

Time 41

Chapter 41 - 41 Outer sect examination

Fatty Fu revealed something shocking just now.

If there was an outer sect examination and it was an 'open secret', then why hadn't Shun Long hadn't heard anything about it.

Fatty Fu saw that Shun Long had stayed quiet so he explained

"It's an open secret because only people who have been in the sect for more than 3 years know about it. This test mostly concerns the newest 60.000 disciples that join the sect every 3 years, so why would the older disciples go about spreading the news of a sect examination for no reason?"

Shun Long understood that fatty's words made perfect sense. Why would the older disciples help the new ones for no reason?

"Although there must definitely be some new disciples that know about the sect exams, there can't be too many of them. Probably only people like Xiao Shitou who have an older brother inside the sect would know about it. The rest of the disciples are most likely kept in the dark until the sect examination begins." Shun Long thought to himself and surmised that even if he wasn't completely correct, the truth probably wouldn't be that far off from his guess.

When Lu Wen thought about the sect rewards his eyes shone as he said

"Brother, don't take the sect examination lightly. Just the rewards for the top 3, and even the top 10 are enough to make me jealous."

Shun Long couldn't help himself as he asked

"Fatty do you know what the rewards are?"

"Haha I knew that you would be interested. I don't know if the prizes for this year will be different, but 3 years ago the first place winner got a spatial ring, a rank 1 silver grade sword, and 10.000 sect points."

Fatty Fu and Lu Wen were both trying to rouse Shun Long's interest in the rewards, and indeed they were successful as soon as fatty mentioned the spatial ring.

Shun Long was embarrassed when he thought of his previous visit to the 'Treasure Pavilion' and how he had to carry 40 sets of medicinal herbs like they were cabbages.

However, Lu Wen's next words were like a bucket of cold water to Shun Long

"The top 3 is probably to be impossible for you brother, however, if you can manage to somehow reach the early rank 8, you can try to get a good place at the exam."

Shun Long looked at Lu Wen who continued

"It's not that I'm looking down on you brother, but there will be disciples who have reached the peak of rank 3 in earth grade, while you still are at the peak of rank 6. No matter how talented you may be, you can't fight someone who is 6 small realms higher than you."

Shun Long understood that Lu Wen was only looking out for him and he was just trying to be realistic. After all, how could someone who has barely cultivated for less than 5 months by now, fight against earth grade experts?

"Usually, the outer sect examination takes place in the Demonic Mountain Region, but there are some rumors circulating, that this year's sect examination will be different compared to last time's."

After fatty Fu finished speaking, he took Shun Long and Lu Wen to the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion' where they spent 3 hours before deciding to split up.

As soon as Shun Long returned to the inn, he entered his room and started to ponder over what he had learned today.

"Since the information came from fatty, it must definitely be true. In that case, I only have 2 months to strengthen myself before the outer sect examination begins. I also need to refine the 40 sets of ingredients that I purchased from the 'Treasure Pavilion' into medicinal pills before the day of the auction arrives, or I may miss the 'fire-spirit fruit' and the 'water element grass' since I don't know what their final price in the auction is going to be."

Shun Long then took a deep breath before he decided to first refine the 40 sets of rank 1 medicinal ingredients that he had, into 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills.

He sat on the floor as he warmed up his cauldron, before starting refining the pills.

Refining 40 sets of medicinal ingredients was very taxing to Shun Long. After 14 days of constant refinement, he had finally refined all the herbs into pills, when the day of the auction finally arrived.

Chapter 42 - 42 The day of the auction

The day of the 'Treasure Pavilion's' auction had finally arrived.

It was already morning yet Shun Long was still exhausted, lying down on his bed with his eyes closed, as he had been refining pills non-stop with barely any time for himself to cultivate.

However, the results were beyond his expectations. He had managed to fill 12 bottles with 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills, for a total of 120 pills.

In other words, he hadn't failed once in his refinement in the past 14 days. Although part of it was due to the 'Monarch's Domain' cheat like ability that froze time around him, after refining pills for so long, Shun Long's alchemy skills had also advanced exponentially.

Looking at the pill bottles that were scattered around on the floor, all of them filled to the brim, Shun Long felt satisfied with himself. After 2 hours of rest, he stood up from his bed and washed himself, before gathering all the pill bottles from the floor as he started heading towards the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

After checking that he had everything he needed with him, including his VIP card and the invitation for the auction, Shun Long found a secluded corner where he changed into his black robes before walking towards the Pavilion's entrance.

Although there were 3 hours until the 'Treasure Pavilion's' auction begun, there was already a huge line outside the entrance, all of them were disciples wanting to participate in the auction.

Shun Long had no other choice but to walk towards the end of the line, as he patiently waited for his turn to enter.

A pair of young outer disciples who were waiting in front of Shun Long had started chatting

"Hey, I heard that the fee to enter the auction is 100 sect points. Do you think everyone in front of us has that many sect points"?

"Tsk, what do you know? You won't even be able to buy the cheapest things with 100 sect points in the auction. This 'fee' is just to stop people from overcrowding the auction when they don't have any sect points and yet they still try to enter." the second young man clicked his tongue as he looked disapprovingly at the man beside him.

Half an hour passed like this, when suddenly a person in green clothes walked from the side of the line, completely ignoring the people queuing up, as he headed straight for the 'Treasure Pavilion's' entrance.

