Aunt Lan cleaned the yard and picked up the pill bottle?"

This frightening thought made Dan Fei extremely nervous all of a sudden.

Chapter 182: Miss Dan Fei Actually Rifled Through the Trash

"Miss, did you need me for something?" Aunt Lan was diligently cleaning away when Dan Fei called for her.

"Aunt Lan, did you clean this place up?"

The diligent Aunt Lan said quite proudly, "I started cleaning as soon as the guests left. The front yard has already been swept once. Does miss think it's not clean enough? If so, I'll go over it again."

Aunt Lan was without a doubt, the epitome of hard work. Dan Fei had hired her because of this diligence. But today, she'd worked too quickly and wrecked Dan Fei's affairs.

Dan Fei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Did you see a pill bottle about this size?"

"Pill bottle? What's that?" Aunt Lan was completely bewildered. A pill bottle was too high class an item for a cleaner like her, so she'd never heard of it.

"Just a small bottle with something inside."

Aunt Lan slapped her thigh, "Oh, I think I picked up something like that. I threw it into the trash pile. Miss, was it something useful?"

Dan Fei shot out like an arrow when she heard the words "trash pile".

Aunt Lan stared off into space for a good while, completely befuddled.

Dan Fei was pinching her nose next to the trash pit, a look of uncomfortable awkwardness displayed on her charming face as she stood next to piles of garbage.

But, when she thought of the fact that Elder Ning had regained the amazing youthful looks from twenty years ago, Dan Fei felt a surge of unknown courage.

She rolled up her sleeves, revealing a pair of jade white arms that were like spring onions, endured the stench and started rifling through the trash.

A tremendous beauty that shook the noble world was going through the trash.

This scene seemed jarring to anyone who might see it. It was a good thing that this was on private property in the Tutor Manor, so there was no worry that anyone would see it.

“Found it, this is it!” Dan Fei suddenly cried out on top of the trash heaps, joyful delight radiating from her eyes.

A pair of jade hands covered in the sludge of trash was holding the pill bottle as the person in question was smiling foolishly.

It was a good thing that the pill bottle was sealed tightly and there were no worries about the pill medicine inside being contaminated.

Just as Dan Fei was transported with joy, Aunt Lan’s exclamation resounded from behind, “Ah, miss, what are you doing? There’s dog poop in that trash pile, you...”

Dan Fei was in a complete disarray at that moment. Someone had seen this embarrassing moment!

Sludge dotted her face and head, and her arms were covered with even more filth.

“Aunt Lan, don’t tell anyone about what happened today!” Dan Fei didn’t actually know how to be a mean person, but she tried her best to maintain a stern face.

As easy going as her demeanor was, she didn’t wish for her ladylike image to be destroyed in a day.

Aunt Lan was unable to make sense of anything when she saw Miss Dan Fei, who usually liked to stay pretty, act so out of the ordinary today and go through the trash!

Was this the Miss Dan Fei who was slightly obsessively fastidious about cleanliness?

After she thoroughly washed herself all over three times, threw away her previously luxurious outfit and changed into new clothes, Dan Fei was like a new person. She grasped the pill bottle like she was hugging a jar of preserves, feeling quite sweet and content.

Women loved to be beautiful, and the butcher’s knife of old age was a beautiful person’s natural enemy.

Dan Fei actually wasn’t that old, she was only twenty years old or so. Not to mention she was a natural-born beauty and knew how to take care of herself, so she appeared rather young all around.

However, the psychological impact from Elder Ning’s changes were simply too great.

Elder Ning was a woman around forty years old!

But, the fact that she’d reverted back to eighteen in the span of a moment as a blow that was simply too much for Dan Fei to bear.

Although Dan Fei was only twenty some years old right now, women were most afraid of the butcher’s knife that was old age, and were most afraid of growing old.

Come to think of, although she was only twenty some years old now, but she was only ten or so years away from being forty.

Ten years would pass by in a hurry. Even a girl like Dan Fei would sometimes think how cruel the fragility of beauty was. She couldn't help but be afraid sometimes.

Therefore, when she heard the name "Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill", how could she not be agitated?

Elder Ning had regained her looks from twenty years ago immediately after taking the pill. The feeling of regaining one's youth and the allure of sustained beauty was something that even Dan Fei found it hard to resist.

She suddenly remembered what Jiang Chen had shoved into her hand when she left — wasn't that the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?

No wonder Dan Fei had hurriedly left back then.

"Jiang Chen, if this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is real, then I may grudgingly forgive you for what happened previously!"

Dan Fei lay on her bed and propped her feet up on a chair, thinking back to the matters that had occurred today.

"Eternal youth and looks that last as long as the heavens? That fellow spoke frivolously but seemed to allude to the effects of the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Can it be that this pill has something to do with him?"

When Dan Fei's thoughts traveled here, she suddenly sat up. A trace of deep contemplation was displayed on her beautiful face.

"The secrets of the Phoenix-Dragon, the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine... there are a thousand tricks up this Jiang Chen's sleeve. It isn't impossible to say that this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill has something to do with him, is it?"

Dan Fei lightly bit her red lips as a few patches of red flew onto her mesmerizing face.

...

When Jiang Chen returned home, he saw the Qiao brothers completely naked, kneeling in the front yard and bearing rods on their backs.

When they saw Jiang Chen return, their heads drooped almost to the crotch of their trousers.

"Young master." Xue Tong felt a bit awkward seeing Jiang Chen enter and walked up in greeting.

"What's this? Bearing the rod in punishment?" Jiang Chen said with a shadow of a smile.

"Young master, these fellows wouldn't get up no matter what I say. They said that if I didn't beat them, they'll kneel until they die." Xue Tong was rather resigned.

Although he was the captain of the eight personal guards, he couldn't really bear to lay a hand on his own brothers.

"Xue Tong, stop hemming and hawing like a woman, alright? Why won't you dare make a move when we're the ones not afraid of pain?" Qiao Shan's ornery temper came to the fore.

Jiang Chen walked up bad-temperedly and stomped on both of their butts, sending their faces kissing the ground. “Both of you, get up and stop looking like fools.”

“No.” The two brothers had tempers like mules. “It was our fault this time. If you don’t hit us, we’ll hit ourselves!”

“Number two, you hit me first. We’ll take turns until we can’t move anymore.” Qiao Shan called out.

These two brothers were men of their word as they really picked up the rods and started brutally beating each other.

“Putting on just the right amount of show will be fine. It must be that rogue Qiao Baishi who taught you guys this trick, wasn’t it? How would you two sillies have this level of intelligence?”

Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan had really been getting into things but they froze after hearing those words. Indeed, it had been their uncle Qiao Baishi who’d taught them this.

“Alright, you guys likely encountered your fair share of hardships in the Black Dungeons, and you’ve also beaten yourself appropriately. I didn’t say I was going to do anything to you.” Jiang Chen wasn’t a harsh person. At the end of the day, the mistakes that his men had committed weren’t a big deal.

“But, we broke the rules and flew into the capital.”

“And, in order to save us, the young master gave up a chance to hail Tutor Ye as master.”

Jiang Chen smiled when he heard those words, “Tian Shao must’ve blabbed on the way back?”

The two brothers were flabbergasted as they felt that they had also accidentally sold out Tian Shao. They hastily shook their heads, “No no, we discovered that ourselves.”

Jiang Chen didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry when looking at these two sillies. “The rule of not being able to fly in the capital is a trashy rule. I’ll think of a way to register our Goldwing Swordbirds. As long as we have flight plates, we can fly as we wish.”

“Both of you hurry up and go dress your wounds. The young master isn’t pursuing this matter, so stop being so dramatic.” Xue Tong said as he looked at the Qiao brothers.

The two brothers finally left when they saw that Jiang Chen really didn’t seem to want to pursue this matter any further.

“Not bad, Xue Tong. You’re looking more and more comfortable in your role as captain. I see that your training seems to have reached the peak of nine meridians true qi. You’re a hair length away from becoming a true qi master?”

Xue Tong’s speed in training was also quite fast. Although he had received aid from Jiang Chen, Xue Tong did indeed possess high potential to begin with.

The other personal guards were all still at eight meridians true qi. Xue Tong was nearing a breakthrough in the advanced realm of true qi and was already half a foot in the true qi master realm of ten meridians true qi.

"I gave you Xue Sha's bow last time. Come here and I'll pass onto you a few bow and arrow techniques to enhance your fighting abilities."

Jiang Chen had Xue Tong follow him into the secret chamber and verbally passed on a few bow and arrow techniques to him. He also gave to Xue Tong the foundations of God's Eye and Ear of the Zephyr.

"These two secret arts are exceedingly important in training your vision and hearing. If you complement your techniques with these two arts, you will have a great future in the path of the bow and arrow."

Xue Tong was touched as his lips trembled slightly. "Brother, you're my great savior. Without you, I'd likely still be toiling away in the Yinglan Tribe of the Jiang Han territory."

Xue Tong had lost his parents since he was small and had always lived under someone else's roof, eking out a living for himself in the Yinglan Tribe.

The chief of the Yinglan Tribe was Jiang Chen's uncle, and thus Xue Tong's uncle.

"That's all in the past. Even in that kind of environment, you still constantly strived to better yourself. You were bound to improve your circumstances sooner or later."

Jiang Chen patted Xue Tong's shoulder as he suddenly lost his train of thought. Then, as he looked carefully into Xue Tong's eyes, a weird notion popped into his mind.

"Xue Tong, have you ever met your parents?" Jiang Chen suddenly asked.

"My parents died on a trial in the outside world when I was six."

"Then... do you think that your mother, who was my aunt, looked similar to uncle?"

Xue Tong tried hard to think back and nodded, "In my memories, the features of my mother and uncle were indeed roughly similar. About sixty or seventy percent so."

Jiang Chen nodded and smiled, "Alright, train well. I've got two Rare Jade Fruits here. When you become a true qi master and stabilize your training at ten meridians true qi, you can eat one of these fruits. It will unconditionally raise your realm by one level, directly elevating you to eleven meridians true qi."

"What?"

Jiang Chen had given one of his Rare Jade Fruits to his father, with two remaining. Now, he rewarded Xue Tong with one, with one left. He planned on awarding the last fruit to whoever broke through to true qi master first amongst the personal guards.

"Remember, you only need to take one of the Rare Jade Fruit. Taking more will have no effect. Of the remaining one, give it to whoever amongst the personal guard who ascends to true qi master first. I'll give them both to you for safekeeping now."

Chapter 183: The Future of Younger Cousin Jiang Yu

Having just sent the overjoyed Xue Tong on his way, Jiang Chen walked into the inner courtyard. He'd arrived in the capital for so many days now, but it had been a while since he last had a good chat with his father, Jiang Feng.

“Chen’er, I heard that you just participated in the birthday banquet of the spirit king protector of this kingdom?” Jiang Feng asked when he saw Jiang Chen in such a good mood.

“Yes. Have you also been keeping tabs on this, father?”

“Haha, I naturally pay attention to matters like these. This is the spirit king protector of the kingdom! Ai, when will I, Jiang Feng, reach such a realm in my training?” Jiang Feng asked with a look of admiration on his face.

“Nothing is impossible on the path of martial dao.” Jiang Chen smiled. He hadn’t discovered before that his father was such a martial dao-holic.

It made sense when he thought about it. Jiang Chen had been such a useless fop before. As the Duke of Jiang Han, Jiang Feng was in charge of everything, no matter how big or small. He had to take on both roles of father and mother, as well as overlook all sorts of affairs. What time would he have left to train?

Now that he wasn’t the Duke of Jiang Han and was just an ordinary person, his level of training had advanced by leaps and bounds. He was now a true qi master at the peak of eleven meridians true qi.

Upon seeing his father so mesmerized by martial dao, Jiang Chen really wanted to offer a Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill to his father.

But as his thoughts continued down this path, he restrained this impulse. He’d never used this pill before and there was no rush.

It wouldn’t be too late to offer the pill to his father after he’d personally tried it and experienced its effects. The difference of a few days wouldn’t mean much.

Jiang Chen had already made his preparations on his way back from the Tutor Manor. He planned on going into closed door cultivation and taking the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill, beginning the process of transmuting true qi to spirit, comprehending the spirit realm and shaping his spirit ocean.

