

## Time 31

### Chapter 31 - 31 Refining pills

Nevertheless, what others may consider as madness, to Shun Long it seemed completely logical after having understood every single aspect of these medicinal ingredients he was handling.

Shun Long added the 'Blue stripped grass' first and he noticed that it instantly started to 'wither'. Before all of the essence had left the grass though, Shun Long threw in one leaf from the '5-leafed flower'.

The shocking result was that after throwing in the leaf, the 'Blue stripped grass' had a reaction as the half-withered grass coiled itself around the leaf while it was being refined.

Shun Long smiled proudly as he said

"Ha, I knew it that this was the correct way to refine the 'Blue stripped grass'. By adding one leaf from the '5-leafed flower' the medicinal essence of the 'Blue stripped grass' that would have been lost in the air is now all focused around the leaf. The refinement is faster and the efficacy of the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill will be higher in the end. But I have to throw the rest of the flower inside soon or its quality will quickly drop after it has lost one of its leaves."

When he finished speaking, 5 breaths of time had already passed and Shun Long threw the rest of the '5-leafed flower' inside the cauldron.

When a medicinal ingredient was purified, a sizzling sound could be heard as its body would wither and it would leave behind its medicinal essence in liquid form.

The '5-leafed flower' was quickly being refined and Shun Long used his spiritual energy to lower the flame's temperature.

"The 'grisly growing root' has to be refined slower than the previous two ingredients or its essence would evaporate with only a very small amount remaining in the cauldron in the end."

However, even though Shun Long had already lowered the flame's temperature, when he threw in the 'grisly growing root', more than half of the root's essence was instantly lost and his first attempt to refine the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill was a failure.

Shun Long sat down with his legs crossed as he pondered for a bit

"Ahh, although the recipe was perfect, I should have adjusted the temperature of the flame even more. If I had lowered it just before the '5-leafed flower' had finished its refinement process then I wouldn't have failed like this."

Even though Shun Long had absolute knowledge regarding the materials he was currently using, alchemy was in the end a process of trial and error. Even if your theoretical knowledge was perfect, you still had to adapt to any sudden changes during the actual refinement of the pills.

Although Shun Long had failed, he wasn't demotivated in the least. Instead, he was eager to find out if his guess was correct this time.

He rested for an hour to recover the spiritual energy he had expended, before starting the refinement process again from the beginning.

This time Shun Long followed the same steps that he took during the first time, but he lowered the temperature of the flames before the '5-leafed flower' was completely turned into essence.

It took 20 breaths of time for the 'grisly growing root' to be refined after he had thrown it in. Now there were 3 different colors moving inside the cauldron. Blue from the 'Blue stripped grass', light green from the '5-leafed flower' and a dark brown from the 'grisly growing root', each of them guided by Shun Long's spiritual strength to rotate inside the cauldron in a circular motion.

"All I need to do now is extract the 'Honey fruit's' juice before adding it inside the cauldron. Ah, I guess that's why other alchemists need helpers. It really is a tricky situation since you can't remove the juice before you start the refinement process or the fruit will wither and die before a few breaths of time have even passed."

Shun Long was having a really hard time right now. If he stopped the refinement to extract the juice from the 'Honey Fruit', the rest of the essence inside the cauldron would become useless without the support from his qi flames and the support from his spiritual power, eventually dissipating in the air. If he didn't do this though, the entire refinement process will still go to waste eventually without the 'Honey Fruit's' needed support to complete the pill.

"Can I perhaps..?"

Shun Long had a crazy idea in his mind. And yet, although it sounded crazy, once it was stuck in his mind, he couldn't get rid of this feeling. It seemed like something inside him was pushing him to try this idea.

Shun Long took a deep breath, his eyes shining brightly. He circulated the qi inside him as he activated the 'Monarch's Hourglass'. Then he shouted inside his mind

'Monarch's DOMAIN'

The indistinct figure of an hourglass expanded from his body and covered the entire room as time went still.

Chapter 32 - 32 Qi barrier-breaking pills

The indistinct figure of an hourglass expanded from inside his body and covered the entire room as time went still.

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"Crazy!"

Shun Long couldn't help but exclaim after time had stopped in the entire room.

"It really worked. I can manipulate time forcing everything to go still, before finishing the refining process myself."

Although Shun Long was inwardly thinking how much of a cheat his 'Monarch's Hourglass' technique really is, he didn't lose any time daydreaming as he quickly moved to extract the juice from the 'Honey Fruit'.

Right now, he could only keep the 'Monarch's Domain' active for 6 breaths of time. After that, his qi would be sucked dry from the huge consumption of the technique.

A yellow color had added itself into the mix of blue, light green, and dark brown.

Guided by Shun Long's spiritual power, the yellow liquid moved inside the cauldron, before it followed the other 3 colors that were already revolving around each other in a circular motion.

Shun Long stopped the activation of the 'Monarch's Domain' as the invisible figure of an hourglass returned back in his body. And yet, even though less than 3 breaths of time had passed between the activation and the deactivation of the technique, Shun Long still felt that his qi was severely drained.

"Just activating the 'Monarch's Domain' requires so much of my qi. I need to enter the 7th rank of qi condensation soon. I will definitely have more qi then and sustaining the 'Monarch's Domain' will be easier."

