

A Demoness 141

Chapter 141: Explaining That He And The Demoness Weren 't A Couple

Jiang Hao lowered his head. The girl had misunderstood. Nothing had happened in that room, and Hong Yuye wasn't his wife!

He wanted to clarify, but he realized that it looked suspicious. Even if he said they weren't married, the fact still remained that he had been in her room for the entire night.

Jiang Hao suspected that the young girl would misunderstand it even more if he tried to explain further. It was troublesome. He couldn't kill her to silence her anyway.

He let out a sigh. "Do more work and ask fewer questions. That way, you'll create fewer problems for yourself. Asking too many personal questions might get you into trouble with other guests, you know."

The young girl seemed to realize that she might have said something wrong. She lowered her head. "Yes, I understand. I'm so sorry. I-I didn't mean to..."

"The guests staying at this inn are not ordinary people. You shouldn't ask or gossip about their personal lives. Do you understand?" asked Jiang Hao in a gentler tone.

"I-I understand," the young girl said, lowering her head. Jiang Hao took out a copper coin and handed it to her. "Here. Take this." "T-thank you." The young girl accepted the copper coin.

Jiang Hao nodded and then left the backyard. Before leaving, he instructed her not to disturb the soil around the spirit herbs.

As for the matter of what she thought was between him and Hong Yuye, he didn't care.

She was just a child with a passing curiosity. She would forget it in a day.

However, if Hong Yuye happened to know about it...

‘Last night, I regained my divine ability but missed the chance to visit Heavenly Lake. I wonder if I’ll find anything there now...’

‘On the bright side, my Clear and Pure Heart ability is back! I can start studying the third form of the Heavenly Blade!’

It had taken so long for him to learn the third form. He could finally master it!

However, it would take a few more days.

He was still just curious about the pill that Hong Yuye had given him. ‘What exactly was it?’

Its effects were surprisingly good. “It would probably cost a lot of spiritual stones to buy one.”

Keeping a pill like that would definitely be a wise choice. Other people rarely possessed divine abilities, but he had three of them!

If he experienced something that damaged his divine ability, it would be difficult to fight.

Divine abilities were useful but excessive use could damage them. Once damaged, they needed to be nurtured for a long time to get them to their full potential.

He hadn’t asked the name of the pill. He just needed to resolve the matter fast and return to the Heavenly Note Sect to investigate.

He left Heavenly Earth City and headed toward Heavenly Lake.

Heavenly Lake wasn't far from Heavenly Earth City. Otherwise, he never would have dared to venture out of the city on his own.

In front of a massive building, he saw some guards. They were two cultivators in the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

They appeared to be in their thirties. They seemed relaxed. Occasionally, they exchanged a few words with each other. It seemed like they were not very enthusiastic about guarding this place.

Jiang Hao passed by them and entered the building. The entrance led to a wide and spacious area.

In the center, there was an altar stained with blood.

Jiang Hao touched the bloodstains. They were still fresh. 'This is recent...'

Jiang Hao recalled Zuo Lan or at least his clone whom he had dealt with at the market. Maybe this was Zuo Lan's doing.

Upon careful observation, he noticed that the altar was different from the building. It seemed recently constructed.

He activated Daily Appraisal.

[Psychic Altar: Offer the blood of young virgin boys and girls with spiritual roots and use the Secret Message Tablet as a medium to communicate with the temporary owner of the stone tablet. Zuo Lan prepared this to deal with the owner of the stone tablet, who is out of control. Originally, he planned to offer the final blood sacrifice seven days later to obtain the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm. However, he was interrupted by Fang Jin and others, so he decided to come back in nine days. At present, he has already determined that you are the owner of the stone tablet.]

Jiang Hao sighed warily. Waiting a few more days wasn't a problem but, by then, the enemy would advance to the Primordial Spirit Realm!

'I need to find him before that, or I can't face him.'

Jiang Hao walked up to the altar and saw the place where the stone tablet was supposed to be placed.

He wondered if he could also obtain the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm if he placed his stone tablets there. However, this kind of power would likely come with... side effects.