The requisite time could be short, or it could be long. Jiang Chen wasn’t sure either.

“Oh right, rather, there’s something I suddenly want to ask you.” Jiang Chen remembered the odd thing that had happened regarding Xue Tong just now and opened his mouth to ask a question.

“What odd thing?”

“I was speaking with Xue Tong just now and suddenly felt that his bloodline didn’t seem to have that familiar bloodline resonance with mine. Something seems a little off.”

“What’s wrong?” Jiang Feng’s expression was a bit unnatural.

“If Xue Tong’s mother is my mother’s sister, born of the same parents, then we should share a similar bloodline and there should be some resonance between us.”

“Oh. Maybe something went wrong with your perception. He’s your aunt’s brother, of that there is no doubt.” Jiang Feng chuckled. “Alright, Chen’er, your mother passed away more than ten years ago, let’s not talk of these saddening matters anymore. Your third uncle and Xiaoyu have come with us to the Skylaurel Kingdom and are rather lonely. Go visit with them if you have nothing occupying your time.”

Jiang Feng didn't seem to speak more on this matter and changed the topic.

Jiang Chen felt that this was a bit odd, but wasn't able to continue asking when he saw his father act in this way.

"Alright, I'll go check in on them. Take care, father."

Jiang Chen left Jiang Feng's room and went to visit third uncle Jiang Tong's. He had a good conversation with his younger cousin Jiang Yu.

"Third uncle, I feel that Xiaoyu has some potential in the area of networking and relationships. He's not bad at business either. How about I see if I can introduce him to the Myriad Treasures Palace as a disciple or something if the opportunity arises?"

What father under the heavens wouldn't think of his son? When he heard Jiang Chen say this, Jiang Tong was overjoyed, "Chen'er, it won't do for Xiaoyu to sit idly everyday either. It would be wonderful if he could go to the Myriad Treasures Palace!"

"Alright, I'll bring the matter up to Feng Yan when he visits next."

Speaking of the devil, just as Jiang Chen was chatting with Jiang Tong and his son, someone from outside came in to report that the vice administrator of the Myriad Treasures Palace, Feng Yan, had come for a visit.

"Come, Xiaoyu, let's go receive Feng Yan together." Jiang Chen tugged Jiang Yu outside.

Feng Yan had been in a great mood lately. He was riding on the crest of the wave of success, having been promoted and earning great sums of money. He felt that everything in his life was very nice, and that the sun was so brilliant everyday.

He also knew that the person who had brought him all this was Jiang Chen.

Feng Yan cared a great deal about this wonderful herald of fortune. He came to visit almost everyday, in hopes of further increasing the depth of his relationship with Jiang Chen.

"Young master Chen, you've become the talk of the capital in the days that I haven't seen you! Ai, some people are born to be the main character. Young master Chen is undoubtedly one of those people. This makes me, Feng Yan, quite envious."

"Brother Feng, you're not doing too badly these days either." Jiang Chen laughed heartily.

"Heh heh, my little bit of accomplishment is due to the gracious person known as young master Chen." Feng Yan's posture was quite prim and proper. He didn't dare call Jiang Chen brother or anything like that, but rather very respectfully called Jiang Chen, young master Chen.

This was both respectful and intimate.

"Oh right, young master Chen, I've heard that you used a jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine to win the place of the best gift on Tutor Ye's birthday banquet."

"It certainly seems that nothing can be hidden in the capital. How long has it been since I've gotten home?" Jiang Chen smiled ruefully.

“The capital has always been a place of where the winds and clouds intersect. All news travel the fastest in the capital. How about it, young master Chen? Are you interested in auctioning off a jug of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine at the Myriad Treasures Palace? If our Myriad Treasures Palace can represent this wine, we will surely create a win-win situation.”

Jiang Chen was a bit tempted upon hearing Feng Yan’s words. He looked at Jiang Yu by his side and had an idea. He nodded, “I gifted the spirit degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine to vice head Shi and Tutor Ye. The ingredients needed to brew this wine cost a slight bit. This wine is also unsuitable for widespread production. If it spreads throughout the market, vice head Shi may not be happy.”

Feng Yan thought that those words made a lot of sense when he pondered them more deeply. Vice head Shi was someone who loved wine. If any random person off the street could purchase the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine with money, then how could this wine still count as a precious wine?

“Here, I have a recipe for a common degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Its level is lower, but it’s still absolutely a peerless brew. This can be introduced into the marketplace.”

“Oh? Such a thing like this exists? Young Chen, this means that we really do have the foundations for a partnership.” Feng Yan’s eyes also lit up.

“Mm, I plan on placing my younger cousin Jiang Yu in charge of this matter. Feng Yan, what do you think about me using the recipe of this wine to buy shares and obtain a place for my younger cousin in the Myriad Treasures Palace?”

Feng Yan started, and immediately smiled, “There would be nothing better. It’s difficult for people to enter the Myriad Treasures Palace, but there will certainly be no problem for young master Chen’s brother. I’ll go report to vice head Shi and I believe that he will absolutely not let you down.”

Feng Yan was a man of action and immediately took his leave to go back and discuss with Shi Xiaoyao.

“Xiaoyu, I’ve paved the way for you. You’re on your own once you enter the Myriad Treasures Palace.”

Jiang Yu was greatly appreciative, “Brother, I won’t let you down.”

After roughly two hours, Feng Yan rushed back with great enthusiasm.

“Young master Chen, the vice head was quite straightforward and generous. He gave Jiang Yu the title of a disciple of first rank. That’s only a level away from my rank of vice administrator.”

The disciples of the Myriad Treasures Palace all started as an intern disciple, before rising to a disciple of the ninth rank, eighth rank... all the way up until they reached first rank.

A disciple of the first rank was the highest level of existence amongst the disciples. Continuing upwards would be the middle management positions of vice administrator, administrator, senior administrator.

“Vice head Shi also said that as long as younger brother Jiang Yu performs exemplarily within the Palace, he won’t hesitate to make an exception and mentor him.” Feng Yan smiled.

Jiang Chen could feel Shi Xiaoyao’s sincerity. “Feng Yan, go back for now. I will have Jiang Yu bring the recipe for the wine tomorrow and negotiate with you guys. I won’t inquire about the details at all; it will be strictly up to Jiang Yu.”

Feng Yan smiled, "With young master Chen present, we wouldn't dare mistreat younger brother Jiang Yu. Haha, then I'll go back first and await younger brother Jiang Yu's visit tomorrow."

It could be seen that Feng Yan was quite proactive about this matter and really wanted it to succeed. If he saw this matter through, then he would undoubtedly have made a great accomplishment.

For one, it went without saying that even a common degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would be a hugely profitable transaction. They would also not only absorb Jiang Yu into the Myriad Treasures Palace but also further enhance their relationship with Jiang Chen at the same time.

"Xiaoyu, I'm giving you the recipe for the common degree of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine now. Tonight, think about how you want to handle the talks. Don't be too accommodating and lose your bottom line. Don't be short-sighted either and only have money in sight, do you understand?"

"Brother, I will have my boundaries." A light that itched to see action sparkled in Jiang Yu's eyes.

Jiang Chen wrote down the recipe of the common degree wine, spoke a few more encouraging words before sending Jiang Yu on his way.

He then called for his men, left some instructions and announced that he was going into closed door cultivation.

Jiang Chen didn't impart to the outside world the significance of this time's closed door cultivation.

Only he knew that he was planning on officially taking the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill and preparing his assault on the spirit realm.

The deficiencies of his strength still left his hands and feet tied many times.

Some matters wouldn't have been that difficult at all if he was strong enough. The feud with the Northern Palace for instance. If he'd been strong enough, he could've rolled right over them and slaughtered all the robbers. None of the subsequent troubles would've cropped up.

Jiang Chen had learned his lesson and desired to increase his strength.

With a clatter, he poured out several Five Dragons Opening Heaven Pills.

He closed his eyes and started using Boulder's Heart to start sensing these pills. When his mental strength locked onto one of them, a magical connection caused Jiang Chen to open his eyes.

"That's the one!"

Jiang Chen put away the other pills. For a pill like this, taking just one was enough. There was no benefit in taking more.

Jiang Chen sat down cross-legged and entered a meditative state. He went over the information regarding the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill in his mind once again.

He opened his mouth and swallowed this pill.

The strong medicinal effects immediately spread throughout this body.

There was as if there was a surging ocean within his body, five fierce dragons overturned the tumultuous waves and ran wildly rampant.

“Inducing the qi to become dragons, forging the body, transmuting true qi into spirit qi, coalescing the spirit ocean...”

All sorts of familiar notions flashed through Jiang Chen’s head as step by step, he began to manipulate the five surges of strength that were running around like horses that had slipped their halters.

The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had absorbed the essence of the five elements. The pill that it formed encompassed all five attributes. The five forces actually formed an equilibrium with the entire heaven and world.

For a martial dao practitioner, the physical body was a small world. If a practitioner were to improve or break through to become a stronger practitioner, he would have to continuously expand and improve the small world within his body.

Similar to the greater world, attributes of the five elements were the foundation that formed the small world of the physical body. Jiang Chen’s pill was to cleave into existence a balanced, small world.

In reality, every practitioner trained the five qi within their bodies in the true qi realm. The so-called five qi corresponded to the five organs.

These five qi also corresponded to the five elements.

Except, many practitioners who ascended to the spirit realm were hemmed in by various restrictions, and their foundations weren’t solid enough with regards to the five elements.

This was why some could go far when transmuting true qi to spirit, while others always dithered around the beginning of the spirit realm.

Chapter 184: Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill, Finally Entering the Spirit Realm

The power of the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill was indeed violent and fierce. Even with Jiang Chen’s directions, the power of martial dao formed into an assault that was practically a huge explosion within his body.

One had to say, the pain brought to the human body from this kind of assault was quite frightening.

Even with Jiang Chen’s firm foundation in the true qi realm, he was still in so much pain from this kind of assault that his forehead broke out in cold sweat.

It was as if his vital organs and entrails were being churned to pieces and reformed, before being churned to pieces and reformed once again.

This cycle repeated itself as five tyrannic surges of power rampaged through Jiang Chen’s system.

Time passed day by day amidst this neverending cycle.

As time progressed, Jiang Chen became used to the pain brought by this assault. The five rampaging sources of strength were also slowly tamed and gradually quietened within Jiang Chen’s body.

As for Jiang Chen's dantien, it had already turned into a grey cloudy ball, as though it was a sea of stars within the boundless void, giving one an ethereal feeling.

Jiang Chen observed himself internally and knew that the initial steps of the pill's modification of his body had been completed. The fledgling form of an ocean of qi had formed within his dantien.

"Hmm, the indomitableness of this ocean of qi is not bad." Jiang Chen probed a bit and discovered that grey, foggy ocean of qi seemed to contain a powerful force.

Jiang Chen opened his eyes, disbelief written all over his face. "Who would've thought that assailing the spirit realm would be so easily successful!"

It was indeed easier than Jiang Chen had thought. Although the force from the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had been strong, but it'd only put Jiang Chen through trials by pain, instead of bringing him any legitimate danger.

The most important thing was, Jiang Chen had thought he needed to be behind closed doors for a while, but from the time he had taken the pill to when the ocean of qi initially formed, it had yet to be seven days.

"It seems that less time was needed than I'd thought?"

Jiang Chen was quite satisfied with the results of his closed door cultivation this time.

'Who would've thought that I was still in the true qi realm before closed door cultivation. Seven days later, I'm truly a spirit realm practitioner now.'

Jiang Chen was different from other practitioners. Most couldn't even begin to imagine the path that ordinary practitioners would have to take to transmute true qi into spirit.

However, Jiang Chen had the memories from his past life and aid from a heaven-defying pill like the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill. These dual advantages made it so that he didn't need to experience the progression of half step spirit realm like many other practitioners.

He was a spirit realm practitioner in both name and strength now.

Although his spirit ocean has just formed, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that thanks to the pill forging this spirit ocean, his level may not be strong, but he was absolutely at the pinnacle in terms of potential.

"The spirit ocean has formed, it's as if wings have been added to my back. Now, I must elevate my other areas."