The 4 streams of liquid inside the cauldron were guided by Shun Long's spiritual power as they tried to merge with each other.

Shun Long knew that he had reached the most crucial phase in his refinement process.

The lid of the cauldron was now closed as it buzzed incessantly, while Shun Long's mind was fully focused on merging the 4 liquids into one.

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A burst of fragrance came from inside the cauldron as the scent of medicinal herbs suddenly filled the room.

Shun Long stood up and opened the lid of the cauldron as he looked inside.

Two small cyan-colored pills could be seen inside as they emitted a sweet-smelling aroma.

Shun Long quickly gathered both of them and put them inside the bottle that fatty had sent over along with the three sets of medicinal ingredients.

Alchemists stored their pills and herbs in airtight bottles, or else the pills would lose their effectiveness by coming in contact with the air for a prolonged period of time.

After resting for an hour to recover his qi and spiritual energy, Shun Long decided to refine the last batch of ingredients he had left.

Now that he had already succeeded once, the concoction of the pills was even easier the second time around.

The refinement process was even faster than before and there was one more pill inside the cauldron when he opened the lid this time.

Shun Long now looked at the 5 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills inside his bottle and was overjoyed as he thought of the price that they could fetch.

"Normal 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills have a fifty percent chance of allowing someone at the peak of rank 6 to enter the early rank 7 in qi condensation.

My pills however have a seventy percent chance of allowing the people consuming them to directly reach the middle stage of rank 7."

Shun Long thought out loud as he looked at the 5 cyan-colored pills in his hand.

As for reaching the early stages of rank 7?

Shun Long had absolute confidence that anyone consuming his pills would experience a breakthrough in less than 15 days.

This was absolutely unheard of in the entire 'floating cloud sect'.

It had to be known that rank 7 was a dividing line and a cultivator with mediocre talent would need to cultivate for more than a year to reach the early stages of rank 7 from the peak of rank 6 if they didn't use any pills.

But Shun Long's pills could help someone, regardless of their talent, to directly reach the 7th rank in qi condensation in less than half a month.

Shun Long himself understood that his pills would easily fetch a price of 100 sect points each.

The problem was how to go about selling these pills.

He couldn't tell people that he had just refined these himself. The efficacy of his 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills and the ones that were out on the market were on a completely different level.

Shun Long then thought

"I will first try to enter the 7th rank in qi condensation. Then I will consider the matter of selling the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills. The 'Treasure Pavilion' should be my best option but I will think about it again after I complete my breakthrough."

Shun Long sorted out his thoughts before entering seclusion to reach the 7th rank of qi condensation.

Chapter 33 - 33 Breakthrough to rank 7

Shun Long had already received enough food and water from the inn-keeper this time, before entering seclusion to reach the 7th rank in qi condensation.

The bottleneck that other cultivators would meet at the peak of rank 6 wasn't a bottleneck for Shun Long at all, hence why he didn't need the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill for himself.

He sat down cross-legged as he entered inside the space of the triangular-shaped stone.

There were 55 balls of qi above his head, 7 of which were shining more brightly than the others.

Shun Long took a deep breath as he said

"It's time to start."

He then started purifying the rest of the qi balls, his goal was to make them all at the same level as the other 7 above him.

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Days passed while Shun Long was in seclusion, and soon, it was already the 21st day since he had arrived in the 'floating cloud city'.

Shun Long had already reached the early stage of rank 7 but still hadn't exited his seclusion.

After one more week, Shun Long finally stopped cultivating and stood up from his cross-legged position.

His body that should originally be feeling sore after sitting cross-legged for almost a month, was brimming with energy as Shun Long had already reached the peak of rank 7 in qi circulation.

Inside the 'Monarch's Hourglass', there were now 63 qi balls of light, all at the same level of power.

As Shun Long stood up and stretched himself, he started pondering on how to sell his 5 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills.

Suddenly he slapped his thigh as he exclaimed

"Damn, why didn't I think of this earlier?"

He opened the chest he had carried all the way from the 'Blue Forest-city' and searched among the clothes he had brought with him and found a black robe that covered him perfectly.

Shun Long tried wearing the black robe, and after making sure that his face and body were both completely covered, he removed it as he stuffed it inside a small bag that he hanged on his left shoulder.

Shun Long then stuffed the bottle with the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills inside his robes and left his courtyard.

The inn-keeper looked at Shun Long who was just leaving his courtyard and approached him as he said

"Guest, you have used almost the entire month that you paid for. There are 3 more days left. Please remember that the courtyard you are staying in costs 4 sect points each month, so make sure to renew the payment if you wish to extend your stay for another month."

The middle-aged inn-keeper said somewhat amiably, but his eyes betrayed the scorn he felt. He had seen plenty of new disciples like Shun Long, who had just arrived from the 'Mortal world', and instead of looking for ways to gather sect points, they only looked at the short-term benefits of cultivating in the richer aura of the 'cultivation world'. Only when these people's sect points fell to 0 would they understand their mistakes, but it would be too late by then.

Shun Long heard the inn-keeper but he didn't really pay any attention to him.

His mind was fully occupied with the matter of the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills.

Although Shun Long's plan was good in theory, he didn't know if it would actually work.

After asking for directions, he walked for half an hour before arriving at the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

The structure of the pavilion was huge, just as big as the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion's'.