'I wonder if the temporary owner of the stone tablets is the person Hong Yuye is looking for...'

According to what they knew so far, there was only one owner behind each stone tablet.

The appearance of those from the Great Thousand God Sect in the Heavenly Note Sect had something to do with the owner of the tablets.

'I don't know if he is from the Great Thousand God Sect, or he is only pulling their strings...'

Jiang Hao didn't know anything for sure right now. The only way he could find out the truth was by capturing Zuo Lan.

As for the whereabouts of Zuo Lan, it was still a mystery.

After hesitating for a moment, Jiang Hao decided not to destroy the altar. If he did, he might not be able to find Zuo Lan. This was a fairly safe place to lure Zuo Lan.

'I should find Fang Jin and the others and ask them not to stir up trouble for now...'

He worried that Zuo Lan would keep delaying his plan if Fang Jin and his group continued causing trouble.

If that happened, it was very likely that the three months he had would be wasted.

After leaving the building, inspected the surroundings. He

discovered some formations and hidden traps.

There were restriction traps and talisman traps. It would be so easy to fall into such traps if one was not aware.

Jiang Hao carefully noted down each trap to prevent any mishaps when he came back here in nine days.

Unfortunately, he had very few items on him, and his proficiency in formations was almost nonexistent. Otherwise, he could have utilized these traps to his advantage. This was an unavoidable situation.

He had been practicing cultivation for over ten years, but only recently had started learning talisman-making. The time was too short to learn other things.

The most pressing matter was to focus on improving his cultivation for now.

Jiang Hao went to the backyard after he headed back to the inn.

Looking at the yard with scarce spiritual energy, he felt that it would be better to buy some spirit herbs directly instead of cultivating them. This way, the fragrance could cover the surroundings immediately, and the spiritual energy could gather quickly.

Unfortunately, transplanting spirit herbs often led to unexpected problems. Moreover, they were very expensive.

After hesitating for a moment, Jiang Hao used some spirit stones to arrange a gathering formation in the surroundings. That way, spirit stones would act as a substitute for insufficient spiritual energy.

After setting the formation, Jiang Hao looked up at the sky and realized that it would soon get dark.

He needed to go up and find Hong Yuye.

Just as he had returned to the lobby, he heard someone complaining.

“We almost found him. Zuo Lan has some treasures on him. Otherwise, I would have definitely found him through his clone,” Lan Jin complained.

“Not finding him in person is not a big deal. It’s a pity that we couldn’t find out where he’s holding the captives. Let’s go to the Heavenly Lake tomorrow and see if there are any other clues,” Bai Qiong said.

“I don’t know who killed all of Zuo Lan’s clones! Otherwise, we wouldn’t have lost all the leads,” Lan Jin said angrily.

At that moment, they noticed Jiang Hao coming out from the backyard.

The three of them were taken aback.

Jiang Hao looked calm and collected as always, but deep down, he felt embarrassed. They were complaining about him. He had killed Zuo Lan’s clones..

Chapter 142: Risking One’s Life For A Cause

“Fellow Disciple Jiang?” Fang Jin was surprised.

Seeing Jiang Hao coming out of the backyard, he understood that the person living next to them on the sixth floor was him.

With his strength, it wasn’t surprising that Chen had been injured.

Fang Jin was certain that Jiang Hao wasn't in the Foundation Establishment Realm, after all.

"Fellow Disciple Fang," Jiang Hao said politely.

Since they had met, he needed to discuss something with these people.

"Just happened to drop by?" Fang Jin pointed to the seat next to him and invited to sit down.

The first floor was the dining area, equipped with many tables and chairs. The inn wasn't receiving many guests lately, so it seemed spacious.

If someone came into the inn to cause any problem, the staff explained the situation to them politely. They didn't want to offend someone like Jiang Hao again.

Lan Jin looked at Jiang Hao with curiosity. She also thought that the person living next door was Jiang Hao.

She was very curious about his true strength. Logically, he shouldn't be much stronger than her seniors.