"The arts of God's Eye, Ear of the Zephyr, and Boulder's Heart are all progressing steadily. Now that I've entered the spirit realm, greater efforts are naturally needed before my goal can be attained. The four great arts that I couldn't train before entering the spirit realm can finally be mastered now!"

Jiang Chen was happiest about being able to train "Psychic's Head".

This was the most important art amongst the four supplementary ones in the "Moonshatter Flying Daggers".

It could be said that “Psychic’s Head” combined the mysteries of the previous three, concentrating the seven senses of the human body into one. After aggregating mental strength, all seven senses undergo a breakthrough to resonate amongst one another, thereafter pursuing the realm of the illuminated seven senses.

If he succeeded in his training, then his might would be doubled as though adding wings to a tiger.

The most important thing was that he’d be able to practice attacking with the mysteries of the “Moonshatter Flying Daggers”.

“So it turns out that Psychic’s Head uses the spirit strength within the body to stimulate the seven senses and form the perception of illuminating them. This is an amazing art indeed.”

Jiang Chen felt that this art was absolutely marvelous as he started training it.

“The Psychic’s Head elevates the five senses of the human body to seven senses, then forms a resonance between them. In this way, even if I’m in the midst of a blazing fire, sunken in the deep sea, or trapped in the great abyss of the earth, I can still move as though I am walking on land with no obstacles at all.”

The Psychic’s Head meant that any of your senses could be employed as you wished, as if it had its own consciousness and heart.

After three more days, Jiang Chen once again took inventory of his gains.

“Very good, God’s Eye and Ear of the Zephyr have all repeatedly broken through after my breakthrough to the spirit realm. They’re already at the ninth level, whereas Boulder’s Heart has also reached the fifth level. Psychic’s Head has actually cracked open the door to the second level after three days!”

Jiang Chen was very satisfied with what he’d reaped.

“This is not bad. My current condition makes me completely eligible to practice the great techniques. The lowest requirement of the great technique of the ‘Moonshatter Flying Daggers’ is that God’s Eye and Ear of the Zephyr must all be at level seven, Boulder’s Heart at level five, and Psychic’s Head at level two.”

“Now, apart from the Psychic’s Head having just reached the requirements, the other three have greatly exceeded their requirements. It’s time to practice the great techniques!”

Jiang Chen had discovered that although he had many ways to attack, he was still a bit short in terms of being able to dish out fatal blows.

This would resolve a situation as urgent as fire singing his eyebrows.

“Great techniques at an initial stage of power — Flying Eagle Form, Pouncing Tiger Form!”

There were two great techniques at an initial stage of power for Jiang Chen to choose from. The Flying Eagle Form pursued the bizarre and unpredictable, whereas the Pouncing Tiger Form sought for domination.

“They’re both great techniques at an initial stage of power. I should probably learn both of them.” Jiang Chen thought as he began to study the mysteries of the two.

The Flying Eagle Form mandated comprehension of the mysteries of wind, since it used the rhythm of wind to inflict bizarre and unexpected injuries.

The Pouncing Tiger Form on the other hand, emphasized the unbridled fierceness of water. It was as if the surging waves and sea were pouncing like a springing wolf, completely swallowing the opponent.

“If these two great techniques are matched to each other, they would complement each other quite well.” Jiang Chen discovered that the creator of the Moonshatter Flying Daggers had been truly thoughtful, as the two great techniques at the initial stage of power actually complemented each other.

An absolutely wondrous innovation suddenly flashed through Jiang Chen’s mind.

“Mm? When I train the Divine Aeons Fist, one of my hands is the moon and the other is the sun. Would there be a completely different effect if I combined the meaning of the Divine Aeons Fist with these two great techniques? Flying Eagle with the left hand, Pouncing Tiger with the right hand. They will be just like the moon and sun. The opponent will surely not know how to defend against this kind of attack!”

This sudden thought greatly piqued Jiang Chen’s interest.

At this moment, he was like a fierce beast that wasn’t choosy in his hunger. These martial techniques were his prey and food that he was greedily taking in.

Another half a month passed by...

“Hoo! It looks like there are many changes along the path of martial dao. One cannot remain the same forever. The two great techniques of the initial stage of power can be used individually and can be combined after the changes I’ve made. When these two are combined however, their power will be equivalent to a great technique of intermediate power!”

Jiang Chen was overjoyed. With his knowledge of martial dao, this kind of experimentation was but a small effort.

“If the current me met those Northern Palace disciples, I should have been able to kill them within seconds. Even if I met that Liu Can, I still have a seventy to eighty percent chance of defeating him if I combine the great techniques!”

Jiang Chen was hugely confident.

Jiang Chen reconsolidated his grasp of the Divine Aeons Fist and Vast Ocean Current Splitter next. After entering the spirit realm, all his martial techniques had once again been improved in all aspects. In particular, attack power had undergone titanic changes.

“Tutor Ye gave me the Skylareal Kingdom Medallion most likely because he was entrusting some sort of hope to me. However, his words were true. I, Jiang Chen, am myself. I don’t need to curtail my actions because of anyone. I should do whatever I think is right. What need do I have to concern myself with other people’s thoughts? So what of the first prince? What of the Northern Palace? Why should I, Jiang Chen, accommodate these people? From now on, I will trample whoever becomes a stumbling block or an obstacle on my path of martial dao!”

After breaking through to the spirit realm, Jiang Chen's confidence had increased by quite a lot.

By this time, Jiang Chen had remained behind closed doors for a full month.

"Young master, you've emerged from closed doors?"

"Young master!"

Jiang Chen's gaze swept across his followers one by one. "Alright, good, it looks like you guys haven't slacked on your training during this time since you've all improved."

Xue Tong in particular hadn't let Jiang Chen down. He had broken through to the ranks of true qi masters as he'd hoped.

"Xue Tong, I'm in awe of your potential. I will work hard to fight to be the second person to break through to the realm of true qi masters!" Guo Jin was loath to lag behind.

In this month, Guo Jin, Wen Ziqi, and the Qiao brothers had all broken through eight meridians true qi and entered nine meridians.

The other three were a bit slower in comparison, but they could enter nine meridians true qi at any time.

When he heard Guo Jin voice such lofty and aspirational words, Qiao Shan called out, "Yo, Guo! Number two's definitely mine."

"Don't forget me, Qiao Chuan!"

Although Wen Ziqi didn't say much, her beautiful eyes also shot out a thick sense of competitiveness.

"It's good that you have the heart to compete. But, you're also brothers. Remember to compete in a friendly way and bear your limits in mind." Jiang Chen warned.

Xue Tong smiled, "Be at ease young master, I'll keep my eye on them at all times."

Gouyu also smiled, "If this bunch of hooligans dare rebel, I'll be the first to destroy them."

Ever since Gouyu had become Jiang Chen's follower, she had done an outstanding job in handling both internal and external affairs. This made Jiang Chen feel a bit embarrassed.

"Gouyu, come with me for a second." Jiang Chen beckoned and led her to the secret chamber.

"Jiang Chen, you..." Although Gouyu had an open and forthright personality, the space with the secret chamber was narrow and confined. This made her feel a bit ill at ease.

"What's this stammering about you and me? You've lingered long enough at eleven meridians true qi. What thoughts do you have with regards to the comprehension of the spirit realm?"

A light shone in Gouyu's beautiful eyes. "Jiang Chen, do you mean to give me pointers?"

"Are you still that martial dao-holic Gouyu? Do you have no confidence when no one gives you pointers?"

Gouyu's full chest puffed out. "Jiang Chen, don't you underestimate me. I've never given up training in martial dao. I, Gouyu, will become a spirit realm practitioner! I'll prove to those sects that I, Gouyu, can still enter the spirit realm even without their resources! I'm not the slightest bit inferior to those so-called innate constitutions."

Chapter 185: First Prince Ye Dai Seeks an Audience?

Although the Long family had been thoroughly cowed and suppressed, Gouyu still held deep enmity towards the Long family. The existence of Long Juxue was absolutely a thorn in the side of the headstrong Gouyu.

This thorn had always made she who possesses proud self esteem feel ill at ease.

Although Gouyu had never mentioned it, she'd never been willing to accept and concede defeat in the face of Long Juxue's constitution. What kind of basis was that for the sects to look at Long Juxue with different eyes?

She was going to prove that she, Gouyu, was just as good!

She didn't have abnormal potential, but she had an even more resolute heart of martial dao that would make up for it.

Jiang Chen looked at this serious woman and suddenly felt a few stabs of being unable to look on further. This woman was a princess and could've stayed within the Eastern Kingdom to continue and enjoy the lofty and luxurious treatment provided to the royal family.

However, she had followed him without hesitation and become his follower.

What did she want? Breakthroughs in martial dao, naturally.

Jiang Chen wouldn't deny that Gouyu felt dependence, gratitude, and even some vague emotions between man and woman towards him. However, Jiang Chen had never wanted things to go down that path.

It wasn't that Jiang Chen didn't think much of Gouyu, but that he knew that they would eventually walk separate paths and were destined to be unable to fly together as a pair.

This was a woman that he was destined to let down. Therefore, his heart softened when Jiang Chen looked at Gouyu and her resolute demeanor.

"Even if she's not my woman, I'm going to at least let her live a life that is even more glorious and brilliant than she would've ever thought."

When Jiang Chen's thoughts travelled here, he suddenly smiled, "You're right, you can still enter the spirit realm even without a sect. Now, I'll give you a chance to enter the spirit realm."

"What did you say?" Astonishment shot out from Gouyu's beautiful eyes. She had thought that she'd misheard.

"Do you want to enter the spirit realm?"

"Yes." Gouyu nodded her head without hesitation.

Jiang Chen flicked his finger and a middle rank Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill landed in her hand. "This pill is called the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill, and will give you a 90% chance of entering the spirit realm. This pill can also shape your spirit ocean, crafting it into one with unparalleled potential. Remember, I haven't given even Xue Tong this pill yet, so you must keep it a secret."

Gouyu's face was filled with shocked surprise as she stared dumbly at the pill in her hand. Her eyes suddenly grew red.

This feeling of being helped by Jiang Chen, being given pointers by him and being taken care by him, suddenly sent her memories back a few months, back to when they were all residing in the Eastern Kingdom.

"Jiang Chen, you..."

"Stop. I don't like a fussy or dithering woman. You're my follower and it's a natural course of action for me to give you a pill." Jiang Chen was unable to stand it when women cried.

Gouyu bravely wiped away at her eyes. She was disappointed to realize today that she seemed to have grown used to Jiang Chen's aid, used to his pointers, and accustomed to receiving benefits from Jiang Chen.

"This pill will assault your entire physical body and will reforge your body, forming the spirit ocean within it. This process will be very painful. Remember, you must hold up beneath it. If you do, the sky will be the limit. You'll set foot into the spirit realm and soar as you wish from henceforth."

Gouyu lightly puckered her lips as she could no longer find the appropriate words suitable for expressing her current emotions.

"Jiang Chen, it looks like I, Gouyu, am destined to owe you during this life. My life is yours whenever you want to call in these bestowments."

"I don't want your life, I only hope that you will always remain that tenacious and unyielding Eastern Gouyu who has her sights set only on martial dao!"

Gouyu started as Jiang Chen brushed past her and walked out.

"Jiang Chen.... You, you really are a devil. You have me, Eastern Gouyu, falling so helplessly into the deep abyss that is you..." Gouyu murmured to herself. "Forget it, forget it. I've done all of this voluntarily. Jiang Chen, do you know? Your excellence has spoiled my worldview. I would rather willingly and happily lose myself in your abyss than while away the rest of my life amongst mediocrity. I know... I'm not worthy of you, and that a great distance separates us. However, even if I am a slave or a servant, I am still willing to follow you for the rest of my life. Do you know? The splendor that you so carelessly radiate is enough to light up my entire world..."

Gouyu was almost raving in agitated silliness. She stood there in the secret chamber, both happy and sad.

"Young master, first prince Ye Dai is outside seeking an audience." Someone quickly delivered this report when Jiang Chen walked out.

"Ye Dai?" Jiang Chen was startled and then waved his hand. "Denied!"

“Young master, this prince Ye Dai has a thick face and refuses to leave. He says that if the young master doesn’t receive him, you will be sure to regret it for the rest of your life.”