The 'Treasure Pavilion' could be considered slightly inferior to the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion' in terms of luxuriousness, but it was definitely above it in terms of grandeur.

Its outer appearance wasn't any inferior to the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion's' actually.

The biggest difference between the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion' and the 'Treasure Pavilion' was that while only filthy rich disciples like Lu Wen and fatty Fu tended to visit the first, everyone, whether they were rich or poor, would always need to visit the second.

That was because the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion' was a center for entertainment, while the 'Treasure Pavilion' was a place for disciples to buy what they needed.

Shun Long didn't directly walk inside the 'Treasure Pavilion'. Instead, he took a detour and found a secluded alley a few dozen meters away from it.

After making sure that no one was looking at him, Shun Long put the black robe on his body as he headed towards the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

The streets were bustling and as a result, not many people paid attention to his black robes. After all, it wasn't that uncommon for people to put on a disguise inside the 'floating cloud city'.

#### Chapter 34 - 34 Treasure Pavilion

Shun Long walked straight towards the 'Treasure Pavilion's' entrance.

As soon as he entered the pavilion though, he noticed a drastic change in the atmosphere around him.

The air inside the pavilion seemed to be richer in qi, compared to the air on the streets. Also, the loud sounds from the pedestrians on the streets were instantly isolated as soon as he had entered inside the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

It was obvious that the pavilion was protected by many formations, some of which even purified the qi in the air to a certain degree, while others isolated the outside noise.

Shun Long noticed counters everywhere, where disciples working for the pavilion, were stationed to sell the goods on display.

As he wasn't in a rush, Shun Long toured around the first floor of the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

As he walked around the floor, Shun Long noticed that the 'Treasure Pavilion' had everything that a person would need.

Weapons of all kinds as well as armors were for sale in this room. Swords, sabers, spears, wh.i.p.s, hammers, knives, bows and arrows, and many more were up for sale, all of them forged by rank 3 bronze grade formation masters.

Pills from rank 3 bronze grade alchemists could also be bought on this floor. Even rare treasures that could only be activated once but could kill someone above your level were up for sale here, but their prices were all terrifying. The prices for such treasures started at 3.000 sect points and went up to 10.000.

Shun Long was elated to have even found one of the medicinal herbs he needed to refine the rank 2 'internal destruction' pill, that he required in order to reach the first stage of the 'Monarch's Eternal body'.

Sadly he only had 1 sect point on him right now, so Shun Long decided to stop wasting time and hurry and find someone to sell his 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills to.

Shun Long looked around the first floor, but since he didn't find anyone who purchased pills here, he decided to move up to the second floor of the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

The second floor had much fewer people compared to the first floor, and when he walked in he saw a few young girls in yellow robes giving directions to the people who arrived on the floor.

One of the girls in yellow robes approached the black-robed Shun Long as she asked politely.

"Hello, senior, welcome to the 'Treasure Pavilion'. Can Mei Yi assist you?"

Apparently this young girl's name was Mei Yi and she was there to offer instructions to those who entered the second floor.

Shun Long coughed once trying to change his voice in a much heavier than his usual tone as he said

"Yes, I have heard that the 'Treasure Pavilion' both purchases and sells pills, correct?"

Mei Yi looked at Shun Long and replied smilingly

"Yes senior, if you wish to purchase pills, there are many pills of even better quality than the previous floor here on the second floor. However, in case you want to sell pills, chances are that you won't get a good deal as our 'Treasure Pavilion' has a huge stock of many different kinds of pills. Unless of course senior is planning to sell a rank 4 pill or some other kind of rare pill, in that case, things would be different."

Although Mei Yi explained everything clearly and politely, she didn't hold high hopes for Shun Long, as most alchemists who came to sell their pills here, would usually end up leaving dejected. The 'Treasure Pavilion' had its own alchemists to refine pills, and it didn't need to rely on unaffiliated alchemists like them.

Shun Long looked at Mei Yi as he replied again in his heavy voice

"Indeed, I have some kind of special pills that I wish to sell."

"In that case senior, please follow me."

Mei Yi said as she took Shun Long to a relatively big room near the end of the second floor, where alchemists could get their pills appraised. Then she bowed politely as she said

"Senior please wait until I call an alchemist of our 'Treasure Pavilion' to come and appraise your pills."

Shun Long nodded and Mei Yi left the room for a while.

The room was relatively empty, as it only had a big table at the center, and 2 couches on each end of the table. Shun Long seated himself on one couch as he waited for Mei Yi to return.

Less than 10 minutes later, she followed behind a man in white robes who had a white badge with two stars and a tiny cauldron on his chest.

The man looked to be in his early thirties and he had a placid look on his face as he looked at the black-robed Shun Long and sat down opposite to him without asking for approval or any greetings beforehand.

Mei Yi quickly introduced the man to Shun Long as she said

"Senior, this is senior Wong Bo, a rank 2 alchemist, and an appraiser of our 'Treasure Pavilion'."

Shun Long nodded at Mei Yi's words, as he suddenly heard Wong Bo speaking

"Please tell me what pills you wish to sell to our pavilion. Hopefully, you won't waste my precious time."

Shun Long's face smiled underneath his black robes

"I have some 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills, have a look" he said as he retrieved a bottle from inside his robes.