"Hey, where is this guy goi.." The young man in front of Shun Long was about to protest before the man next to him slapped his head from behind

"Do you want to die? Don't you see that he is wearing inner sect disciple robes?"

"So what? There are other inner sect disciples here and they are also queuing up in front of us, so why can this guy walk all the way to the entrance?"

"How ignorant can you be? He probably has an invitation from the pavilion." The man next to him was exasperated as he kicked his friend.

As soon as these words left his mouth, they both fell silent, while the young man in green clothes had completely ignored the discussions around him as he walked towards the entrance.

There, 2 young women in outer disciples robes welcomed him, as the young man showed them his shiny silver-colored invitation. After verifying it, the 2 young women politely escorted him inside.

As soon as Shun Long had seen the man's invitation, he understood how dumb he himself was.

Of course those with an invitation wouldn't have to wait in line for so many hours.

Shun Long left the line as he walked straight to the pavilion's entrance.

"Hey, isn't that the man who was behind us just now? Senior brother don't tell me that you think that he also has an invitation."

The 2 young men that were in front of Shun Long had started conversing again as they saw him nearing the pavilion's entrance.

The 'senior brother' didn't comment but he just quietly shook his head, indicating that this man probably wouldn't have an invitation, after all the invitations from the pavilion weren't cabbages.

Shun Long ignored the discussions around him, as 2 young girls in outer disciple robes asked him for his invitation.

When Shun Long took out his shiny silver invitation, the 2 young girls inspected it before one of them rushed inside quickly.

"Haha senior brother, do you think that this guy came here with a fake invitation? Or else why haven't they granted him entry yet."

"Haha, your guess makes sense junior brother, I think that you are probably right."

Just when the crowd around Shun Long was sneering at him for trying to enter with a 'fake' invitation, a hurried voice was heard rushing from inside the pavilion

"Senior, please excuse me for making you wait"

When the people outside saw the owner of this voice, their jaws all dropped to the ground as the area outside the pavilion had suddenly turned so silent, that even a pin drop could be heard.

Chapter 43 - 43 Putting up for auction

The person that was hurriedly rushing from the pavilion was Yin Xing, the genius rank 3 bronze grade alchemist of the 'Treasure Pavilion'.

Every invitation from the 'Treasure Pavilion' had the personal mark of the person who had created it and Yin Xing's invitation wasn't any different.

Since he knew that this senior would be coming today, Yin Xing had ordered the people at the entrance to immediately inform him if a person who was dressed in black robes and was carrying his invitation were to appear today.

As soon as the disciples stationed at the entrance recognized Yin Xing's personal mark in Shun Long's invitation, they rushed to inform him that the person he was waiting for had arrived, and Yin Xing in turn hurried towards the entrance.

"Senior please come in."

As soon as Shun Long and Yin Xing had disappeared inside the pavilion, the people outside started whispering

"Senior brother, could it be that this person is some kind of senior alchemist who is of even higher rank than alchemist Yin? Wouldn't such a person be at the silver grade then?"

His senior brother nodded his head as he said

"Mhm, he must definitely be at least in the silver grade if senior Yin came rushing and was so polite to him"

While these discussions were taking place at the pavilion's entrance, Yin Xing was guiding Shun Long deep inside the first floor, towards the depths of the 'Treasure Pavilion' where 2 huge doors were wide open and guards were stationed at the sides.

Shun Long followed Yin Xing as they entered inside, and he noticed that there were 2 paths that they could follow. One path was leading straight ahead after entering the doors, towards the 'outer seats' where people without invitations would sit. Yin Xing instead led Shun Long through the side entrance until they reached the private booths, where only people with invitations were allowed to seat themselves.

"Senior, this way please" Yin Xing said as he pointed towards a private booth with the number 6 on it.

Shun Long entered inside and Yin Xing followed behind him.

Although the room was relatively small, in terms of luxuriousness it was perhaps even superior to the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion'.

The room had a luxurious red couch on the center and a table in front of it filled with food and wine. The 'Treasure Pavilion' had paid a lot of attention to the decorations of these rooms, as they were all meant for important people.

Shun Long took a look at the room before turning his head to look at Yin Xing who was standing behind him and was looking at him eagerly.

Shun Long laughed before saying in that altered heavy voice of his

"Do you have anything that you want to ask?"

Yin Xing hurriedly shook his head as he answered

"No senior, I just wanted to know if you find everything to your liking."

"Yes, everything is good so far. Especially this couch that is made from the fur of a peak rank 2 'scarlet furred wolf'" Shun Long answered

Yin Xing's eyes shone as he said

"As expected from a great alchemist such as senior, you understood what the couch is made from just by throwing a single glance at it"

Yin Xing was honestly impressed by Shun Long. A great alchemist had to know, not just how to mix medicinal herbs, but also have a wide knowledge regarding magical beasts.

Shun Long of course had absorbed so much knowledge regarding medicinal herbs, magical beasts, and even the human body, that it was child's play for him to understand that this couch was made from the fur of a peak rank 2 magical beast.

Yin Xing looked at Shun Long eagerly as he asked

"Senior, do you happen to have any more of those 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills?"

Shun Long just smiled under his robes as Yin Xing continued

"To tell the truth to senior, the 5 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills that senior sold to our 'Treasure Pavilion' last time were bought by 2 high-rank Elders of our sect, and they have been pressuring me about them ever since."