“Regret? Because of him?” Jiang Chen laughed coldly and thought that his underlings were probably unable to shoo Ye Dai away. “Ignore him, I’ll go chase him away.”

When he walked to the door, he indeed saw Ye Dai standing there. His tall and fit body was like a willow tree swaying in the wind. His demeanor was sophisticated and graceful. He presented a rather pleasing view if one only considered his looks.

“Jiang Chen, I’d planned on standing here and not leaving until I’ve see you.” Ye Dai smiled faintly, as if the two weren’t rivals who’d had some friction between them, and were rather old acquaintances.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “First prince, relations between the two of us don’t seem to be familiar enough for such boring jokes to be cracked?”

Ye Dai thought nothing of it as he maintained his graceful manner, “Jiang Chen, I admit that I was a bit unhappy and even a bit envious of you the day of the honored tutor’s birthday banquet. However, when I returned home, I felt that this wasn’t the way to approach things. To be honest there’s no death feud between the two of us. You’re now the holder of a Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion, and I am the most supported and loved prince in the Skylaurel Kingdom. Why must the two of us be engaged in competition against each other instead of cooperation?”

“Cooperation? Ye Dai, are you drunk? What is there to cooperate between the two of us?”

“That’s not necessarily the case!” Ye Dai shook his head and spoke seriously. “You can cooperate with number four of my house, so you can definitely cooperate with me.”

“Do you think I, Jiang Chen, is someone who will become a turncoat and change who I support?” Jiang Chen smiled coldly.

“Jiang Chen, you can think on it. I can even be the mediator and have you make up with the Northern Palace if you nod your head. The matter of you killing their disciples can be resolved with a smile. Dead people are already dead, those alive surely can’t embroil themselves in endless conflict because of a dead person. And you see, I have many contacts within the Precious Tree Sect. With your potential, you’re sure to enter the Precious Tree Sect in the future. I can absolutely pave the way for you and make it smoother for you to receive an even higher position. In addition...”

“Stop.” Jiang Chen was impatient. “Ye Dai, just what do you want to say? You want to recruit me? I can tell you clearly, I’m not interested.”

“Just because number four was one step ahead of me and made a trip to the Eastern Kingdom?” Ye Dai was unwilling to accept this. “He’s just an opportunistic fellow. If it wasn’t for the fact that I was busy then, I definitely would’ve made a trip to the Eastern Kingdom as well if I’d know such a person as you existed. You don’t believe me Jiang Chen? Do you think number four can really fight me for the position of Crown Prince? Are you really willing to hang around a prince with no background and make a blunder that will affect the rest of your life?”

Jiang Chen laughed, "Ye Dai, you speak with great gusto, but I'm completely uninterested in this struggle for Crown Prince and this so-called grand royal endeavor. I help Ye Rong because he's my friend, and you, Ye Dai, are not my friend. It's that simple."

"Then we can also be friends." Ye Dai hastily said.

"The moment that I entered the Black Dungeons destined that the two of us would not be friends." Jiang Chen waved his hands and frowned, "I'll ask you one thing, are you getting the hell out of here or not?"

Ye Dai's face grew frosty and knew that he couldn't keep up the act. He spoke harshly, "Jiang Chen, are you determined to pursue your mistaken beliefs and oppose me to the end?"

"Oppose you? You think too much. Go back and look at your reflection in a puddle of your own pee. Is something like you worthy of me, Jiang Chen, opposing you?"

"Alright, very good! Jiang Chen, you'll pay a great price one day for your stubbornness and ego. Then, you'll be crying, shouting, and kneeling in front of me, begging for forgiveness."

Ye Dai left these vicious words behind and left with a flourish of his sleeves.

He had held great hope this time and forcefully restrained his disgust as he put on the act of a someone kind and considerate to men of talent, hoping to eventually recruit Jiang Chen.

He also knew that it would be difficult for him to publicly oppress Jiang Chen once he had the medallion.

Since he couldn't publicly oppress him, why not recruit him? Ye Dai discovered that the advantages of recruiting Jiang Chen greatly outnumbered the disadvantages.

There was only one drawback in that he'd have to smooth over things with the Northern Palace and Lu Wuji.

But the benefits would be innumerable.

However, he discovered that his carefully laid out plans had all been for naught. Although he had all sorts of advantages and an impressive background, so what of that? Jiang Chen paid no attention to any of that at all.

Jiang Chen shook his head, "He has no idea what he should be doing."

He was about to go back inside when the clatter of hooves suddenly sounded from the other end of the street. A man on a horse was swiftly approaching Jiang Chen.

"Younger brother Jiang, I've heard that you've been in closed door cultivation. Did you emerge today?" The person on the horse had seen Jiang Chen from afar and raised his hand, calling out in greeting.

"General Tian?" Jiang Chen was surprised to see that that person was Tian Shao of the Dragonteeth Guard.

The horse galloped straight up to the door before Tian Shao suddenly hauled back on the reins, making it come to a complete stop. Tian Shao jumped down and wrapped Jiang Chen in a huge bear hug.

"Younger brother, we haven't seen you in a month. The fourth prince rather misses you."

“General Tian has a spring in his step. Looks like you’ve had quite some gains recently.” Jiang Chen chuckled.

“And it’s all thanks to you. You gave me the chance to ask a question of Tutor Ye last time. After his pointers, I feel that I’ve progressed on that path of martial dao again and have already felt the edge of the half step spirit realm.

Tian Shao had been at the peak of the true qi realm so it was an incredible breakthrough that he’d reached half step spirit realm.

“Oh right, I forgot to tell you, Lin Qianli has already thrown off the mortal shackles and risen to the first level of the spirit realm. All of a sudden, he’s become one of the most accomplished disciples in the Southern Palace. His chances of entering the Precious Tree Sect in their next open recruitment are very high.

Tian Shao also felt slight awe towards Lin Qianli when he thought of him.

“Lin Qianli’s heart of martial dao is quite resolute. I’m not surprised that he broke through.” Jiang Chen smiled. “I must congratulate him next time I see him.”

Tian Shao smiled, “I told you that once you spend some time with him, you’ll discover that he’s absolutely a friend worth having. He sings your praises now, and gets up in people’s faces if they even hint at anything bad about you. You two have had your friendship grow from an exchange of blows.”

Jiang Chen smiled, nodded, and then asked, “Oh right, old Tian, have you come looking for me because of anything in particular?”

Tian Shao smacked his forehead, “Ai, look at me. I almost forgot the official purpose of my visit. The Maze Realm Autumn Hunt that’s held once every five years will be taking place in ten days. Are you interested in participating?”

“Maze Realm Autumn Hunt?” Jiang Chen stared. What was that?

Chapter 186: Spots in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt

Tian Shao saw that Jiang Chen looked a bit lost. He hadn’t been in the Skylaurel Kingdom for that long and likely had no prior knowledge regarding the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt, so Tian Shao explained, “The Autumn Hunt is a festive occasion for the practitioners of the Skylaurel Kingdom. It’s held once every five years. Almost all the practitioners at the level of true qi master and above will be participating.”

“What’s so special about it?”

“This Maze Realm is a very special place. Only the Precious Tree Sect has the coordinates of its entrance. But even with the coordinates, it isn’t something that the Precious Tree Sect can open whenever it wants to. The Maze Realm is typically open once every five years. If you don’t leave the Maze Realm within a month, then you’ll be trapped in it forever.”

“Forever?”

“Yes.” Tian Shao nodded his head resolutely. “Forever.”

“Doesn’t it open once every five years? There’s still a chance of making it back alive then?”

Tian Shao smiled, “Absolutely not. This is because the space within the Maze Realm is different every time. The Maze Realm has existed within the Skylaurel Kingdom for several hundreds of years and its interior design has never repeated itself. This means that the Maze Realm that appears each time is actually a different world.”

“Oh?” Jiang Chen was actually a bit curious now. He hadn’t thought that an independent space would exist in a small place like the Skylaurel Kingdom, much less flowing independent space.

Jiang Chen naturally knew that this so-called Maze Realm was a crack between different planes of existence, the overlapping portion of different planes of existence, or possibly some form of disorder within the same plane of existence.

There was usually a very defined rhythm to the operations of such a space.

“This Maze Realm Autumn Hunt seems quite interesting. I have a belly full of theory now but lack practical experience. This Autumn Hunt is a chance to test my theories out.”

After his thoughts traveled here, Jiang Chen asked, “Old Tian, how does one sign up for this Maze Realm Autumn Hunt?”

Tian Shao was overjoyed to hear these words, “Do you want to participate? If you want to, you don’t have to worry about signing up. The fourth prince will take care of everything for you.”

“Oh? Ordinary people can’t sign themselves up?”

Tian Shao smiled ruefully, “Only those of second rank noble or above have the right to participate. Those who have the right to participate will also receive some quotas on the number of followers they can bring. It’s similar to participating in Tutor Ye’s birthday banquet but the Autumn Hunt is on a much larger scale than that old tutor’s banquet. At least several thousand people participate each time.”

“That many?”

Tian Shao nodded, “Just think about it. So many princes, sons and daughters of nobles and courtiers, the descendents of all the dukes, and the disciples of all sorts of factions; there are truly many spots.”

“Will the Precious Tree Sect send disciples to participate?” Jiang Chen was rather curious about this.

“The inner disciples of the Precious Tree Sect won’t be participating, so only the outer disciples of these four great sites will participate in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt.”

Jiang Chen suddenly understood. So the four great sites only counted as the outskirts of the Precious Tree Sect. It was only those who truly trained within the Precious Tree Sect who were viewed as inner disciples.

Inner disciples wouldn’t take part in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt.

“Do you think it’s odd that although the Precious Tree Sect controls the coordinates, none of their inner disciples participate?” Tian Shao smiled.

“It is indeed a bit odd.” Jiang Chen nodded.

“The reason is actually very simple. The Precious Tree Sect holds two such maze realms like this. The other is called the Aquarius Maze Realm. That maze realm has three to five times the difficulty and danger level of the external Maze Realm. The Aquarius Maze Realm is what holds true attraction for the inner disciples of the Precious Tree Sect.”

Jiang Chen finally truly understood. It wasn't that the Precious Tree Sect disciples weren't participating, but rather, they found the level of this time's Autumn Hunt completely beneath them.

But Jiang Chen didn't look down on it. He didn't want to pass up such a good opportunity.

“Old Tian, then please ask the fourth prince to save a spot for me. Wait, if there are enough spots, then please leave me another one as well.”

Tian Shao smiled and nodded his acceptance before he suddenly asked, “I seemed to have seen the first prince just now?”

“Ach, don't even bother mentioning such a brainless person.” Jiang Chen flapped his hands, completely uninterested in the topic of Ye Dai.

Tian Shao laughed heartily. There weren't many people in the entire Skylaurel Kingdom who dared call the first prince brainless. Jiang Chen was absolutely the youngest, most unique of them all.

After sending off Tian Shao, Jiang Chen thought for a bit and felt that this Autumn Hunt was a chance to train. If he could find some opportunities during the trials, he'd surely be able to greatly increase his battle strength and progress on the road of the spirit realm.

Since he planned on participating in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt, he naturally needed to make some preparations.

Jiang Chen never fought a battle without being prepared beforehand.

He made a visit to the Myriad Treasures Palace and prepared some necessities. He also checked in on Jiang Yu. Not only had he thoroughly assimilated into the Myriad Treasures Palace in the span of a month but he was also exemplary at fulfilling his position with sound and colour. Even an old eccentric like Shi Xiaoyao thought him worthy of praise.

Jiang Chen left only after imparting a few words of encouragement. He also planned on making a trip to the Southern Palace. After he arrived at their location in the capital, he learned that Qiao Baishi had followed Elder Ning back to the Southern Palace headquarters. He'd left almost half a month ago.

Jiang Chen purchased a few things at the counter before turning to leave. Since Qiao Baishi wasn't present, Jiang Chen also didn't want to linger.

When he was walking out the front door, he suddenly heard a round of shouting, “I've already said that the public clinic is over. The spirit alchemists have already left. Even if you kneel here until you faint, we will not be able to help you no matter how much we want to. We're only businessmen and don't know how to treat patients.”