"You called me all the way here for some 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills? Even our rank 1 bronze grade alchemists can create this kind of lousy pill" the arrogant rank 2 bronze grade alchemist Wong Bo exclaimed as he was ready to leave the room.

Shun Long didn't reply to him, all he did was to open the bottle with his 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills and Wong Bo's expression instantly changed.

Chapter 35 - 35 Stunning price

As soon as Wong Bo smelled the fragrance emitted from the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills that Shun Long had brought, his arrogant expression instantly vanished as his eyes focused and he sat straight on the couch opposite to Shun Long.

As an alchemist, he definitely understood that this pill wasn't 'just a Qi barrier-breaking pill'.

Meanwhile, the young girl's Mei Yi's expression had turned completely pale. She had forgotten to ask what pill this senior wished to sell to their 'Treasure Pavilion' before she brought him at the appraisal room.

She stuttered as she said in a weak voice

"Senior Wong, please forgive me. I didn't check what pill this senior wished to sell before I brought him to the room. I-I-It is.."

"Be quiet!" Wong Bo said in a serious voice as he didn't even look at Mei Yi, his eyes completely focused on the bottle of pills in Shun Long's hands.

Shun Long closed the bottle but he didn't return it inside his robes, he just stood seated on the couch as he watched Wong Bo who suddenly stood up.

Wong Bo then bowed as he said

"Senior, please forgive me for my disrespect earlier. I will personally go and call senior Yin, a grade 3 alchemist of our 'Treasure Pavilion' to appraise these pills, please wait here."

Wong Bo's voice was full of pleading, as he kept bowing and apologizing.

Shun Long didn't say anything, he just waved his hand as Wong Bo flashed a relieved smile before he rushed out to call that 'senior Yin' in the room.

'Senior Yin' who was also dressed in the same manner as Wong Bo, except that the white badge on his chest had 3 stars instead of 2, arrived at the room with Wong Bo in tow and when he entered it, his eyes turned to look at the black-robed Shun Long and the bottle of pills in his hands.

'Senior Yin' then said to Shun Long



"This brother, I heard that you wish to sell some special 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills. Please allow me to inspect them for a while before I can give a proper assessment about their effects."

"Indeed, have a look and tell me what you think" Shun Long answered as he placed the bottle of 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills on the table in front of him.

Up to now, neither Wong Bo nor 'Senior Yin' had managed to ascertain Shun Long's level of cultivation, which made them have some doubts in their hearts.

Naturally, they didn't know that Shun Long was training in the 'Monarch's Hourglass' and had completely retracted his aura, and that caused them to assume that Shun Long's level of cultivation was above theirs.

'Senior Yin' then, opened the bottle and his expression was just as stunned as Wong Bo's when he had inhaled this fragrance from the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills earlier.

He took out one pill from the bottle and inspected it very carefully for a while before putting it back inside. Then he prudently returned the bottle of pills in Shun Long's hands before saying

"This brother.. ah no, I mean senior, if you wish to sell these pills to our 'Treasure Pavilion', we would be more than happy to purchase them from you."

Senior Yin pondered for a bit more before gritting his teeth and saying

"There are 2 ways for senior to sell these pills.

The first, if you aren't in a hurry, would be to sell them in our monthly auction which will take place 15 days from now, here in our 'Treasure Pavilion'."

As 'Senior Yin' finished speaking, he took something shiny from his spatial ring and said

"This is the VIP invitation to our monthly auction. If senior decides to attend, you will of course spectate the auction from one of our private VIP booths. I, Yin Xing, hope that senior will attend the auction as there will be plenty of good things to buy."

Shun Long accepted the shiny silver-colored invitation and put it in his robes as Yin Xing continued

"The second way would be for senior to sell the pills directly to our pavilion. Although the profit won't be as high as if senior were to sell them at the auction, our 'Treasure Pavilion' will still buy them at 500 sect points for each pill."

Shun Long almost choked when he heard the price that Yin Xing was willing to purchase the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills at. Normal 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills were only sold for around 50 sect points each, but Yin Xing was willing to pay 10 times the normal price for Shun Long's pills.

Shun Long was shocked but Yin Xing took his silence as a sign of displeasure so he hurriedly said

"Senior, it is not that I'm intentionally giving you a low offer, it is just that although these pills are exceptional and something that I have never seen before, they are still rank 1 pills in the end, as they were concocted by rank 1 medicinal herbs, hence I can only offer you this much."

"Low offer?" Shun Long thought "How is this considered a low offer? I expected this guy to offer me around 100 sect points for each pill, this time I have struck it rich."

Shun Long was lucky that he was wearing the black robes, or his delighted expression would have instantly given everything away.

Shun Long quickly composed himself, and contrary to Yin Xing's expectations he said

"Alright, I will sell them directly to your 'Treasure Pavilion' this time."

Chapter 36 - 36 Gathering Medicinal Ingredients

Yin Xing was extremely excited. This was a never before seen, improved version of the normal 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill, and as a rank 3 bronze grade alchemist, he could easily understand the effects of a rank 1 pill after inspecting it for a while.

"Who knows, perhaps if I'm lucky enough, this senior may even give me the recipe for this improved 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill in the end."

Although Yin Xing had these thoughts in his mind, he didn't try to push his luck in fear of incurring Shun Long's displeasure.