Shun Long felt somewhat afraid inside as if his identity were to be exposed, who knew how the sect would react if they were to learn that a rank 7 outer disciple can refine these kinds of medicinal pills? He took a deep breath to steel his nerves and said in a very heavy and stern voice to Yin Xing

"I hope that there won't be any people learning of our deal, otherwise you can forget about obtaining a single pill from me in the future."

Yin Xing could make out the irritation in Shun Long's voice and hurriedly said

"Senior please rest assured. Although I said that the pills were bought from some mysterious senior, I, Yin Xing would never leak things that senior doesn't want other people to know."

Shun Long nodded his head and said

"That's good then"

Then he took out 12 bottles of pills, with 10 pills inside each bottle as he said

"Here are 120 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills. Do you think you can put them up in today's auction?"

Yin Xing's eyes shone with excitement when he saw the pills.

Chapter 44 - 44 Auctioning the pills

Yin Xing's eyes shone with excitement as he happily nodded his head at Shun Long's question.

The higher-ups of the 'Treasure Pavilion' had pressured him quite a lot to reveal the creator of these special 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills, however, when they noticed that Yin Xing wouldn't reveal anything they eventually gave up but they still told him that he had to do everything he can to get more of these pills.

Yin Xing had heard that some of the seniors in the sect had gifted these pills to their disciples and just a few days ago, 3 of those disciples who had consumed these pills had left seclusion while their cultivations had sky-rocketed from the peak of rank 6 in qi condensation all the way to the middle of rank 7.

This was many months of hard work, all skipped thanks to one pill.

It was natural that people would go crazy for it.

Yin Xing received the pills as he said to Shun Long with excitement

"Don't worry senior, I will definitely place the pills at the end of the auction."

Shun Long shook his head as he said

"I want you to put the pills at the start of the auction, the closer to the start the better actually. I also want you to sell them in 4 different batches, 30 pills at a time."

Yin Xing was baffled as he asked Shun Long

"But senior, isn't it better to put them towards the end of the auction so that they can be sold for a higher price? Usually, the more expensive goods are always placed at the ending of the auctions."

Shun Long knew that Yin Xing was right, but he wanted to know how much the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills would be sold for, so he could use the sect points from the profits to bid for the 'fire-spirit fruit' and the 'water element grass'.

Yin Xing didn't seem to understand but he still listened to Shun Long and left the room to quickly arrange for the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills to be auctioned as early as possible.

Shun Long sat on the couch and he could see everyone below who was sitting on the 'outer seats', while he also had a clear view of the main stage where the auctioneer would stand on.

Time quickly passed and soon, 2 hours had already gone by.

The private rooms were now almost full while the outer seats below didn't have any more room for people to sit.

The lights of the 'Auction Hall' slowly dimmed as a beautiful young woman in green clothes had appeared at the main stage down below.

Shun Long's eyes widened as he recognized her.

The young woman smiled to the crowd as she said

"Honorable guests, welcome to our 'Treasure Pavilion's' monthly auction. I, Lan Jinjing will act as your auctioneer today. I hope that you are all excited, as we have many special treasures for today's auction."

As soon as she finished speaking, the crowd in the outer seats started to silently discuss

"Isn't that miss Lan Jinjing? I thought that she acts as the auctioneer only for the yearly auctions of the 'Treasure Pavilion'. Why is she participating in the auction of this month?"

"I also saw Elder Lu Niu and Elder Meng Liang enter earlier. Could it be that there are some special treasures in this auction?"

The beautiful auctioneer, Lan Jinjing was the girl who was next to the stunning Liu Mei whom Shun Long had met when he visited the 'Alchemist's Guild'.

Lan Jinjing gestured with her hand and the crowd quietened, as she started speaking

"I'm certain that everyone here knows the rules. Every item starts with a minimum price, and the guests with the highest bid in the end can obtain them. Without further ado, this month's auction officially starts now"

Lan Jinjing said as she clapped her hands, and 2 outer disciples carried the first item for the auction on the main stage, a black bow.

"Dear guests, the first item for today's auction is a creation of master Dugu's the 'air-piercing bow'. As you all may know, 'Formation master Dugu' is a rank1 silver grade formation master and although this bow is merely at the pinnacle of rank3 bronze grade, it is a perfect weapon for anyone below the Heaven grade who is proficient in archery

The minimum bid is 1000 sect points and every increment must be at least 50 sect points higher than the last bid"

"1050"

"1120"

"1190"

In the end, the black bow was sold for 1500 sect points to an outer disciple girl who was sitting at the outer seats.

After 2 more items were sold, the auctioneer Lan Jinjing took a deep breath as she said

"The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh items in today's auction are a bit special. Originally our 'Treasure Pavilion' would put them towards the end of the auction but the senior who sold them insisted on them being auctioned at the start."

A small table was carried at the center of the main stage and 3 small bottles with 10 pills inside them could be seen as Lan Jinjing continued explaining

"These are some very special 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills that can help people at the peak of rank 6 to directly advance to rank 7. Our pavilion has also verified that there is a high chance for those who consume these pills to directly reach the middle of rank7 in qi condensation."

As soon as these words were spoken, before Lan Jinjing could list the minimum price of the pills, the crowd had already erupted in an uproar.

Chapter 45 - 45 Water element grass appears

Lan Jinjing understood how amazing these pills were. As a cultivator, directly skipping a minor stage of a rank in cultivation, would save you at least a few months of work.