“Great sir associates, please. Look, we've even prepared our diagnosis fee. Please, can you guys make an exception for us?”

“Ai, I say, what can’t the two of you listen to reason? Since you have the diagnosis fee, why didn’t you come when our Southern Palace was holding the public clinic?”

“Ai, we ran into some accidents on our way here and the diagnosis fee was confiscated. We finally settled the case, but the public clinic was already over by then. Isn’t it just our bad luck?” The man was also quite dejected.

Jiang Chen walked in upon hearing the man’s voice and couldn’t help but call out, “Tang Long?”

This man was the first Skylaurel Kingdom citizen that Jiang Chen had met upon entering the kingdom. He was that Wyvern Knight who had been patrolling the border.

When the person heard Jiang Chen call his name, he was momentarily stunned when he turned his head, “It’s you!”

A trace of awkwardness and shame flashed across Tang Long’s face and he looked a bit embarrassed, “I heard my woman say that she brought the Black Spirit Wood here to ask for help, but it was taken from her. You were the one who lent her a hand, but that caused you to become embroiled in the case instead.”

It wasn’t that Tang Long was devoid of gratitude, but that his status was far too low for him to have the right to know any inside intelligence. He was just a Wyvern Knight on border patrol. There was too big a gap between him and the Dragonteeth Guard.

He only knew this much. As for how the case was resolved and if his savior had been released, he’d tried to learn the result, but no one paid any attention to him.

Tang Long knew that his words didn’t carry much weight, so he had given up after a while.

When he saw Jiang Chen now, he naturally felt a bit embarrassed and felt that he owed Jiang Chen something.

Jiang Chen didn’t know Tang Long’s thoughts as he smiled, “How come you have the time to come back to the capital this time?”

Tang Long’s face dimmed, “Forget it, I heard that something had happened at home and deserted my post to come back. I’ve been fired by the border guard now.

“That’s right, are — are you alright? I’ve heard my woman say that you were involved in a case and offended the Northern Palace. You’re alright?” Tang Long widened his eyes.

He was the lowest blade of grass in the capital. He had absolutely no inkling of the situation within the capital, and hadn’t even clarified Jiang Chen’s identity.

“Aren’t I just fine? The Dragonteeth Guard returned the stick of Black Spirit Wood to you, right? What are you doing?”

Tang Long was much relieved after seeing that Jiang Chen was fine. “This Black Spirit Wood was what I asked you to bring back last time in order to make it to the Southern Palace’s public clinic. Who would’ve thought that I made it in time, only for something unexpected to crop up. My woman said that

if it wasn't for you last time, she probably would've been beaten to death by the robbers from the Northern Palace."

"What did you guys need the public clinic for? It doesn't look like the two of you are sick."

Tang Long sighed, "My younger brother is the one who is sick. He was diagnosed with palsy when he was young and can only spend his days in a wheelchair. I was thinking that if I could ask a spirit alchemist to help him, then maybe he'd be able to stand up."

He then cast a look of resignation at the fellow from the Southern Palace after speaking.

The associate obviously knew of Jiang Chen's background and his expression changed as he started panicking, "You're young master Chen? Young master Chen, it really isn't our fault! The public clinic has long since ended and we lowly associates have no abilities to treat patients!"

Jiang Chen spread out his hands, "Alright alright, there's none of your business here. What are you afraid of?"

It was as if a huge burden had been lifted off of the associate's chest. "Young master Chen, would you like to come sit inside?"

"Forget it, you are dismissed."

The young associate nodded and bowed, smiling happily, "Yes, yes. Young master Chen, then this one will take his leave first." He walked off as quickly as possible.

What kind of person was Jiang Chen? The young associate had seen it for his own eyes, the way Zhang Meng had been directly hauled out by Sir Bei from the Southern Palace and beaten straight to death that day in the transaction area .

When he left the transaction area, he'd beaten yet another disciple of the Northern Palace to death.

How could the disciples of the Southern Palace not know of someone as fierce as this?

Tang Long felt it odd that the associate feared Jiang Chen that much. "You... haven't you only just come to the Skylareland Kingdom? Why does this associate seem quite afraid of you? He doesn't seem like someone who's that polite."

Tang Long felt a bit surprised.

Jiang Chen smiled. "Come, I'll take you to a place. Perhaps there, we can help your younger brother find a spirit alchemist."

Tang Long started, "Really?"

"Why would I lie to you?" Jiang Chen smiled. Tang Long was a warm, enthusiastic man and Jiang Chen happened to need to make a trip to the Qingyang Valley and talk to old man Fei about something anyway.

He'd just so happened to run into Tang Long. Helping him out of convenience would allow Jiang Chen to repay his good intentions in introducing the particulars of the capital to him.

"I'll say this first, I only have this stick of Black Spirit Wood for the diagnosis fee. I won't be able to take anything out if the price is higher. Sell my house? My family has only three run down straw huts that no one would want even if I gave it to them." This Tang Long was quite down to earth alright; his thoughts were also very simple and unadorned.

Jiang Chen liked interacting with simple and unadorned people like him and smiled, "What are you worried about? I won't ask you to pay since I'm the one who brought you here. Not to mention, they wouldn't dare take my money."

Tang Long was half skeptical and half believing. He thought that Jiang Chen was someone who'd just arrived in the Skylareland Kingdom. How could he speak with such a lofty tone? He was also curious at the same time — as someone who'd killed a disciple of the Northern Palace, how could he be brazenly walking about on the streets now?

Chapter 187: The Weird Sect Disciple

When Jiang Chen arrived at the Qingyang Valley location in the capital with Tang Long and his wife, Tang Long's face turned green as he read the words "Qingyang Valley" on the sign.

"Qing... Qingyang Valley?" Tang Long stammered as his legs were like they'd been staked into the ground, unwilling to take a single step forward. He looked at the sign with trepidation, as if the sign would eat him.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Chen thought his reaction was a bit odd.

Tang Long had a rueful look on his face, "Brother, just where do you come from? Your methods are simply too out there! This is the Qingyang Valley location, aren't you afraid of being kidnapped to be a medicine servant for them because you brought me here?"

"A medicine servant?" Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The most senior leader of the Qingyang Valley, old man Fei, was now rightfully and properly his medicine servant!

Jiang Chen hadn't really wanted that to happen, but it'd been old man Fei who'd begged him with a thick face.

So, snatch him to be a medicine servant? Old man Fei would first need to have the guts to accept him as one!

"Don't worry, would I sell you out?" Jiang Chen smiled. "Let's go."

"Not going. I'm scared!" Tang Long shook his head, he was quite determined.

'You're really not going? Then I'm going to wash my hands of your matter.'

Tang Long hesitated and he raised his head to look at the sign again, as if wrestling over a tough decision in his heart.

"I'll go in, but first, you need to tell me who you are." A moment of brilliance suddenly struck Tang Long as he asked an exceedingly good question.

Just as Jiang Chen was finding it both irritating and hilarious, a voice suddenly called out from behind him, "Jiang Chen."

Jiang Chen turned around in surprise and he saw a fellow wearing all black robes and a cape standing awkwardly at the side of the door.

"It's you?" Jiang Chen would never have thought that the person calling out to him would be the Precious Tree Sect disciple, Han Xianke! This was the genius disciple who had clashed ferociously with him in a verbal sparring match, and he had even thrown down the brutal words that if he lost to Jiang Chen, he'd be Jiang Chen's dog.

Han Xianke was obviously finding it a bit awkward and he was hesitating as well. He seemed to want to talk to Jiang Chen, but he also seemed to find it difficult to open his mouth.

Jiang Chen was rather indifferent. He hadn't taken Han Xianke's words spoken in anger seriously. Sect disciples like Han Xianke were all like this. Their eyes were on the top of their heads and they placed themselves loftily above everyone else.

Jiang Chen had no blood feud with him, so he wasn't particularly of a mind to be ruthless to Han Xianke.

"It's me." Han Xianke still walked over after hesitating for a long while.

"You haven't returned to the Precious Tree sect yet? What are you doing hanging around brainless idiots like Ye Dai in the prime of your life? I find it a poor waste even if you don't." Jiang Chen shook his head. When did sect disciples have so much time on their hands?

Han Xianke's face flushed beet red, "I... I actually don't have any relationships with Ye Dai. He paid a high price to invite me here."

"You don't need to explain things to me. I didn't take anything that happened that day seriously." Jiang Chen was rather surprised that Han Xianke would take the initiative to talk to him.

According to the typical style of sect disciples, they would've hated his guts with a passion. They would want to exterminate him, stomping him beneath their feet as demanded by their style.

This Han Xianke was actually greeting him first. This really did surprise Jiang Chen.

"Ai... " Han Xianke sighed. "I haven't gone back to the sect, but I haven't hung around Ye Dai either."

"Then what are you doing? Don't tell me you want to leave the sect and resume a secular life?"

"I... I don't know what I want to do either. I wanted to find you, but I couldn't sacrifice my face enough to do so. I had to just randomly walk around in hopes of bumping into you, and I really did do so!"

"What do you want from me? Do you still want to fight to determine who's better?" Jiang Chen was completely baffled by Han Xianke.

He was a sect disciple after all. Could he not conduct himself as a sect disciple would?

Jiang Chen felt rather unused to how Han Xianke was acting. In Jiang Chen's eyes, all sect disciples are malicious-looking and seek revenge for the smallest grievances.

“Jiang Chen, I thought carefully after I left that day and realized that I didn’t hate you at all. If I insult others, they are sure to insult me. When I was humiliated by you that day, I had brought shame on myself. And, when I reflected carefully on your words, they did indeed make a lot of sense. Sect disciples shouldn’t use their sect’s name to suppress others, but should instead use their true abilities to convince others of their superiority.”

Han Xianke became more agitated as he spoke, “I felt that I was stronger than the Qingyang elder and humiliated him without mercy so that he had no way out. Then, since you’re stronger than me, isn’t it normal for you to humiliate me? Since this is the case, what reason do I have to be unable to accept what has happened to me? Comparing my feelings to other people’s, I was indeed in the wrong first.”

Jiang Chen wouldn’t have found it strange at all if Han Xianke had thrown himself into a no holds barred deathmatch.

But as Han Xianke nagged on and on, muttering and reflecting on his actions, Jiang Chen felt greatly astonished.

He almost wanted to suspect that Han Xianke had put on a show of torturing himself to win Jiang Chen’s confidence because Ye Dai had told him to do so.

After his careful observation, he realized that this wasn’t a trick. A sect genius like Han Xianke was absolutely not someone that Ye Dai could compel.

Besides, Han Xianke had a drawn and long face. It was apparent that he really had spent the month wandering around outside. If a sect disciple were to put on an act, he definitely could never produce such a realistic act of dejection.

The most important thing was that the perceptive ability of Jiang Chen’s “Psychic’s Head” was exceedingly strong. He could clearly capture the true emotions behind Han Xianke’s words.

Han Xianke was truly revealing his sincere sentiments and speaking from the depths of his heart.

This was what surprised Jiang Chen most. He never would’ve thought that a sect disciple with his eyes on the top of his head and no one in his sight would become so humble after a round of setbacks.

It looked like although the sect disciples all put on sneering expressions of superiority over everyone else, they still possessed vastly different personalities on the inside.

Han Xianke was likely one of those disciples who was spoiled but not bad at heart.

“Han Xianke, since you say these things, it seems that you’ve been somewhat enlightened. That’s not necessarily a bad thing. Maybe this enlightenment will be beneficial to you in your future training. If you’re purposefully waiting for me to give me an explanation, it’s alright. I was just going with the flow that day and do not hold a grudge. I have no blood feud with you.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t someone who ruthlessly hounded others either. He was still a kind person to a certain extent, and willing to coexist peacefully with other people.

If Han Xianke could see his faults and change his ways, then he was much stronger than any ordinary sect disciple. Jiang Chen naturally wouldn’t stand on the little points for someone who knew his faults and was willing to change.

When Han Xianke heard Jiang Chen's words, his entire being seemed greatly revived. "Jiang Chen, this means I haven't waited a month for you in vain."

"You actually still did wait in vain, because I really thought nothing of it, haha." Jiang Chen smiled.

"No, it was not in vain. Jiang Chen, although my words that day were a bit extreme, I'm willing to hold myself to them. I will be your follower from now on."