If she challenged him, it would seem presumptuous. Fang Jin and Bai Qiong would definitely criticize her for being reckless. If it were within the sect, it wouldn't matter.

She decided to observe him silently.

"Friend, when did you arrive?" Fang Jin asked casually. "We arrived just two days ago. We are staying in rooms 1,2, and 3."

"I arrived a day or two ago, too. We are staying in rooms 5 and 6."

At this moment, a plate of cold dishes and peanuts were placed on the table. These were to serve as appetizers as they waited for the main dish.

“Did you have them tidy up the backyard?” Lan Jin asked.

“Yes. I came to request you to not disturb the backyard for a while,” said Jiang Hao.

“Friend Jiang, you are too polite,” Fang Jin said. “We’ll certainly not disturb the backyard. But we are curious though. What are you doing in the backyard?”

“I’m planting some spirit herbs because I’ll be staying here a while, ” said Jiang Hao.

“Is it for the woman who travels with you?” Bai Qiong asked.

Jiang Hao nodded. He didn’t know how to introduce Hong Yuye to them.

‘Should I call her a senior sister?’ thought Jiang Hao. ‘I don’t know if Hong Yuye will get angry if I tell them about her...’

He just nodded and didn’t say anything further about her. He could come up with something if they asked next time.

Jiang Hao was surprised to know that these three people stayed in the rooms next to them. It was just as well. He could talk to them about matters concerning Zuo Lan.

“What brings you here this time?” Fang Jin poured a cup of tea for Jiang Hao.

“Are you here because of Zuo Lan?” Jiang Hao asked straightforwardly. “I know you’ve been chasing Zuo Lan. Did you find any new clues?” The question caught the three people off guard.

“Did you kill Zuo Lan’s clone?” asked Lan Jin suddenly.

Jiang Hao took a sip of tea. Unfortunately, sometimes he acted too recklessly.

Fang Jin and the others were also curious, but they didn't question him further.

It was best if all of their paths overlapped somehow. It was even better for them to be on the same side. If not, they wouldn't cause trouble for one another.

Jiang Hao put down his tea. "Zuo Lan was supposed to appear by the Heavenly Lake for the final ritual. But because you caused trouble for him, he is going to do it in nine days. If he doesn't show himself, will you be able to find him in another way?"

Fang Jin and the others were alarmed at that. "Do you know where Zuo Lan is?"

"I don't know. I only know that nine days later, he will appear at the altar by the Heavenly Lake. The person you're looking for will probably also be there," Jiang Hao said.

If he knew where Zuo Lan was, he would have already gone ahead and dealt with him.

"Do you want us to refrain from doing anything in these few days?" Bai Qiong asked.

"You can consider visiting Heavenly Lake first before considering my suggestion," said.

Fang Jin nodded. "We will seriously consider that. Could you please provide more details, friend?"

"The altar requires the fresh blood of talented young boys and girls with cultivation potential. In the final ritual, the children will be present," said Jiang

Hao. "So, I'm guessing that the disciple who has been taken away from your sect will be at the altar on that day."

However, there was one thing he couldn't figure out.

Zuo Lan was just a Golden Core cultivator. How were the people of the Bright

Moon Sect unable to locate him?

Jiang Hao hesitated for a while and then asked them.

"We are also somewhat puzzled." Bai Qiong frowned.

"At first, we suspected that there might be powerful individuals among them, but it doesn't seem like it. Then we speculated that there might be magical abilities or treasures hiding our disciple's location. Recently, one of our senior uncles was intercepted by people from the Heavenly Saint Sect, who are close to Zuo Lan's group. It's also possible that they were the ones who attacked."

"There is another possibility. Do you know the origin of Zuo Lan?" Fang Jin asked.

Jiang Hao took a sip of tea and said calmly, "The Great Thousand God Sect?"

"You have good insight. We also came to this speculation after encountering his clone. It should be the Great Thousand God Sect's Clone," said Fang Jin. "The Great Thousand God Sect is located in the Milky Way Sea region. If they are here, they must be helping someone. The Great Thousand God Sect was originally driven to the Milky Way Sea region by our Bright Moon Sect. So, it's possible that they can locate our sect easily."