However, she still motioned for the crowd to quiet down as she said

"There are a total of 120 pills for sale this time, all of them will be auctioned in 4 batches of 30 pills."

When the crowd heard that, many people in the crowd were disheartened that they couldn't buy each pill individually, but the eyes of the richer people inside the private rooms were shining as they were eagerly waiting to start bidding.

"Who knew I would be so lucky today? I came here for the 'golden lion cub', but stumbled upon this instead."

"Haha Meng Liang, I'm sure that I have more sect points than you. Can you afford to not bid for these 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills? But if you do then how are you going to compete with me for the 'golden lion cub'?"

The voices originated from 2 different private rooms.

The 2 people who spoke were Elder Lu Niu and Elder Meng Liang.

Although the 2 of them were friends and were used to bantering with each other, Elder Meng Liang knew that Lu Niu was right.

He gritted his teeth as he said to a young disciple who was standing beside him inside the private room

"Quickly return to the family and ask the Patriarch for more sect points. Inform him that the 'Qi barrier-breaking pills' have appeared in the auction and we probably won't have enough sect points to bid for the 'golden lion cub' later."

The young man quickly acknowledged the order as he rushed back to quickly inform his patriarch.

"The starting price for the first 3 bottles of pills is 6000 sect points and every increment must be at a minimum of 100 sect points"

The crowd below was startled at just the starting price of the pills but the people in the private rooms weren't daunted at all by the high price.

"7000"

"8000"

"I, Li Wei bid 10.000 sect points. I hope that the fellow daoists will give me some face" suddenly an elderly voice shouted.

As soon as this voice was heard many people stop bidding. Elder Lu Niu said then

"If senior Li Wei wishes to purchase this batch of pills then of course I won't compete with you"

"Right, I am intrigued by this new recipe to create the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill. Even though it's a low-level pill, it can prove helpful in my research" Li Wei answered from his private room.

Shun Long frowned that this old man wanted to purchase his batch of pills and for such a low price. Shun Long had originally estimated that every 3 bottles of 'Qi barrier-breaking pills' would be sold for at least 12.000 sect points but this old man shamelessly used his status when bidding to deter others from competing with him. As an accomplished rank1 silver grade alchemist, people would be unwilling to offend Li Wei just for 3 bottles of pills, especially when there were 9 more bottles for sale.

However, Shun Long was clearly dissatisfied with Li Wei's way of manipulating the prices so he shouted in a heavy voice

"15.000 sect points"

Everyone was agape as they heard Shun Long's altered voice. Not just because '15.000' sect points was an astonishing amount of sect points but because someone dared to so openly go against 'Alchemist Li Wei'.

"Who is that person?"

"I wonder who is this person who doesn't even give 'Alchemist Li' face."

Li Wei frowned and his voice was full of displeasure as he asked

"This friend I wonder who you are?!"

Are you certain that you want to bid against me?"

"Tsk, old man, you think you can get my pills for free? Today you will either lose all your face or your money. As for obtaining the recipe for my 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills? That's just wishful thinking' Shun Long thought inside as he felt that he had just released all his anger with his bid.

Li Wei waited for a response but since he received no reply he declared in a voice that was obviously feeling extremely irritated

"20.000 sect points. If this friend is willing to offer more than this old man then I will allow you to get these 'Qi barrier-breaking pills' here" he said as he looked towards Shun Long's private room.

"Hahaha, congratulations 'Alchemist Li'. I wouldn't pay 20.000 sect points for a few rank 1 pills but I must still congratulate you for being so well-off that you can easily squander 20.000 sect points like that."

Shun Long said laughingly. Originally, tampering with the prices by bidding for one's own treasures during the auction was forbidden, but since only Yin Xing knew that the black-robed Shun Long was the seller of the pills, Li Wei couldn't find out anything if Yin Xing didn't betray him.

In the end, the first 3 bottles of 'Qi barrier-breaking pills' were purchased by Li Wei for the price of 20.000 sect points but he was actually extremely angry and determined to find out who this black-robed man was, as soon as the auction was over.

Lan Jinjing sent someone to deliver the pills at Li Wei's private room as well as collect the payment of the 20.000 sect points, before 2 other disciples brought forth the next 3 bottles of pills.

Many people in the private rooms bid for the pills the second time around and in the end, this batch was purchased by Elder Lu Niu for 12.700 sect points.

The third batch and fourth batch of pills were all sold at 13.000 and 14.000 points each.

Yin Xing arrived at Shun Long's private room and he was holding a sect identifying jade in his hands as he said respectfully

"Senior, I have come to deliver you the sect points. The final amount that the pills were sold for was 59.700 sect points. Extracting the 5 percent fee of our 'Treasure Pavilion' which comes at 2.985, the total amount that we owe senior comes down to 56.715 sect points."

Yin Xing then transferred the sect points to Shun Long and just as he was about to speak Lan Jinjing's voice sounded as she introduced the next item of the auction

"Honorable guests, our next item is a rare rank 2 medicinal herb that I am sure many of you are interested in, it is the 'water element grass'."

Chapter 46 - 46 Terrifying pressure

"Our next item is a rare rank2 medicinal herb, the 'water element grass'."