That day, in the heat of the moment, he had said that he would be Jiang Chen's dog if he lost. Those were words spoken in anger.

But Han Xianke was a proud person. The pride of a sect disciple wouldn't let him run away from paying up after a loss.

"Taking in a sect genius as a follower? Aren't you afraid that those of your sect will drown me in their spittle?" Jiang Chen waved his hands. "I already said that I won't pursue this matter. You can go back with a clear conscience and light heart."

"No." Han Xianke shook his head resolutely. "If I'm not a man of my word, then what kind of sect genius am I, Han Xianke? Not only will I grow fat from eating my own words, the heart of my martial dao will be affected as well. If I return like this, then I am sure to fall from my position in the Sect and be exiled to the outer branches after ten or so years. Jiang Chen, you must take me as a follower. I mean it."

"I..." Jiang Chen discovered that he'd been defeated. Han Xianke had spoken in a circle, finally reaching the conclusion that he must become Jiang Chen's follower!

Tang Long on the other hand, was utterly flabbergasted. If he hadn't been with Jiang Chen all along, he would almost have suspected that the two were putting on an act.

A genius sect disciple was begging Jiang Chen to take him as a follower!

This was the genius disciple of the Precious Tree Sect!

Tang Long's brain was a complete, muddled mess. His poor limits of comprehension were entirely useless. His knowledge of the world was absolutely unable to make sense of the bizarre scene that was happening in front of him.

As for Han Xianke, he'd obviously already made up his mind and didn't care at all that there were others present.

He only had one thought at this moment which was to become Jiang Chen's follower. He couldn't grow fat from eating his own words nor could he become a turtle who withdrew his head into his shell.

"How about we talk about this matter later?" Jiang Chen changed the topic. "I have something to do first. See, I have two friends with me who I'm taking to the Qingyang Valley to find a spirit alchemist to treat his brother."

"Treat an illness? Is there anyone in the Qingyang Valley who's more skilled at that than I am?" Han Xianke wouldn't let Jiang Chen change the topic at all. "Although I admit that I was at fault that day, I still insist that my level is higher than those of the Qingyang Valley."

Jiang Chen couldn't deny this either. He wasn't sure who was better between Han Xianke and old man Fei, but compared to some middle aged chubby man, Han Xianke was surely better.

"Where's the patient? These two? They're not sick." Han Xianke looked at them and could immediately see that Tang Long and his wife weren't sick at all.

Jiang Chen suddenly had a brainchild. Look for a spirit alchemist? Han Xianke was knocking at his door, and it'd be a shame to not use someone who'd come looking.

"Tang Long, if you want your brother to be healed, bring him here immediately and have Sir Han take a look. Ordinary folk wouldn't normally have the chance to make the acquaintance of a genius disciple from the Precious Tree Sect."

Tang Long's mind was blank and he didn't react until Jiang Chen was about to kick his butt. He immediately became overjoyed and kept nodding, rushing out in the direction of his home.

"He's your friend?" Han Xianke was curious. How did Jiang Chen make such a lowly friend?

"A chance acquaintance. He's an enthusiastic fellow."

"Just a chance acquaintances?" Han Xianke was startled. He discovered that he could see less and less through Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen nodded. "I still need to make a trip to the Qingyang Valley. Are you coming in with me, or will you wait here for Tang Long?"

Han Xianke hesitated and finally said, "Then, I'll wait here."

Jiang Chen looked at this fellow and laughed ruefully inside. What an odd day! How had he run into this abnormally muttering guy? He'd rather fight Han Xianke than have the guy stick to him like toffee!

Chapter 188: Dan Fei's Invitation

What disappointed Jiang Chen was that old man Fei wasn't in the capital but had instead been missing for quite a while. There was no trace of old man Fei in the entire Qingyang Valley.

"Is this old man playing hide and seek with me?" Jiang Chen mused inwardly. But he also believed that even though old man Fei was crafty, he wasn't the sort to run away from his obligations.

If old man Fei was really that sort of person, Jiang Chen wouldn't have given him the recipe for the Renewal Purity Pill. He'd observed the old man a few times and confirmed his temperament before giving that recipe to him.

"This old man has been pining after this pill for forever, surely because of its particular use. In that case, he must be furiously collecting materials in preparation of refining this pill?"

It was a good thing that although old man Fei had left, he had given instructions to these disciples that if Jiang Chen came by, they'd have to serve Jiang Chen as if they were serving their own ancestor.

Therefore, when Jiang Chen arrived, all these associates were incredibly fervent. Jiang Chen handed over the list that he'd prepared earlier and all the items were collected in short order, with the associates refusing to accept any money for the items.

Such ardent zeal made Jiang Chen feel almost a bit embarrassed to have lectured old man Fei.

After lingering for a while inside, Jiang Chen didn't want to while away the time outside with Han Xianke so he drank two small cups of tea before finally making his way out of the door.

At this moment, Tang Long happened to arrive with his younger brother. Large beads of sweat dotted his forehead.

Even though he was part of the army, to make a return trip in such a short amount of time with only his two legs was still a very difficult thing

Han Xianke was a man of his word and didn't put on any airs.

He took a quick glance, flourished his sleeves, and poked a few times at some acupuncture points on Tang Long's younger brother's leg. Then, he took out a few gold needles and poked at various key nerves in his younger brother's body.

"Ah!" Tang Long's brother cried out as a mouthful of previously blocked blood sprayed from his mouth. Black blood also started flowing out of the seven orifices of his head.

"Alright." Han Xianke put away his gold needles. "You brought him here in time. If you had waited another half a year, not even the gods would have been able to save this man."

"Al... alright?" Tang Long hadn't even had time to react. "The treatment is done just like that?"

"Ignore it if you don't believe me." Han Xianke's regular demeanor as a sect disciple once again reared its head.

Tang Long smiled awkwardly as he grasped the Black Spirit Wood in his hands. He wanted to offer it as a reward, but was then worried that he was acting too hastily. What if his brother hadn't truly been cured?

Jiang Chen really wanted to burst out laughing when he saw Tang Long's hesitant figure.

"Tang Long, take your younger brother back. Oh right, before that, go to the Qingyang Valley and obtain some medicine that will strengthen the body. They're not that expensive. Tell them I sent you."

This time, Tang Long had happened to catch a glimpse of Jiang Chen coming out of the Qingyang Valley office.

"If you want your younger brother to be able to stand up, you still have to use the requisite medicines. Sir Han also already taken care of the palsy, but it's still up to him to go through the recovery process. Using better medicine will help him heal faster."

Jiang Chen actually had good medicine, but those were the ones for practitioners to take when they were injured. The body of Tang Long's younger brother wouldn't be able to cope with such high-level medicine.

Tang Long was a complete believer this time. He held the Black Spirit Wood in his hands, unsure whether to offer it to Jiang Chen or Han Xianke.

Jiang Chen smiled, "I've already said that no diagnosis fee is needed. If you find that item cumbersome, why don't you sell it to the Qingyang Valley? They'll give you a fair price."

Han Xianke was the genius disciple of a sect. How could he find any value in a stick of Black Spirit Wood? Only useless trash like that senior brother Kuang would try to steal something like that.

Why would a true sect disciple want something like that?

Taking a look at Han Xianke's resolute face, Jiang Chen felt a headache develop. "Then, ah, let's have a chat. I have no opinion about you wanting to be my follower, but let's talk about this only after I enter the Precious Tree Sect. How about that?"

"You want to enter the Precious Tree Sect?" Han Xianke started before becoming overjoyed. "Then what are we waiting for? I'll recommend you right now."

"The time isn't ripe yet." Jiang Chen shook his head. Recommendation? Jiang Chen didn't want to make it into the sect through someone else's power. Besides, he didn't want to start off pathetically as a low ranked disciple. He wanted to make a big entrance in a blaze of glory.

Besides, he hadn't been in the Skylaurel Kingdom for long. His foundations were not yet solid, and he had yet to find suitable positions for those around him.

It was obviously not yet the right timing to enter the Precious Tree Sect.

He didn't want others to think that he'd gotten in by some under-the-table means as soon as he entered the sect.

Jiang Chen spent a lot of time and effort to finally convince Han Xianke that when he entered the Precious Tree Sect in the future, he would carry out the words he had spoken today and accept him as a follower.

Han Xianke still hadn't seemed that happy, so Jiang Chen had to further promise that he would let Han Xianke visit him once every three months.

Amongst all the followers he'd ever taken, Jiang Chen had never had such a follower forcibly foisted on him before. Han Xianke was the type to never rest until he reached his goal.

"Han Xianke has rather shown me another side of sect disciples." Jiang Chen sighed lightly. Sect disciples had their eyes on top of their heads and all sorts of eccentric tempers. But, Han Xianke possessed an indefatigable and undying sense of resolution and a type of intelligence that followed enlightenment. This wasn't something that any regular person could measure up to.

Sect disciples weren't useless after all; it was just that they often displayed the awful sides of themselves and made others feel that that all sect disciples were good-for-nothings.

After all, in order to become a sect disciple, all of them surely had that a spark of something special about them.

...

When he returned home, Jiang Chen discovered that he had an unexpected visitor...

Dan Fei!

She was Tutor Ye's half granddaughter, half disciple, and the woman that Jiang Chen was currently most afraid of bumping into.

But, she'd come knocking on his door. He couldn't very well turn his head and walk away now, could he? He could only force himself to walk up and greet her with a wry expression, "Look who the wind blew in! Sister Dan Fei, what brings you here?"

Dan Fei looked like she was in a good mood today as she wore a light green robe, with the appearance a quietly elegant apricot berry, giving others a very refined impression.

Except, her skirt emphasized her wondrous body, making her appear even more alluring. The skirt rippled like water and billowed slightly, complementing her snow white skin and exquisite features, and even adding a few ethereal traces to her face.

"Jiang Chen, I had thought that I'd need to wait half a day for you." Dan Fei put down the tea cup on the table with a shadow of a smile.

Seeing that she was smiling, Jiang Chen felt that she likely wasn't here to interrogate him. Almost a month had passed since the birthday banquet so there'd be no point in holding a grudge about it anymore.

Although he'd turned down the old tutor's good intentions, he'd also explained his reasons for doing so. Even if those reasons were made up, he had still taken care to spin them into sincere white lies.

"Young master, you're back. Miss Dan Fei has waited a long time for you." Gouyu had been keeping her company, but it seemed that these two women who had similarly beautiful features, the same impressive body, and same proud natures were destined not to become friends.

The two remained silent for a long time while staring at the empty air.

"Mm, Gouyu, entertain our guest first. I've just been out and am incredibly tired. I'm going to take a shower and get a change of clothes first." Jiang Chen wanted to make use of the opportunity and run away.

Dan Fei laughed softly and said leisurely, "To think that Jiang Chen, renowned throughout the capital and unafraid of even the country's princes would be this afraid of seeing me, a weak woman?"

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully. This woman was a strong character alright. Although she didn't have malice written all over her face and wasn't threatening, but several of her noncommittal words had made it so that he could neither retreat nor advance.

However, Gouyu responded, "Miss Dan Fei, the young master of my house is only treating you with all due respect. He's not afraid of you."

Dan Fei smiled leisurely again, "What a loyal gal. Jiang Chen, to think that you were keeping a young wife in a golden house. You rather know how to enjoy yourself."

Gouyu refused to admit that she was inferior. "Who are you calling gal? Who knows who's the older one?"

Dan Fei smiled, "At least my age won't be smaller than you?"

Gouyu stuck her chest out proudly and said with burning fighting spirit, "Who knows who's smaller if we don't compare ourselves?"

Those who knew what they were talking about would know that they were referring to age. Those who didn't would likely think that they were comparing chest sizes instead after seeing Gouyu's gesture.

These two women had vastly different personalities. Gouyu's enthusiasm raged like fire, whereas Dan Fei's intelligence sparkled with exquisite elegance.

One was a fiery red tree peony in full bloom, and the other a graceful camellia that was still friendly.

These two different women had created a battlefield in the living room, with a battle that saw neither the light of the blade nor the shadow of a sword commencing.

"Alright, alright. Are all women roosters that like to fight?" Jiang Chen was quite depressed as he plopped into a chair. "Sister Dan Fei, speak what's on your mind and don't mind that I'm stinking with sweat."