Jiang Hao nodded. This was the first time he had heard of this. Among these possibilities, what worried him the most was the connection to the Heavenly Saint Sect. He had a hostile relationship with them.

These people seemed to be convinced that he knew the secret of the treasure hidden in the mine and wanted to extract that information from him.

Even Senior Sister Ming Yi, the Saintess-in-training, couldn't do anything about it. In the future, they might just hunt Jiang Hao down. But there was still time...

If ten years were not enough, then a hundred years. One day they would understand that Yan Hua had not revealed the secret to anyone.

After talking for a while, Jiang Hao headed to his room.

Jiang Hao also learned that the seniors from the Bright Moon Sect would be arriving soon. He had already decided to give up on the mission of the Law Enforcement Hall.

These people were relatively easy to get along with. For the Bright Moon Sect to go to such lengths for a disciple who hadn't even entered the sect yet, it would be troublesome if Jiang Hao stole one of their disciples who was already a member of the sect.

In a demonic sect, anything was possible.

Upstairs, Jiang Hao visited every guest one by one. He requested them to stay away from the backyard for the time being.

Chen Quan and the others assured him that no one would disturb it, and even said they would keep an eye on it.

This made Jiang Hao feel a bit embarrassed. He gave them a bit of the Snow Queen Spring tea as thanks.

Chen Quan didn't want to accept it, but Jiang Hao had already left. He reluctantly kept it..

Chapter 143: How to Introduce the Demoness?

In the backyard, the sky had already darkened. It was livelier outside today.

Jiang Hao had heard from the innkeeper that it was the Lantern Festival, which occurred once every three years.

“Senior, when do you plan to depart?” he asked.

At this moment, Hong Yuye was sitting in the pavilion and looking at the surrounding flowers. She was lost in thought.

Finally, her gaze fell on the spot where the Clear Snow Seeds were planted.

“When will they sprout?” she asked.

“Maybe tomorrow or the day after tomorrow,” Jiang Hao said. In truth, it would be the day after tomorrow. Tomorrow was the last day of watering it, but he didn’t want to be too specific in his response.

Hong Yuye slowly stood up and looked at Jiang Hao calmly.

“How long do we plan to stay here?” she asked.

“At least nine days,” Jiang Hao said.

During the nine days, he intended to search for clues while studying the third form of the Heavenly Blade technique.

He needed to be well-prepared to deal with Zuo Lan.

According to his plan, he wanted to defeat him before he advanced to the Primordial Spirit Realm. However, nothing ever went as planned.

Therefore, he needed to be adequately prepared, just in case.

Hong Yuye didn't say anything. She simply walked outside.

"Senior, are you going to see the lanterns?" Jiang Hao asked as he followed.

Hong Yuye glanced at him but remained silent.

Jiang Hao was surprised. Her gaze mocked him.

It seemed that Hong Yuye had other reasons for going out. Watching the lanterns float in the sky was simply beneath her.

Jiang Hao noticed that the city was brightly illuminated tonight. People were bustling about, talking to each other, and having a good time.

It reminded him of his childhood. His stepmother, despite her flaws, had taken him along to similar festivals.

Back then, he was too young to work. So, his father would carry him on his back.

He remembered watching the fireworks once. It moved his heart to the core.

During this journey, he had experienced many things that he couldn't have fathomed if he stayed inside the sect.

The half a year he had spent to controlling his mind couldn't compare to the progress he had made on his journey.

He had a feeling that once he found his stepmother and his father, his state of mind would undergo another transformation.

Would he be able to let go at that time? He didn't know.

But it was precisely because it was unknown that he needed to see, to experience, and to comprehend. Hiding in the sect would do nothing for his maturity.

Only by immersing oneself in the world could one transcend it. At that moment, a pleasant, bird-like voice sounded beside him.

"Do you often daydream?"

"No, of course not. I... there are so many people here tonight, so I was just thinking about how to guide you through the crowd," said Jiang Hao hurriedly.

"It's not a coincidence that you encountered the deceptive spirit beast." Hong Yuye chuckled.