As soon as Lan Jinjing finished speaking, Shun Long's eyes shone brightly as his attention was all focused on the main stage of the hall where 2 disciples were carrying a bottle with a blue-colored grass inside it.

"The minimum bid for this water element grass will be 500 sect points and every increment has to be at least 50 sect points"

"600"

"700"

"1000" Shun Long's heavy voice was heard from inside the private room.

"1100" Surprisingly a young man's voice was heard from the outer seats as he competed with Shun Long for the 'water element grass'

"2000" Shun Long said in the same tone as before. The 'water element grass' was extremely important to him as he needed it to refine the rank 2 'internal destruction' pill.

The young man from below contemplated for a bit but still gritted his teeth as he declared

"2200 sect points"

It was obvious that this young man also needed the 'water element grass'

"3000" Shun Long called again making the young man in the 'outer seats' to feel dejected.

People in the hall were shocked that the price of the 'water element grass' had reached double of its market price. Usually a stalk of 'water element grass' would be sold for 1300 sect points.

Even if the price went up, it wouldn't exceed 1500 sect points but Shun Long had already bid 3000 sect points for it.

After Shun Long's bid of 3000 sect points, no one competed with him for the 'water element grass' any longer and the staff of the 'Treasure Pavilion' sent someone to deliver it to his private room as well as collect the payment.

After Shun Long got his hands on the 'water element grass' he mumbled

"Now all I need is the 'fire-spirit fruit'."

Yin Xing looked like he something to say something but he didn't know how to say it. Shun Long turned his eyes at him and said

"If you want to say something, just say it"

Yin Xing nodded his head as he responded

"Senior, although no one of the upper echelons of our pavilion would care even if they knew that you slightly inflated the price of the first 3 bottles of 'Qi barrier-breaking pills', I'm afraid that problems could arise due to senior Li's identity.

Senior Li is a high-ranking member in our 'floating cloud sect' and I fear that he may try to create some problems for senior when you leave our 'Treasure Pavilion'."

Shun Long nodded at Yin Xing's words but he couldn't show any fear for Li Wei or that could expose his identity. After all Shun Long was supposedly a high-level alchemist himself as well. After thinking about it for a bit he said

"Although I'm not afraid of any problems that this Li Wei may try to cause me, I still don't want to waste my time with him."

The unconcerned manner in which Shun Long spoke had truly fooled Yin Xing who then replied

"Then if senior doesn't mind, how about you leave the pavilion after obtaining everything that you require."

Shun Long pondered for a bit before nodding his head

"Not a bad idea. Then let's follow your plan." Shun Long said in that unconcerned but heavy voice of his.

Yin Xing wiped the sweat from his forehead as he thought inside

"Thank god that senior is so aloof and doesn't care about fighting with others over minor matters, otherwise if I had to meditate over their fight with senior Li I wouldn't have enough layers of skin to save myself."

What Yin Xing didn't know was that Shun Long was also trying to find a way to avoid Li Wei or that would end up exposing his identity if they were to actually fight. After all, Li Wei had definitely reached the Heaven grade being a silver grade alchemist, and Shun Long would be helpless in front of him if they were to truly fight.

"I have to become even stronger. The rate at which I'm progressing isn't enough. People like Li Wei, and even people like Yin Xing are already far stronger than me. If I want to establish a foothold in the 'cultivation world' I will need to become even stronger than these people. I will do my best to reach the Heaven grade, as only then will I be able to fight with people like Li Wei."

Just as Shun Long was about to sort out his thoughts, with his goal of reaching the Heaven grade, the triangular-shaped stone sucked in his consciousness, and an insanely strong force repelled everything around Shun Long.

The decorations in the room and even the couch created from the fur of a rank 2 magical beast were all blown to smithereens while Yin Xing who was at the door of the room was thrown outside like a cannonball.

Everything in a radius of 10 meters around Shun Long was repelled and the heavenly pressure that his body seemed to exude could be felt by everyone in the entire 'Auction Hall'.

Everyone felt like they were about to be pulverized from this terrifying pressure as they couldn't even breathe properly. Even Li Wei was on his knees inside his private room due to this terrifying pressure. His eyes were full of terror as he looked towards Shun Long's room and thought of the man who he had wanted to take revenge against, that was now exuding such a pressure.

Chapter 47 - 47 Desires

Shun Long could feel that the triangular-shaped stone was releasing a suppressive aura outside his body but his consciousness was all sucked inside the triangular-shaped stone.

This time he hadn't arrived in the space where he practiced his 'Monarch's Hourglass' but had instead been sucked inside a pitch-black space without the slightest trace of light.

Shun Long couldn't see anything around him when a dignified voice that came from inside the darkness asked him

"What do you want?"

Shun Long was puzzled as the voice asked him again

"Do you want power?"

Shun Long didn't know if it was the triangular-shaped stone that was asking him or if it was someone else, but because the stone had directly merged with his soul, he had always felt as if the stone was part of him so he replied

"Are you the little stone?"

The voice repeated the question

"Do you want power?"

Shun Long nodded his head as he answered truthfully

"Yes"

"How much power?" The voice asked him again

Shun Long then thought for a bit before replying

"Enough to beat Heaven grade experts at least"

For the first time, the voice from the darkness showed some emotion as it laughed and said

"Heaven grade experts? Then what will you do if you meet someone at an even higher level than a Heaven grade expert?"

Shun Long hadn't thought that the voice would ask him such a question and for the first time, he didn't have an answer in his mind.