Dan Fei smiled in satisfaction as her red lips curled slightly upwards, making a small gesture that was an indication of her power at Gouyu.

Gouyu laughed coldly and walked behind Jiang Chen, "Young master, you've had a long day. Let me rub your shoulders and pound your back."

Jiang Chen discovered that these two women were dead set on facing off against each other.

"Jiang Chen, the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill you gave me last time was quite nice. I heard that Elder Ning of the Southern Palace immediately shaved twenty years off her looks after taking it. Your personal maid is so dutiful, so why don't you give her one as well?" Dan Fei chuckled as she asked her question.

Gouyu smiled, "Who says I don't have any? Our young master's given me a ton. I'll have enough to use from when I'm forty years old to when I'm four hundred."

Dan Fei was a bit depressed that her blow had no effect whatsoever.

Jiang Chen hastily changed the topic when he saw the situation. "Sister Dan Fei, what of the honored tutor's Phoenix-Dragon?" He'd wanted to ask if it'd been castrated, but that really wasn't the sort of thing to ask in front of two beautiful women.

"It's all been taken care of and the lordmaster is quite happy. He's told me to come ask you to meet him for a drink. Look, you've kept him waiting for so long. Aren't you an awful person?"

Jiang Chen didn't believe that Dan Fei was merely here to invite him to go drinking. He rubbed his nose. "Ordinary people aren't able to drink the lordmaster's wine. Sister Dan Fei don't try to act dumb, please speak candidly."

Dan Fei shot a swift smile of beauty, "I'll only tell you if you promise me first."

"I promise I'll definitely do it if it's something I can do. But how can I agree to something that I can't do? What if you tell me to run naked through the streets? That I definitely won't do." Jiang Chen started joking around with her as well.

"Who wants you to go streaking? You dratted person." Dan Fei hectored, but she wasn't really angry. "Have you heard of the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt? I have a few spots at my disposal, are you interested?"

"Eh..." Jiang Chen was speechless.

"What? You were just saying that you'd do it for sure if you could do it. You can't even do this?" Dan Fei's charming face was a bit unhappy

Chapter 189: Dan Fei and Her Greatly Shifting Personalities

Jiang Chen could only say candidly that his spot had long since been locked in by the fourth prince.

"That little monkey Ye Rong?" A hint of a crafty smile appeared on Dan Fei's radiant face. "What if I convince Ye Rong to give your spot to me?"

"Um... forming parties and groups are allowed in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt?" Jiang Chen was rather curious.

Dan Fei rubbed her head. She discovered that Jiang Chen was naive to the point of being completely ignorant.

"Duh. Of course parties and groups can be formed for the Autumn Hunt. What's the point of these spots then?"

Jiang Chen still didn't understand, "Sister Dan Fei, with your status, it shouldn't be at all hard to find a few practitioners with an even higher level of training. Why does it have to be me?"

Dan Fei giggled, "That needs to remain a secret for now."

"Not even the right to know? I'm not going!" Jiang Chen shook his head, he was quite dissatisfied.

"If you don't go, do you believe that..." Dan Fei extended a slender hand and made a downward chopping motion. "Do you believe that I'll do to you what was done to the Phoenix-Dragon? Snip snip... huh huh!"

Jiang Chen hadn't thought that the usually pure and fresh Dan Fei would suddenly erupt with such fierce words.

"You don't need to be that vicious, do you?! Why do I feel like you're a human trafficker that deals in young men and boys?"

Dan Fei smiled sweetly. "Good, be afraid! And don't flatter yourself, I wouldn't be able to stomach you."

Jiang Chen was resigned, "I hope that Prince Ye Rong will be able to protect his integrity and avoid falling victim to the snares of a beautiful woman, swapping me out as a result."

"Don't even bother thinking about that! That little monkey Ye Rong won't be able to escape from the palm of my hand." Dan Fei stood up after saying these words and walked leisurely outside, her footsteps ringing out softly.

"Jiang Chen, it's settled then. Remember, I'm not joking. I'll give you the Phoenix-Dragon treatment if you stand me up!"

Jiang Chen's brow creased as he watched this woman with greatly shifting personalities. He discovered that this woman was really a bit tough to handle.

She was occasionally demure and occasionally playful, sometimes fierce and sometimes crafty. She could be kind, and she would sometimes display a disposition that was a bit like a little devil.

"Honored Tutor Ye, how did you cultivate such a unique woman? Did you send her here purposefully for me?" Jiang Chen slapped his forehead. "Gouyu, massage my shoulders!"

He turned his head to discover that Gouyu had walked away huffily.

"No way, both sides hate me now?" Jiang Chen wisened up to the status of the situation to his great dismay.

What Jiang Chen hadn't anticipated was that Dan Fei had actually left to go find fourth prince Ye Rong. Ye Rong did not put up much of a resistance and gave Jiang Chen to Dan Fei.

Ye Rong smiled in his manor, "Jiang Chen, you really can't blame me for this matter. I really didn't want to. However, you know that I'm unable to hold up beneath the onslaught when Dan Fei loses her temper."

Tian Shao smiled, "Younger brother Jiang Chen, it is to your advantage that this matter has yet to be circulated in the gossip mills. You'd be condemned by the public if word got out. Miss Dan Fei has participated in the Autumn Hunt twice in the past. A lot of noble youths wanted to form teams with her in the past, but do you know what happened?"

"What?!"

"Miss Dan Fei didn't approve of anyone and she went at it singlehandedly each time, being a lone beauty. Do you see how bitterly disappointed the young men who wanted to demonstrate their strengths in front of Miss Dan Fei were? You're a character alright. You've been handpicked by Miss Dan Fei, but you wear a woebegone expression. Wouldn't you say that you're not appreciating the happy life that you enjoy?"

Ye Rong also smiled, "Jiang Chen, I actually somewhat admire you. Although us princes had many chances to see Miss Dan Fei every month when we were learning from the honored tutor, of all the chances we've had to spend some time alone with Dan Fei as we grew up, their combined total still doesn't match up to the amount of time for an Autumn Hunt."

Although that was the truth, Jiang Chen's mood wasn't improved by their words. The young men of the capital wanted to form a team with Dan Fei because they wanted to show off their abilities in front of Dan Fei and obtain her favor. This was because Dan Fei was their goddess for one, and they also wanted to gain the honored tutor's favor through Dan Fei for another.

However, Jiang Chen absolutely didn't have these sorts of twists and turns in his thoughts. He had no desires or requests to make of the old tutor, and he had absolutely no thought of purposefully currying favor with him.

Although Dan Fei was a beauty, Jiang Chen hadn't lost his mind and soul or been thoroughly mesmerized by her looks.

If Jiang Chen was someone who lusted after sex, to speak frankly, before he'd met Dan Fei, whether it was Princess Gouyu or Eastern Zhiruo, neither one of them would have a reason to turn him down if he'd nodded his head.

But, Jiang Chen wasn't someone who immersed singlemindedly himself in the pursuit of the fairer sex. Although Dan Fei was quite excellent, ladies who were as accomplished and as perfect as her were often full of thorns.

Jiang Chen was participating in the Autumn Hunt to train and better himself. He actually didn't want to be tied to the side of a beauty.

Particularly when that beauty's thoughts were so difficult to grasp.

"Jiang Chen, I still have two spots. Do you need them?"

Jiang Chen debated briefly and nodded. "I'll take one."

He'd wanted two, one for Xue Tong and one for Gouyu. But when he considered that Gouyu was about to go into closed door cultivation soon to assail the spirit realm, she would be unable to make it in time.

Not to mention, Gouyu and Dan Fei didn't seem to get along. If he was deployed to Dan Fei's team and brought Gouyu as well, it'd be rather inconvenient if the two of them met in the Maze Realm.

After debating back and forth, Jiang Chen still decided to give Xue Tong a spot.

Xue Ting's potential for martial dao was incredibly high. He was an unpolished jade that had yet to be carved.

Someone who'd been living under someone else's roof and hadn't been able to receive the resources needed for training had seen the level of his training suddenly shoot upwards in the short year that Jiang Chen had taken him in. Xue Tong had entered the realm of true qi masters and Jiang Chen held great expectations for him.

When he returned from the fourth prince's manor to his own, Jiang Chen summoned Xue Tong. After Xue Tong had broken through the ranks of true qi master, he'd been solidifying his training during this time.

He would take the Rare Jade Fruit when his level stabilized and push on without stopping to assail eleven meridians true qi.

Xue Tong had been filled with vigor during this time. He felt that the world was filled with beautiful colors and that his world had become so exciting because of his older cousin Jiang Chen.

"I owe a debt of being understood and well treated by elder cousin. I must train hard and become his most reliable underling and help him with his burdens and worries. I, Xue Tong, had no parents since I was young. I lived under another's roof, and if it wasn't for elder cousin Jiang Chen selecting me to be his personal guard, I would most likely still be in the Yinglan Tribe of the Jiang Han territory at this moment, still being bullied and humiliated by his uncle's son, Lan Yizhou. I've now soared into the skies with one astounding feat and become a true qi master, whereas Lan Yizhou should still be wasting his life away in the Yinglan Tribe. At the heart of it all, elder cousin Jiang Chen has given me a second life..."

Xue Tong's thoughts traveled down this path as his footsteps brought him to Jiang Chen's door.

"Young master." Xue Tong really respected Jiang Chen.

"Xue Tong, you're my younger brother. When there's no one else present, you can call me young Chen. Elder brother works as well."

"Elder brother." Xue Tong was a bit nervous. His parents had passed on when he was young. Eking out survival in the cracks beneath that fop Lan Yizhou's oppression had more or less caused him to be a bit timid and self conscious. Even Lan Yizhou didn't allow Xue Tong to call him elder brother, much less than Jiang Chen.

Therefore, out of an inferiority complex, Xue Tong had never dared call Jiang Chen "elder brother."

"Don't stand on ceremony. We're brothers first and then master and follower. Oh right, there's a trial coming up this time called the 'Maze Realm Autumn Hunt'. I've obtained a spot for you, are you interested?"

"Trial?" Xue Tong's eyes lit up. He knew that trials existed in the world of martial dao. Such an environment had existed in the Eastern Kingdom during the Hidden Dragon Trials.

However, only the sons of dukes had such unique treatment. Ordinary practitioners had no right to participate in any such trials.

"Xue Tong, your potential for martial dao is quite good and you've grown quickly in all areas. But now, you lack the trials of life and death experiences and thus, you lack a bit of killing intent and aura." Jiang Chen pointed out Xue Tong's problems. "The Autumn Hunt is a great chance to train, but it also encompasses certain risks. What are your thoughts?"

"I'm willing to give it a try." Xue Tong was quite resolute.

"Alright, it's settled then." Jiang Chen nodded and gave his reminders. "There's still half a month left. With the aid of the Rare Jade Fruit, you'll be able to make an attempt for eleven meridians true qi master. The stronger you are for a trial like this, the more of an advantage you'll have. What levels have you trained the God's Eye and Ear of the Zephyr that I passed onto you to?"

"The two arts have already been trained to the third level. If I practice hard in this half month, I should be able to make it into the fourth level."

Jiang Chen nodded his head with satisfaction. Xue Tong's potential was truly perversely out of the ordinary alright. With the experiences from Jiang Chen's past life building him up, even as a reincarnated son of the Celestial Emperor, his training speed was only about the same as Xue Tong.

To speak candidly, if Jiang Chen's body hadn't been reforged, he'd have only ordinary potential. His potential was better than average only after being reforged.

Xue Tong however, hadn't gone through any reforging and he had trained himself since young, under conditions that lack resources and cultivation.

It could be seen from this how perverse Xue Tong's potential was.

In terms of potential, Xue Tong's was absolutely the highest amongst the eight personal guards. His potential was even higher than Eastern Gouyu's.

If one were to talk about gold being buried in the sand, then Xue Tong was truly gold buried in the sand.

...

As for Tang Long's family, they were silent as they took his younger brother home. They only thought that today's events were simply too farfetched.

They made their way home as Tang Long thought that the matters had been odder and odder.

"Brother, my calf seems to be having a reaction. Help me up to walk around, I really do feel something!" Tang Zhong, suddenly cried out loudly as he sat in the wheelchair.