However, Yin Xing was now determined to do everything he can in order to leave behind a good impression on Shun Long.

Since Shun Long had said that he will sell them directly to the 'Treasure Pavilion' this time, he must have meant that he will sell more pills in the future, but he will probably put them up for auction and won't sell them directly to the pavilion like he did this time.

"Perhaps this senior could take a liking in me and accept me as a disciple. Then I will get to learn all sorts of precious pill recipes like this one hehehe..."

Yin Xing had already started daydreaming, and even his drool had started dripping from the corner of his mouth.

Shun Long was a bit disgusted looking at his expression, while Mei Yi's and Wong Bo's faces had turned red from shame.

\*Cough\*

Shun Long coughed once to wake Yin Xing up before he said

"I also need to purchase some things from your 'Treasure Pavilion' this time."

Yin Xing realized his blunder as this was a very shameful display for a rank 3 bronze grade alchemist, so he hurriedly said

"Don't worry senior, just tell me what you need and I will personally go and bring everything over"

Just then a sudden idea came to Yin Xing's mind, as he took something from his spatial ring before handing it to Shun Long

"Senior, please accept this VIP card as a gift from our 'Treasure Pavilion'. It can give you a 40 percent discount on everything that you directly purchase from our 'Treasure Pavilion'.

Unfortunately, this VIP card doesn't count inside our pavilion's auctions, but it may still come in handy for when senior visits our Pavilion."

Shun Long was astonished by this VIP card's features. It had the same use as fatty Fu's privileges inside the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

Shun Long laughed and accepted the VIP card as he expressed his thanks at Yin Xing, before listing out the ingredients he needed

"I need 40 sets of 'Honey Fruit', 'Blue stripped grass', '5-leafed giant flower', and 'Grisly growing root'. I also need a 'white-root Ganoderma', a 'blood lotus' at least 50 years of age, a 'fire-spirit fruit', a 'water element grass' as well as half a bottle of a rank 3 'black-tongued python's' poison.

Yin Xing was exhilarated that he could manage to leave behind a good impression after his previous blunder, but when he heard the second part of the ingredients that Shun Long had listed his face suddenly paled.

He said in an almost crying tone

"Senior, although our 'Treasure Pavilion' has some of these ingredients, I am not sure if we have everything that you listed just now"

Shun Long was a bit disappointed as he had originally thought that he could gather everything in the 'Treasure Pavilion', but in the end, he still waved his hand and said

"I understand, just tell me what is available. I already spotted the 'white-root Ganoderma' on the first floor, but if you don't have the rest of these herbs I will understand."

Yin Xing seemed relieved that the senior was so understanding, and said

"Senior please give me a moment to check, I will be back very soon."

Shun Long nodded and Yin Xing quickly left the room.

Half an hour later, Yin Xing returned, and as he waved his hand the previously empty table was now almost full with medicinal herbs.

"Senior, here are the 40 sets of 'Honey Fruit', 'Blue stripped grass', '5-leafed giant flower', and the 'Grisly growing root'. Their total cost would be 560 sect points, but considering the 40 percent discount of senior's VIP card, the final cost is only 336 sect points."

Then Yin Xing took some more things from his spatial ring as he introduced every ingredient with great zeal

"This is the 'blood lotus' that senior asked for and it is almost 100 years old. Its price with senior's VIP card is only 300 sect points from the original 500, while this is the 'white-root Ganoderma' that senior requires and its final price would be 120 sect points."

Yin Xing then pointed at a small bottle filled with black liquid on the table and said

"Senior, this is the poison of a rank 3 'black tongued python', and its price is only 900 sect points.

I also specifically inquired about the 'fire-spirit fruit' and the 'water element grass' and although they aren't available in our 'Treasure Pavilion' right now, I actually found out where senior can acquire them."

Shun Long's eyes brightened when he heard that Yin Xing had information about the last 2 ingredients he needed.

If he could really get his hands on the 'fire-spirit fruit' and the 'water element grass' and refine the rank 2 'Internal destruction' pill, he would then be able to reach the first stage of the 'Monarch's Eternal body'.

Just based on the scenes that Shun Long had witnessed inside his mind, the power of the 'Monarch's Eternal body' was beyond shocking.

"Where can I find them?" Shun Long asked

Although his tone was heavy, Yin Xing didn't fail to notice the unmistakable excitement in his voice and that made him puzzled

"This senior is definitely someone who has reached at least the rank 1 silver grade as an alchemist, just based on the perfection of his 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills. Although the 'fire-spirit fruit' and the 'water element grass' are relatively rare rank 2 medicinal herbs, they shouldn't be that rare to such a senior or hold so much allure for him."

Although Yin Xing was somewhat puzzled, he still answered Shun Long's question

"They should appear 15 days from now, in our 'Treasure Pavilion's' auction."

Chapter 37 - 37 Arena Match

Shun Long was already interested in participating at the auction, but now that he heard that the last 2 ingredients he needed would probably appear there, attending the auction 15 days from now became one of his top priorities.

"Senior, after deducting the cost for the 40 sets of rank 1 herbs, the 'white-root Ganoderma', the 'blood lotus' and the 'black-tongued python's' poison, our 'Treasure Pavilion' still owes senior 844 sect points for the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills."