The voice then asked him

"What is your goal?"

Shun Long thought deep and hard for a long time

"What is my goal...?"

Slowly Shun Long replied

"I want to be free."

"What else?" the voice asked

"I want to control my own fate."

"What else" the voice repeated

Shun Long didn't know what to answer as the voice spoke again

"Search deep inside you. What do you really want?"

"I want to live more.

I want to experience everything in this world.

I don't want to be constrained by others.

I want to stand at the top of this world.

I want to become the strongest person.

I want to be the one in control."

Desires poured out of Shun Long's heart while his voice grew louder and louder as he kept listing more and more things. Desires were easy to suppress if you kept them in the dark, but hard to control if you showed them even the tiniest bit of light.

"Hahahahahahaha! YES that's it! Desire more, ask for more. Use your own hands master. You are allowed to stand at the peak of this world this time, as the owner of the 'Stone of Time'."

"Master?" Shun Long asked questioningly

The voice grew weaker and weaker

"....I will follow you no matter what, as you are my master"

In the end, the voice was almost inaudible as the darkness slowly receded. It all condensed at the center of this space into a pitch-black egg.

This egg was at the size of a human and although it was pitch-black, there were various ancient symbols on top of it, as it emanated a berserk and powerful aura.

Now that the darkness had receded, Shun Long could see the space around him. It was 30 square meters big and the only thing on this space aside from the black egg was the soil on the ground.

When the darkness was condensed into the pitch-black egg, the aura that burst out from Shun Long's body had startled the entire 'floating cloud sect', before it returned back inside his body.

Be it the 'outer city' or the 'inner city', from the weakest outer disciples to the Elders, everyone was alarmed by this burst of powerful aura as they fell to their knees, all of them unable to breathe.

In the depths of the 'inner city' inside a restricted area, there was a luxurious mansion. A man who seemed to be in his early forties was sitting on his bed when he had sensed the burst of aura from the 'Treasure Pavilion' as he spat out a mouthful of blood.

His eyes looked towards the location of the pavilion in the 'outer city' and after that horrifying aura was retracted back to its source the man stood up.

"Could it be that some powerful senior has arrived in my 'outer city'?" The man mumbled to himself

This man was the strongest person in the entire 'floating cloud sect', the sect master Liu Jian.

After sensing this aura he issued a summons to the Elders of the sect, ordering all of them to convene at the 'inner city's' main hall.

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Shun Long's consciousness had been returned to his body before he had time to explore the newfound space in the triangular-shaped stone. However, he clearly remembered that the voice in the darkness had called the little stone 'Stone of Time' as well as Shun Long its master.

Before Shun Long had time to ponder over things, heavy breathing could be heard from the entire 'Treasure Pavilion' as people could finally breathe again.

Chapter 48 - 48 Above the spirit realm?

Before Shun Long had time to ponder over things, heavy breathing could be heard from the entire 'Treasure Pavilion'. Everyone could now breathe again as they looked at Shun Long's private room with different emotions in their eyes. There was horror, reverence, awe, excitement, fear, worship, and more, all at the same time.

Yin Xing who had shot like a cannonball outside of the room earlier, was now looking at Shun Long's back with admiration and fanaticism.

As the loud gasps for air stopped, the entire 'Treasure Pavilion' was bathed in silence. Nobody dared to utter a word and most people were drenched in sweat from head to toe by now.

Shun Long turned to look at Yin Xing who still on the floor outside the room. Then he looked around the room and noticed that everything was destroyed leaving it completely empty inside.

"Yin Xing, are you okay?" Shun Long asked with a bit of embarrassment in his heavy voice. After all Yin Xing was a rank 3 bronze grade alchemist and yet he had ended like that, just by being around Shun Long.

Yin Xing waved his hands hurriedly as he stood up and said

"Of course, senior, thank you for asking." Yin Xing felt flattered that the senior called his name directly. This person was definitely stronger than 'Alchemist Li Wei'. The aura he had emitted earlier was definitely not in the Heaven grade. As Yin Xing thought of the fact that this senior is probably above the Heaven grade, he started trembling with excitement and was even more determined to forge a good relationship with Shun Long as he then asked nervously

"Uhh senior, did something happen earlier which caused you to release your aura?"

Shun Long understood what Yin Xing was talking about. Of course, that aura didn't belong to Shun Long but to the triangular-shaped stone, however Shun Long had to give an excuse after destroying the entire room so he said in his heavy voice

"Earlier, something happened that drew my attention so I couldn't help but accidentally release my aura." Since Shun Long didn't explain explicitly what had happened and Yin Xing didn't ask for

more details about that. If the senior didn't want to explain more then he wouldn't mindlessly pester him about it. Instead he switched the topic as he asked Shun Long

"Senior, about the auction..?"

"Right! Yin Xing, are there any other private rooms available? If not, this one will do as well, although we may need another couch."

"Senior means that you still want to participate in the auction?"

"Of course, isn't that what I came here for?"

"Okay senior don't worry, I will make all the necessary arrangements."

Yin Xing truly made the arrangements he had promised, as just half an incense stick of time later, he took Shun Long to another private room, and this one was even slightly bigger than the last one they were in earlier. He also informed the higher-ups of the 'Treasure Pavilion' that what happened in the room was an accident, and that the mysterious senior wishes for the auction to keep going.