'Indeed, it wasn't a coincidence,' thought Jiang Hao. 'It's because of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.'

Jiang Hao felt that there was nothing wrong with raising the spirit beast. In fact, he might raise another one if he encountered it somewhere. After fully awakening its bloodline, he would let it go. The spirit beast was full of lies. It would someday get Jiang Hao in trouble.

"What do you think is the fundamental difference between you and your spirit beast?" Hong Yuye asked as they walked along the road.

She walked a little ahead.

Although there were many people on the street, the path was always free and spacious for her. It was as if the people around them were actively avoiding them.

Jiang Hao didn't pay much attention to it. He wasn't surprised.

“The difference should be quite obvious,” Jiang Hao said.

“Hm... let’s just say it is, for argument’s sake,” said Hong Yuye. She stopped in front of a mask stall.

“Senior, do you want one?” Jiang Hao asked curiously.

Hong Yuye shook her head and continued walking forward. The place was very lively. Children ran around and laughed.

“You can’t catch me! You can’t catch me!”

“You little rascal, if you get lost, you’ll cry again!”

Jiang Hao watched as a young woman scolded a little boy while chasing after him.

‘I wasn’t like this when I was a child...’ Jiang Hao couldn’t help but compare his childhood to the happy children.

He then shook his head slightly. He felt pathetic that he was comparing himself to a child.

He followed Hong Yuye until they walked out of the crowd and arrived at a pavilion by the river.

Lanterns were hanging around. Some lanterns on the river drifted by.

They hadn’t carried any teapot or stove, so they couldn’t make tea here. They could only look around.

After hesitating for a moment, Jiang Hao looked at Hong Yuye. “Senior, would you like to release a river lantern?”

Hong Yuye looked at him with her beautiful eyes. Her eyes mocked him. It seemed to call him childish.

They just looked around the pavilion quietly. A gentle breeze rustled past.

The edges of Hong Yuye's dress swayed gently in the wind.

Jiang Hao could smell a faint fragrance.

The distinctly familiar scent made him recall the first time he had sensed it. 'That the night when...'

Jiang Hao stopped himself. He was afraid to think about that night.

"How did you introduce me?" Hong Yuye suddenly asked.

Jiang Hao was confused.

"Didn't you say someone asked you about me?" Hong Yuye stared at Jiang Hao.

"How did you introduce me?"

Jiang Hao thought of that little girl who had been cleaning the corridor. 'Did she hear about it?'

He broke out in a cold sweat.

"I... I haven't introduced you yet," Jiang Hao said.

He hadn't mentioned her to anyone yet.

"How do you plan to do it?" Hong Yuye sounded as though she was mocking him again.

“Senior, what do you think would be a suitable response?” asked Jiang Hao.

However, questioning her back seemed to make her irritated. He felt a stifling force that seemed capable of obliterating the entire city in an instant.

Jiang Hao hastily spoke up.

“I’ll wait for them to ask again!”

The aura completely vanished. Hong Yuye didn’t ask him anything further.

“Young Master Chen, look over there. There’s a pavilion from where we can watch the river lanterns.”
Laughter came from nearby.

Jiang Hao turned to see a group of people approaching the pavilion. There was a man and a woman at the front, followed by some attendants.

The woman was the one who had spoken.

“Oh, there are people up there!” said the woman regretfully when she saw Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye.

“What a pity!”

She looked at the young man beside her, who was most probably Young Master Chen.

Jiang Hao also looked at the man. He wasn’t an ordinary non-cultivator. He was at the fifth level of the Lifeblood Refinement Realm.

When Young Master Chen noticed Jiang Hao looking at him, he instinctively gestured for his men to shoo them away. However, when he sensed Jiang Hao's cultivation realm, he stopped the attendants, turned around, and slapped the woman across the face.

"You know there are people here, and yet you want to interrupt them?" This slap left the woman stunned.

Jiang Hao sighed, feeling that these people were less interesting than the people on the street.

"Let's go." Hong Yuye stepped away from the pavilion. Jiang Hao nodded and followed. "Where do you want to go next, Senior?"