Yin Xing said, as he took out his sect identifying jade, and transferred the remaining amount to Shun Long.

Shun Long then, suddenly noticed a problem... he didn't have a spatial ring to carry all the stuff that he had bought today.

He took a deep breath as he thickened his face and said to Yin Xing

"I will also need a big bag."

Yin Xing looked like he didn't understand until Shun Long pointed at a finger on his right hand and said

"Recently I met with an accident and my spatial ring was stolen. Until I find the culprit and get it back, I obviously have to carry everything myself. Hence why I wear these black robes, so I don't get recognized while carrying my stuff with me."

Even Shun Long admired himself and his ability to spout nonsense in broad daylight.

Yin Xing showed a look of understanding as if he had just now realized the senior's predicament and he said to Mei Yi

"Quickly bring a bag for senior."

Mei Yi rushed out and soon returned with a big black bag that Shun Long filled with the ingredients on the table.

Yin Xing's and Wong Bo's eyes twitched, watching those ingredients worth over 1000 sect points fill a bag like they were some kind of cheap goods that you could pick up from the side of the road, but they didn't dare comment on it.

Although Shun Long's face was pretty thick and could ignore their reactions, he still had bought everything that he needed from this trip of his to the 'Treasure Pavilion', so he bade farewell to Yin Xing and the rest as he left to return back to his room at the inn.

After Shun Long left the appraisal room, Yin Xing looked at Wong Bo and Mei Yi and said

"You guys did very well today. But remember, if in the future this senior returns to our 'Treasure Pavilion', you must make sure to inform me immediately."

He emphasized the last words and Wong Bo and Mei Yi both nodded before they all left the room.

On the way back, Shun Long first found an isolated corner near the inn he was staying at and after switching back to his outer disciple robes, he returned to his room where he placed the big black bag that was full of medicinal ingredients on the floor.

Shun Long sighed as he said

"It really is difficult to walk around without a spatial ring. I need to obtain one soon or in the future I will be in trouble if I have to carry so much stuff again by myself."

Although Shun Long had said that, he knew that a spatial ring was definitely very expensive if even fatty Fu didn't have one yet, but he was determined to inquire about it the next time he visited the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

After Shun Long left the black bag with the ingredients in his room, he went to find the inn-keeper to pay the 4 sect points for the next month as well.

As Shun Long now had 845 sect points on his 'sect identifying jade', the measly 4 sect points that his room costed for a month didn't mean much to him now.

After paying the inn-keeper, Shun Long decided to eat outside today. Although he had eaten the food that the inn delivered at his room every day, it was food of the lowest quality, and having to eat that for a month, had already made his stomach grumble.

Although Shun Long couldn't be considered rich right now, with 841 sect points on him, he was definitely not poor anymore, so he chose a relatively good restaurant to eat.

He ate both meat and vegetables until he was full, and although the wine here couldn't compare to the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion's', it was still much better than the plain water he drank every day for the past month that he was locked inside his room.

As Shun Long paid the bill and left the restaurant, he noticed a commotion around him, as most disciples on the street were all heading towards the east of the city.

Shun Long stopped a young man who was running and asked

"Excuse me brother, why is everyone in such a hurry?"

The young man that Shun Long had stopped looked at him as if he was an alien and said

"Haven't you heard? Today is the arena match between Xiao Juyan and Lei Pong. The winner will advance into the top 100 ranks of the arena."

As soon as this disciple finished his explanation, he ran towards the east of the city.

"Arena matches? How interesting."

Shun Long thought to himself as he too followed the rushing crowd.

Chapter 38 - 38 Gathering in the arena

After an hour of walking, Shun Long had arrived in front of a huge arena.

The line that the crowd had formed in front of the arena was so long that it took more than 30 minutes until Shun Long finally entered.

When Shun Long entered and found a seat to spectate the incoming match, he actually noticed a pair of familiar faces staring at him from a few seats away from him.

This pair was Xiao Shitou and Lin Wu.

When Xiao Shitou noticed Shun Long who had just seated himself to spectate the match, he walked over at his side as he said

"HAHA, Shun Long, what a small world we live in."

Then Xiao Shitou lowered his voice as he whispered to Shun Long

"I have not forgotten the humiliation from our fight in the 'Imperial Palace', and I will definitely make sure to pay you back now that I've advanced into rank 7."

Shun Long looked at Xiao Shitou mockingly and didn't even bother lowering his voice as he said

"It's fine, if you won't learn your lesson, I'll make sure to slap you harder this time."

When Xiao Shitou heard Shun Long's words, a humiliating memory resurfaced as his eyes brimmed with anger.

Just then Lin Wu stepped forward as she said in a loud voice, almost as if she wanted everyone here to hear her

"Shun Long, let's see how much longer you can act arrogant for. Brother Shitou's elder brother is senior brother Xiao Juyan and he is ranked 100th on the arena rankings. Brother Shitou is no longer a person that someone like you can offend."

People were startled to find that this young man was actually Xiao Juyan's younger brother.

Xiao Shitou's spirits were lifted when he saw everyone around him looking towards them in shock and with his renewed confidence he said

"Shun Long, if you kneel in front of me now and ask me to spare you, I may put a good word for you in front of my elder brother later. But if you refuse.. hmph, don't think that the second young master of the Lu family can protect you forever."

"Haha, you must think that your elder brother is really powerful huh?"