The higher-ups of the pavilion didn't raise any questions and instead ordered Yin Xing to do his best to forge a close relationship with that person before they called Lan Jinjing and told her that she should continue with the auction.

Although the crowd was still terrified by the earlier aura outbreak, Lan Jinjing's exceptional skills as an auctioneer had managed to divert everyone's attention, and people had started bidding again in no time.

Meanwhile in the 'inner city,' the main hall was almost full as the Elders of the sect were standing in front of the main seat, where the sect master has sitting on. The Elders in the hall were the strongest people in the 'floating cloud sect. Even the weakest person in the room was at the early stages of rank 7 in the Heaven grade.

"Sect master, what was that aura earlier?"

"Could it be that sect master had a breakthrough?"

"Ah yes, that must be it! Who else could release such an aura in the entire 'floating cloud city'?"

Liu Jian motioned with his hand for everyone to be quiet before he said

"That frightening aura didn't come from me. Even if I managed to breakthrough and reach the middle stages of the Spirit realm, I still wouldn't be able to unleash such an aura."

Then he took a deep breath as he said

"Actually, I called all of you here to ask if any of you has any idea why such a powerful person would suddenly appear in our 'floating cloud sect'."

The Elders were all aghast when they heard Liu Jian's words. Silence permeated the hall until a person with white hair and a white beard said

"Sect master, do you think that this person has come here for the 'Vermilion realm'?"

The person who asked this question was the Grand Elder of the sect, Lan Hong. His status was only below Liu Jian's and above every other Elder's.

Liu Jian thought about it but he eventually shook his head as he said

"Unlikely. It is too early for the 'Vermilion realm' to open anyway. Also if this senior wanted to enter the 'Vermilion realm' I doubt our 'floating cloud sect' could assist him in any way. From my estimations, this senior's strength is above the late stages of the Spirit realm. Perhaps even.."

Liu Jian cut off his words and didn't dare speculate any further.

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Discussions were taking place over this matter, just in the main hall of the inner city, but everywhere in the entire 'floating cloud city'. From the 'Mystifying Fragrance Pavilion' to even the cheapest inns everyone was discussing about that sudden burst of suppressive aura.

Meanwhile, the culprit's, Shun Long's eyes were shining brightly at this moment as he heard Lan Jinjing saying

"Our next item for the auction is something that many alchemists need but can't easily find. Although it's only a rank 2 medicinal herb it can help you improve your control over the element of fire consuming this fruit. It is precisely the 'fire-spirit fruit'."

Chapter 49 - 49 Preparations complete

"It is the 'fire-spirit fruit'. The minimum bid must be at least 5000 sect points while every increment must be at least 200 sect points higher than the last bid."

Every alchemist sitting in the outer seats had stood up. Even the people inside the private rooms like Shun Long couldn't stay completely calm as they looked with eyes full of fervor towards the 'fire-spirit fruit' on the main stage. The only exception was Li Wei who looked down from his private room towards those people with a mocking look in his eyes as he thought

'Look at those bumpkins getting so excited over a single 'fire-spirit fruit'. Our 'Alchemist's Guild' has at least 5 of those fruits.'

The bidding immediately started as people called their bids one after the other

"5500 sect points"

"6000"

"7000"

"7500"

The price didn't stop increasing until it reached the 10.000 sect points.

"Is there anyone who is willing to offer a higher price? If not, this 'fire-spirit fruit' will go to this honorable guest over here" Lan Jinjing said as she pointed towards a guest at the side of the outer seats who had bid 10.000 sect points for the 'fire-spirit fruit'.

In reality, although the 'fire-spirit fruit' was rare, 10.000 sect points had already exceeded its value, but this was the reality of the auctions in the 'cultivation world'. When you needed something you would pay as much as you had to, in order to obtain it.

"20.000 points" Shun Long called from inside the private room in a placid voice.

The people inside the auction hall who heard Shun Long's voice and remembered the terrifying aura he had emitted earlier all started to shudder. The alchemist in the outer seats who had bid 10.000

sect points earlier, now felt dispirited. He had a bit more than 13.000 sect points and he was confident that he could obtain the 'fire-spirit fruit' but this senior had to ruin everything.

Even Yin Xing couldn't help asking

"Senior are you certain that you wish to spend 20.000 sect points for a rank 2 'fire-spirit fruit'?"

20.000 Sect points was an astronomical price to pay for a rank 2 herb. However Shun Long didn't mind that. After selling the 'Qi barrier-breaking' pills earlier, his sect points were now more than 50.000.

Shun Long just nodded his head at Yin Xing's question

In the auction hall, Lan Jinjing was the first to recover as she said

"If there is no higher offer, then this 'fire-spirit fruit' will go to the senior in private room number 2."

Since no one put forth a higher offer than Shun Long, the staff of the 'Treasure Pavilion' sent someone to deliver the 'fire-spirit fruit' in his private room.

A disciple in yellow robes arrived carrying a small wooden box with the 'fire-spirit fruit' inside. Shun Long paid the 20.000 sect points and after receiving the box, he opened it and saw a red fruit the size of an a.d.u.l.t's fist, with red lines all over its surface. Shun Long then closed the box and put it inside his robes along with the 'water element grass'.

After the disciple left the room, Shun Long handed Yin Xing a paper as he said "Although this recipe isn't as good as my original 'Qi barrier-breaking' pill recipe, the pills created from this will still have a 40 percent chance of allowing a peak rank 6 qi condensation cultivator to reach the middle stages or rank 7."