"What!?" Tang Long had been in a stupor when he leapt up after Tang Zhong's words. His facial expression was agitated. "Tang Zhong, do you really mean it?"

"Yes, yes! I feel that my two legs can stand up and walk for a bit. Brother, help me up to take a few steps."

Tang Long hastily walked forward to hoist Tang Zhong up.

Tang Zhong's legs extended as he made his way up. However, his legs were a bit weak from sitting in the wheelchair for so long and he didn't have much ability to find his equilibrium.

His movements were quite uncoordinated as they moved.

"Brother, do you see this!? I can walk, I can walk!" Tears flowed down Tang Zhong's face as he hollered and yelled.

Tears also flowed out of Tang Long's eyes, "Yes, yes! You really can walk. This means they've truly cured you."

Tang Long's fiancée, that honest young lady, also kept wiping tears away from her eyes on the side.

After making a few rounds, Tang Zhong began to find more and more of his footing, but he was a bit tired.

"Tang Zhong, you've just started to have the feeling back in your legs again, don't be in a hurry. The function of your legs will slowly recover after you take medicine, and you'll be able to walk like a normal person." Tang Long comforted his brother.

"Brother, I'm overjoyed. How do you know such amazing friends? Where are they from? Why is it that all the doctors had no idea of what to do, but he cured me with a few pokes and prods from golden

needles?" Tang Zhong was quite curious and very excited. Their family was born of the lower levels and they'd only ever come in contact with the lowest levels of society. When had they ever made the acquaintance of such strong friends?

Chapter 190: Tang Long Runs into Enormous Trouble

Tang Long was also completely bewildered. Even until now, he still hadn't figured out how his luck had been so good that he could have made the acquaintance of such a strong person.

"Brother, say something. I think I heard that the person who cured me was a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect? Brother, you're so amazing, you can even ask favors of a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect?"

Tang Long smiled ruefully when he saw his younger brother's eyebrows dancing with pleasure. "Tang Zhong, you think too highly of your ole brother. A disciple of the Precious Tree Sect? I'm not even fit to carry their shoes."

"But..."

"Don't but this or that. If I knew a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect, would I have been fired by the border guard? It's difficult for the three of us to even eat now. It's a good thing that we sold the Black Spirit Wood for a bit of money. If we spend thriftily, we should be able to last two or three years on that money." Tang Long returned to reality from his dreams.

He also knew that he'd met someone who could change his life. Last time, at the border, Jiang Chen had been generous to begin with, directly gifting him an upper rank Vast Ocean Pill.

This time in the capital, if it hadn't been for this person, not only would the Black Spirit Wood have been stolen, but his woman likely would also have been beaten to death.

Because of his matters, he'd caused the guy to become embroiled in a case. Even so, Jiang Chen hadn't blamed Tang Long, but had gone on to save his younger brother instead.

Tang Long sighed. He hated owing favors to other people, but he also knew that the amount he owed Jiang Chen would also be unlikely to ever be returned in this life.

"Jiang Chen... just what kind of person is he?" Tang Long was truly curious. "He's not afraid of the Northern Palace; the Dragonteeth Guard can't keep him locked up, and even the disciples of the Precious Tree Sect obey his commands. This... Is Jiang Chen a senior elder of the Precious Tree Sect?"

"Forget it, forget it. He pitied me and happened to offer me some help. I, Tang Long, am born of the earth like an ants. I'm destined to be of a different world from him."

With effort, Tang Long flung away those random emotions and said to the young girl, "Xiaoqing, why don't you go make dinner? We've been busy all day and we're hungry now. The Black Spirit Wood has fetched a nice price, so go buy something that's not only delicious but will also nourish Tang Long so that he'll be on his feet sooner rather than later."

Tang Zhong was greatly touched to hear his older brother's words. "Brother, when I can stand up and walk, I'll go find a job as well. I won't always be the one who'll let you down."

"Silly boy. Our mom and dad are gone. My wife was a child bride who was slated to be mine since young and she also has no mother and father. The three of us are a family and we depend on each other for survival. Who would take care of you if we didn't?"

Tang Long patted his younger brother's shoulder, "Don't think random thoughts. Just concentrate on recovering from your illness for now. You're still young and the road ahead is long."

Although he spoke thus, Tang Long still felt quite tragic at heart when he saw his house that only had its four bare walls. Right now, he was unemployed as well so he needed to quickly find work to carry the family on his shoulders.

His fiancée Xiaoqing silently took some paper money and walked outside the door, ready to buy some fish and protein, anything to nourish her brother-in-law's body.

She'd just stepped out the door when she suddenly screamed, her face ghastly white with fright as she fled back like a frightened deer.

"What is it?" Tang Long hastily ran to the door.

"Tang Long, we've finally found you!"

"Damned fellow, you decided to go home on your own and drag us all down with you."

"Tell us, how are you going to pay up for all this? Did you think that all would be fine after you just walked away?"

Four people had come. They were all youths around twenty years old with weapons at their waist as malice written over their faces. They all looked like they wanted to find fault with someone.

"Yu Dui, what are you guys doing here?" Tang Long felt a bit awkward as he wiped his hands off on himself.

"What are we doing here?" A bald, burly man with no eyebrows pushed Tang Long's chest. "What do you think we're here for? You left your post on your own accord and made us suffer for it. I was dragged in because of you and got caned thirty times. Am I going to just suffer that for free?"

"And us, we were all caned twenty times. Tang Long, how are you doing to pay us for this?!"

The other three team members also called out, completely appearing as though they'd rush up to beat up Tang Long even as they exchanged harsh words.

These people were all Tang Long's companion-at-arms. Although they weren't that close, they had still all worked together in the same team.

"Yu Dui, I was at fault in this matter. I had urgent matters at home and only resorted to leaving when no one approved my vacation request. How about I treat you all one day and we'll eat up at one of the taverns? How about that?" Tang Long met rudeness with a smile as they stood at the door. He didn't step aside and didn't invite these men in to sit either

He knew that although these people were his colleagues, they'd always maintained a mediocre relationship with him. These guys were characters with questionable morals and were renowned thorns in the side of the border guard. They were scoundrels that were half military men and half robbers.

Tang Long disliked what he saw in them and hence interacted very minimally with them. It was apparent that they had come looking for trouble. They wanted to make an issue of this and create trouble for Tang Long.

"Treat us to a meal?" The bald, eyebrow-less Yu Dui smiled sinisterly. "Tang Long, do you think that we're so poor as to be unable to afford even a meal such that we need you to treat us to one?"

"No, that's not it. I'm treating you in order to express my apologies and to thank everyone for previously taking care of me." Tang Long kept his smiling face on.

"Yu Dui, stop wasting words with this kid. Haul him out for a beating. We'll have suffered all those canings for nothing if we don't beat him half to death!"

"Right, this kid usually walks a different path from us. I feel that he purposefully left his post without authorization this time to drag us down with him. There must be some dirty tricks up his sleeve. If we don't beat him up, he'll never know that we brothers aren't someone to cross!"

"Beat him up!"

Tang Long's face changed as he took a deep breath. "Yu Dui, let's chat about this outside, shall we? My family's here, let's not disturb them."

The bald, eyebrow-less Yu Dui chuckled. "Family? Just now, I saw a young lass who looked quite nice. Who's she to you?"

"She's my woman." Tang Long's heart lurched uneasily. He'd heard of this baldheaded eyebrow-less Yu Dui's reputation. This fellow lusted after wine, wealth, and women. Particularly women.

"Your woman? I've heard that she's only your fiancée?" Yu Dui smiled, but he wasn't really smiling.

"Although we haven't held the wedding yet, Xiaoqing's grown up in my household and we've agreed to be husband and wife since young. Yu Dui, these piddling, worthless trivialities of chicken feathers and garlic skin aren't worth dirtying your ears over. Let's take this outside."

Yu Dui swatted away the hand that Tang Long extended and yelled, "Take your hand away! If you reach out again, I'll chop off your dog claws!"

"Tang Long, you can certainly treat us if you want. Have your woman serve Yu Dui wine. If she makes him happy, we can pretend that nothing happened!"

"Yes, yes. Your woman will do. Yu Dui, what do you think?"

Yu Dui chuckled as his fierce gaze traveled over Xiaoqing's body. "Tang Long, have your woman accompany us brothers in a night of drinking and I can promise that I won't pursue this matter any further."

Tang Long's face changed. "Impossible."

“No room for discussion?” Yu Dui’s smile suddenly vanished. “Tang Long, does this mean that you don’t plan on begging us for forgiveness?”

Tang Zhong was trembling from fury as he listened from inside. He couldn’t help but break out in a string of expletives. “You there, is this how you bully men and tyrannize women, oppressing colleagues whilst you wear the uniforms of the army and draw the kingdom’s stipend? Is this still the attitude of the Skylarell Kingdom? Do you still respect the laws of the land?”

Tang Zhong arrived at the door in great agitation as he pushed his wheelchair forward.

Yu Dui blinked. “Is this your crippled younger brother?”

“Haha, is something wrong with your brother’s brain? Bullying men and tyrannizing women? Laws of the kingdom? A cripple like you dares to talk to us about the laws of the kingdom?”

“Do you know what are the laws? We’re strong, and so we’re the law.”

“Damned cripple, get the hell away or we’ll beat you up as well in a bit!”

Baldy Yu Dui’s face darkened. “Tang Long, I’ll give you one last chance. Have your woman come out. We’ll even pay for the wine. We just want her to keep us company for one night and we’ll let her go tomorrow morning for sure.”

Tang Long’s hands trembled. The humiliation!

If he hadn’t been at home, he would’ve taken them on in his anger. But reason told him that if he threw his life away now, then his brother and Xiaoqing would follow him in death.

But if he didn’t give it his all in taking them all, these guys would surely turn to violence. They were all desperadoes who not only had greater statuses and but also better connections than he did. Going against them meant that death was the only way.

“Well?” Beneath his robes, Tang Long’s hand curled into a fist.

“I’ll count down. Ten, nine, eight...” Baldy Yu Dui started counting.

These people were experienced in committing foolish acts and all sorts of evil. They had naturally scouted things out before coming and knew that Tang Long had no background whatsoever. No matter how they bullied him, he’d have no way of coming back for revenge.

They’d actually also heard that Tang Long had a good-looking fiancée. They’d had a bit to drink before this and the alcohol had gotten to their heads. They came crashing over in a heap towards Tang Long, but was actually scheming on his woman.

All that bullshit had been mere excuses.

“Five, four, three...”

Tang Long felt despair encroach upon him. He knew that he had no avenue of retreat. Making up his mind, he decided to give it his all in a single attempt.

Even if he died, he would never let Xiaoqing be violated by these animals. Even if he died, he'd bring down Yu Dui with him!

"Tang Zhong, get inside." Tang Long grabbed the wheelchair and pushed Tang Zhong inside.

"Two, one!" Yu Dui's voice was incredibly cold.

"Beat him to death. Apart from that woman, beat them all to death!" Baldy Yu Dui gave the order.

At this moment, a voice traveled in from outside the small alley, "Tang Long, does Tang Long live here?"

This voice rather stood out.

Even Yu Dui and the others who were about to pounce suddenly paused, not to mention Tang Long.

Yu Dui was ticked off and said to one of his men, "Go take a look and see who's making a fuss. If they don't know what's good for them, then kill them as well."

"Who do you want to kill?" Yu Dui's order had just been given when the voice from outside traveled to the door.

The newcomer was about thirty years old and dressed in casual clothing. He looked like he was a martial dao practitioner as his eyes were as sharp as a falcon's, raking Yu Dui and the four others with a single glance.

"And what are you looking at?" One of Yu Dui's men glared from behind him.

"I'll dig your eyeballs out if you keep looking." Another man threatened.

The man in casual clothing looked up and down the four and burst out laughing. "You're the border guard? Since when did the border guard start acting with such impunity in the capital?"

He was too lazy to pay further attention to these people afterwards and simply looked at Tang Long, "You're Tang Long?"

Tang Long looked at this person. He didn't know him either, but the arrival of someone new at this time was an opportunity. He hastened to nod, "I'm Tang Long. May I know your name?"