Suddenly a voice was heard from behind Xiao Shitou and Lin Wu.

When Xiao Shitou turned his head, he saw Lu Wen and fatty Fu, along with another young man with a burly build and bald head standing behind them.

The one who had spoken just now was obviously fatty Fu. As they all looked at Xiao Shitou and Lin Wu, the burly man next to fatty Fu spoke up as he asked Xiao Shitou in a disdainful tone

"Do you think that your brother is invincible in the arena? He is barely scraping at the 100th rank"

Xiao Shitou was enraged at this man who dared to belittle his brother and he asked in a furious voice

"Who do you think you are to dare talk about my elder brother like that?"

Just then, some of the spectators had started whispering between each other

"Hey, isn't that Fu Peizhi?"

"What? The one who is ranked 17th in the arena rankings?"

"Yes, I saw him when he challenged the 15th person on the rankings, Li Shuchun, one month ago."

When Xiao Shitou heard who this burly man was, his courage was instantly deflated as he now resembled a popped balloon.

Even his brother wasn't a match for Fu Peizhi, let alone he who was just at the early rank 7 in qi condensation.

"Why is Fu Peizhi here to watch a match that is going to determine the top 100?"

"Ah, you don't know this? I heard from my cousin who works at the 'Administration Building's' mission section, that Fu Peizhi and Lei Pong are good friends."

Lu Wen's group ignored the conversations around them as they introduced Fu Peizhi to Shun Long.

"Brother Shun, this is my cousin Fu Peizhi, and he is at the top20 in the arena rankings."

"Greetings brother Fu" Shun Long greeted Fu Peizhi, but Fu Peizhi didn't even nod his head in response, not bothering to really talk to Shun Long as he sat on his seat with his eyes closed.

Let alone Shun Long, even fatty Fu and Lu Wen frowned at Fu Peizhi's behavior but Shun Long waved his hand, indicating that he didn't really care as they instead started chatting between the 3 of them.

Fu Peizhi didn't understand why his cousin would associate with this weak country bumpkin who came from the 'Mortal world', but he didn't spare Shun Long a second look as he waited for the match in the arena to start.

Shun Long was the first to speak

"Brothers, why are there so many people here for a match that is just going to determine the 100th spot in the arena rankings?"

Shun Long had already heard this from the discussions around him, but he couldn't wrap his head as to why there were so many people gathered to spectate this match

Fatty Fu then sighed as he said

"In the future, you must definitely enter the top100 ranks of the arena, if you ever want to become an inner disciple."

Chapter 39 - 39 Arrogant Fu Peizhi

Shun Long's interest was piqued as fatty Fu continued explaining

"In the 'floating cloud sect' there are 4 ways to become an inner disciple. The first way is to become a heaven grade expert and be below 100 years old.

The second way would be to be born in a big family like mine or Lu Wen's, then you can directly enter the sect as an inner disciple. However, although this is technically possible, even families like my Fu family or Lu Wen's Lu family can only send very few disciples to directly enter as inner sect disciples. So this method is the most uncommon of them all.

The third way would be for an Elder of the sect to take a fancy in you and accept you as a direct disciple. But because of how strict their requirements usually are, this method is almost as uncommon as the second one.

And the fourth and final way to become an inner sect disciple, is to reach the top100 ranks in the arena and get a chance to fight against an inner sect disciple."

Shun Long then asked

"So if someone enters the top100 ranks, they can challenge an inner sect disciple?"

Lu Wen was the one who answered this time

"It's not exactly like this. However, being in the top100 in the arena, usually means that you are among the 100 strongest outer sect disciples. At the end of the year, you may be given the chance to fight against an inner sect disciple then, and depending on the results of the match, you may be promoted to an inner disciple and be allowed entry in the inner city."

Shun Long looked around him as he exclaimed

"So that's the reason the arena is so full, even though it's just a match for the top100."

"Just the top100? The sect has more than 200.000 outer sect disciples. Is it easy to become one of the top100?" This time it was Fu Peizhi who spoke with unconcealed anger in his voice.

Shun Long understood that he had unintentionally belittled the top100 and that's why Fu Peizhi seemed to be angry, however he wasn't willing to back down as he answered

"Ah I see, so the top100 must be really amazing and untouchable by mortals like me in your eyes right? In that case, what are inner sect disciples to you? Gods?"

It wasn't that Shun Long was intentionally belittling the top 100 outer disciples, but that he himself had already set far loftier goals than that. There was no way he would stop in the 'floating cloud sect's' outer city. His goal was to become so strong that no one else could decide his fate for him, and he knew that he already had the means to accomplish that by training as hard as possible in the 'Monarch's Hourglass' technique.

As for people like Fu Peizhi who had already grown complacent by being in the top20 rankings in the arena? He would sooner or later be surpassed by others with that kind of mentality.

The 'cultivation world' was a cruel one and it wasn't that much different than the 'mortal world' in the sense that you will either eat or you will be eaten. If you didn't strive to become stronger, others would dictate your fate for you instead in the future.

"Exactly! In my eyes you and everyone else from the 'mortal world' are all ants. Even that Xiao Juyan is just a slightly bigger ant in my eyes. I only aim to become stronger as I climb through the arena ranks, and my only opponents are those in the top 15 rankings. I don't put any of you in my eyes as you aren't even fit to talk to me. I don't know what the young master sees in you, but in my eyes you will never amount to anything more than an ant."