Yin Xing was overjoyed when he heard Shun Long's words and held the recipe near his chest as he bowed repeatedly while thanking Shun Long.

Yin Xing had helped Shun Long a lot while he was in the 'Treasure Pavilion' and as an alchemist, Shun Long knew what Yin Xing desired the most. Although this recipe was nothing in Shun Long's eyes, to Yin Xing it was a priceless treasure that could help him improve his abilities as an alchemist even further.

Shun Long then decided to leave the 'Treasure Pavilion' as he had no more interest in the auction. He had already learned from Yin Xing what the rest of the items in the auction were going to be and the only interesting thing left was a 'golden lion' cub. However, Yin Xing's estimation was that the cub would be sold for at least 70.000 sect points.

An a.d.u.l.t golden lion was a rank 3 beast that could fight against experts at the late-stages of the Heaven grade. Anyone having such a mount would be near-invincible in the 'floating cloud sect'.

Shun Long walked around the city until he found a secluded corner to remove his black robes, before stealthily returning to the inn. After paying the inn owner another 4 sect points for the next month, Shun Long shut himself in his room.

He looked at the 'water element grass' and the 'fire-spirit fruit' in his hands, as well as the rest of the ingredients that he had previously purchased from the 'Treasure Pavilion' and after taking a deep breath he said

"Finally, I now have everything needed to refine the 'internal destruction pill'."

Chapter 50 - 50 Spatial space

All 5 ingredients needed for the 'internal destruction pill' were all neatly arranged on the ground.

However, Shun Long didn't immediately start the refining process but instead aimed to bring his mental state in peak condition first.

This was the first time that he was going to refine a rank 2 pill, and it was the 'internal destruction pill' at that. After studying Lu Wen's alchemy books and the theories that were written inside, as well as all the recipes for the rank 2 pills, Shun Long felt confident that he could refine every pill that was categorized as a bronze grade pill.

However, he only had this one batch of ingredients and in case he failed, he wouldn't get another chance, so bringing himself in optimal condition was necessary before starting the refinement.

Shun Long used his spiritual strength to inspect the 5 medicinal herbs that were in front of him when suddenly, the 'water element grass' disappeared from the ground.

Shun Long was stunned as he abruptly stood up, but the 'water element grass' had vanished from the room. He sent his spiritual strength around the room but he found nothing, when he suddenly sensed something in his spiritual space.

He sent his spiritual strength inside the triangular-shaped stone, and he was shocked by what he saw inside.

The 'water element grass' had grown by almost one third of its original size as it was buried in the ground inside the triangular-shaped stone's space. Shun Long could feel his qi depleting but he didn't even react as he looked stupefied, staring blankly at the 'water element grass' in the ground. The black egg was also there but were no visible changes around it.

Different possibilities flashed through Shun Long's mind as he thought

'Can I store medicinal herbs in this space?

Do they grow faster here? Is that why the flow of time feels to be flowing faster in that patch of soil, that the 'water element grass' has buried itself at?'

Shun Long ignored his qi that was being rapidly depleted, as he used his spiritual strength on the 'fire-spirit fruit'. Originally there was no reaction, but as Shun Long willed for it to be transferred inside the spiritual space of the little stone, the 'fire-spirit fruit' vanished as it appeared near the 'water element grass'.

Shun Long removed a seed from the 'fire-spirit fruit' and after burying it near the 'water element grass' he felt his qi being sapped at an alarming rate.

Half an hour later, Shun Long forcibly stopped his qi from being transferred towards the soil as his body was almost emptied out, but the effects of the soil were shocking.

There was a small sapling at the place where he had buried the 'fire-spirit fruit' seed earlier, while the 'water element grass' had already doubled in size.

Shun Long wanted to try the same with the 'white-root Ganoderma' and the 'blood lotus' but his body was already out of qi.

Shun Long was thrilled as this discovery solved his 2 biggest problems at the same time, while also providing an even more extraordinary benefit.

"Although the space inside the little stone isn't that big, it's more than enough for me to store what I need here. Wait, I guess I should call the little stone Stone of Time from now on. That's what that voice had called it as well."

Shun Long pondered for a bit more as he said to himself, almost as if he was trying to verify his own finds

"It seems like I have to exchange my qi for the ingredients to mature faster inside this space, but this way I can ensure that I won't really lack the ingredients for the 'internal destruction pill'. In the future, I can also duplicate any rare medicinal herb I find, and then sell them to make a killing."

As Shun Long was having these thoughts, a wide smile was hanging on his face.

Although he couldn't really duplicate the rank 3 'black-tongued python's' poison in the soil as it wasn't a medicinal herb, he could always buy it again from the 'Treasure Pavilion' if he needed it.

Soon, 15 days passed like that, and from the constant depleting and replenishing of his qi, Shun Long had already managed to reach the early rank 8 in qi condensation.

He already had a little tree of 'fire-spirit fruits' with 3 fruits ready to be plucked. The 'water element grass' had reached 3 times its original size, and the same went for the 'white-root Ganoderma' and the 'blood lotus'.

Even if he failed the refinement process, Shun Long would only need the 'black-tongued python's' poison since he already had everything else inside the spiritual space now.

After sitting on the floor and warming up his cauldron, he started adding in the medicinal herbs.