After he finished speaking, Fu Peizhi stood up and left.

"Brother Shun, please forgive me. He is usually arrogant but this time he went over the line. Although I'm not strong enough to teach him a lesson just yet, I'll make sure he gets what he deserves after we return to the family."

Fatty Fu's eyes were almost spitting fire at this point as he looked at Fu Peizhi's back.

However Shun Long just shook his head

"It's not your fault so what are you apologizing about? It is obvious that he is too arrogant and he doesn't place anyone here in his eyes however I will make sure to teach him in the future, just how wrong his words from today were."

"Right, with brother Shun's talent you won't take too many years to reach the late stages of the earth grade since you are already at the peak of rank 6 in qi condensation already."

Before Shun Long could respond to fatty Fu's words, sudden exclamations were heard from the crowd as 2 young men had already stepped in the center of the arena.

Chapter 40 - 40 Open secret

"It's Xiao Juyan and Lei Pong"

People in the crowd exclaimed as everyone looked at the center of the arena.

There, 2 young men were standing opposite to each other.

Both of them were wearing yellow robes, however each of them was carrying a different weapon on their backs.

One of them was relatively handsome and was carrying an iron hammer on his back. Shun Long instantly understood who this man was, as his face greatly resembled Xiao Shitou's.

"That person is Xiao Juyan" Lu Wen said as he pointed towards that person with the hammer on his back.

"Sure enough" Shun Long thought as he nodded his head.

"The person with the blonde hair and the spear on his back is Lei Pong who is ranked 101 in the arena rankings"

Fatty Fu interjected and just as he was about to continue explaining, Xiao Juyan started speaking

"Lei Pong, do you really think that you have a chance against me? You already lost to me once and you will definitely lose again the second time"

"Xiao Juyan, don't think that I'm the same person that I was 4 months ago. You were already at the peak of rank 5 earth grade while I was only in the middle stages of rank 5. But today, the result will be different."

"Fine then, show me how things will be different this time around" Xiao Juyan said in a mocking tone, as his entire body started changing into a rock-like substance, while he held his hammer in his hands.

"This is Xiao Juyan's 'rock body'. In the same realm, there is almost no attack that can break through his defenses and harm him."

"That's not for certain, Lei Pong's 'thunderspear art' is extremely strong. Now that he has also advanced at the peak of rank 5 in the earth grade, he can definitely win this time."

The crowd was then discussing how the battle would proceed when Lei Pong took out his spear and rushed towards Xiao Juyan.

"Their fighting styles are completely different. Lei Pong focuses on attacking, while Xiao Juyan focuses on defense"

Just as Lu Wen finished speaking, Lei Pong had arrived in front of Xiao Juyan and his spear pierced towards Xiao Juyan's chest.

Xiao Juyan stumbled 6 steps backwards as he vomited blood. There was no hole in his 'rock body' but parts of his 'rock armor' were broken as they fell on the ground after Lei Pong's attack connected.

Xiao Shitou's and Lin Wu's faces paled when they saw Xiao Juyan being injured.

Xiao Juyan however, didn't look to be in much pain and his rock body was slowly recovering, as he looked at Lei Pong and said

"Your attacks are strong but too bad that you are still no match for me"

Lei Pong looked at him confidently and responded

"Didn't you just vomit blood from just one of my attacks? I want to see what makes you so act so arrogant in front of me."

Just as Lei Pong was about to attack again though, the aura on Xiao Juyan's body started to rise higher and higher, from the peak of rank 5, all the way until it stabilized at the early-rank 6 of the earth stage.

Lei Pong didn't pause his movement as he attacked again, but deep in his eyes, traces of anger as well as dejection could be seen.

Xiao Juyan easily parried Lei Pong's attack with his hammer, as he sent a punch at Lei Pong's chest, who was then sent flying at the edge of the arena

Lei Pong stood up, with blood flowing from his lips as he asked

"When did you reach the early stage of rank 6?"

Xiao Juyan didn't answer his question but instead, he asked one himself

"Do you think that you are the only one who is improving here?"

"Even if you are at the early stages of rank 6, you won't stand a chance against an inner disciple 5 months from now, so stop acting so smug." Lei Pong was exasperated as he said this

"Whether I'm a match for an inner disciple or not shouldn't concern someone like you who can't even reach the top 100, should it?"

Lei Pong dejectedly left the arena, as Xiao Shitou and Lin Wu quickly rushed to congratulate Xiao Juyan, before they leisurely walked out of the arena.

Shun Long was too about to bid farewell to fatty Fu and Lu Wen, when fatty Fu looked at Shun Long seriously

"Brother, you need to do your best and improve your strength as much as possible. I have heard that an alchemist in our 'Treasure Pavilion' somehow found an improved 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill that can allow people to directly enter the early and even the middle stages of rank 7 in qi condensation. I tried to purchase one for you, but they were all bought by some of the higher echelons in the sect."

Shun Long and Lu Wen were both stunned by fatty's words, and a warm feeling started spreading in Shun Long's heart.

"What I'm going to tell you is somewhat of an open secret so pay attention. You need to improve your strength as much as you can in the next 2 months. Because there are 2 months before the outer sect examination begins."