"To release the river lanterns," Hong Yuye said.

Jiang Hao was speechless.. 'I thought she saw it as childish...'

Chapter 144: Making a Wish

Hong Yuye walked along the riverbank with Jiang Hao. She headed toward the crowd.

There were stalls selling river lanterns.

If they wanted to release lanterns, they had to go there and buy one. As for the young master of the Chen family, Jiang Hao didn't pay much attention to him.

He was just a little curious. The gaze of the people here was distorted by Hong Yuye's power. What had the people seen when they looked at the pavilion?

Out of curiosity, he asked Hong Yuye. However, Hong Yuye just glanced at him with an icy smile and said nothing in reply.

He felt uneasy. His heart raced.

He approached the river and looked at his reflection in the water. He saw his normal self. It seemed that he was unaffected.

Jiang Hao couldn't figure out Hong Yuye. He didn't know how she would distort her appearance in the eyes of the others while remaining as she was at that same time.

But it didn't matter. At least he was safe.

He still had things to do. As long as he was careful, there shouldn't be any grave consequences.

After a while, they reached the upper part of the river. The area was wide, and many people were holding river lanterns in their hands.

There were stalls that sold various types of lanterns.

Hong Yuye found a spot to sit and wait, while Jiang Hao picked two lotus-shaped lanterns.

He handed one of the lanterns to Hong Yuye. "I heard from the merchant that releasing river lanterns is a tradition where you wish and pray for blessings. Senior, do you want to make a wish?"

Hong Yuye looked at the lotus-shaped lantern in her hand. She smiled. "And who do you make a wish to?"

"The river god," said Jiang Hao.

"You want me to make a wish and pray to the river god?" Hong Yuye looked into Jiang Hao's eyes.

She looked amused.

Jiang Hao felt helpless. "Maybe we can make a wish and pray to the heavens instead."

Perhaps she found that more acceptable. "What is your wish?" she asked.

'Mining...'

He didn't say that out loud. He lowered his head. "Most of the time, I just wish for a quiet and peaceful life."

"Is it not peaceful now?" Hong Yuye asked, sitting by the riverbank.

"Under your protection, it has indeed been peaceful," Jiang Hao said. It was only a partial truth.

It was true that he was safe from formidable enemies, but he didn't entirely feel safe from Hong Yuye herself.

He also sat down by the riverbank and released the lantern on the river's surface.

When it came to making a wish, he felt a little lost. Memories of childhood flitted in his mind. It seemed that what he truly cared about was his family.

Mining and cultivation were something he could strive to achieve on his own. He had always done that his whole life. There was no need to make a wish about those things.

Only his stepmother and his father were something he couldn't reconcile with. So, he wished to see them.

"I wonder if my stepmother will still treat me badly after seeing what I have become..."

He released the river lantern, and it floated downstream.

Hong Yuye also let go of the lantern in her hand.

Jiang Hao stole a glance at her. She seemed as quiet and calm as ever.

After that, the two of them stood up and watched the lanterns drift away downriver.

So many lanterns covered the surface of the river. It looked resplendent and beautiful.

"Let's go back," Hong Yuye said.

Jiang Hao sensed that her mood wasn't that good. She seemed to have something on her mind.

They turned around and slowly walked back to the inn. The way was crowded, and it took them quite some time to reach the inn.

After Hong Yuye went back to her room, Jiang Hao opened his own room door.

He looked at the moon outside the window. 'The little outing was indeed for the Lantern Festival!'

Jiang Hao was somewhat puzzled. 'It's better that way. Whatever Hong Yuye intended to do would be too fatal for this city.'

As for him, he had actually gained quite a lot tonight. When he had made a wish on the lantern, he had understood many things about himself.

He remembered a world that was plentiful and then was hit by a famine. He realized that natural disasters tore families apart.

With a sigh, Jiang Hao sat on the bed and took out The Seven Forms of the Heavenly Blade book.

After adjusting his state, he activated the Clear and Pure Heart divine ability. He felt at peace and his thoughts were clear. H found answers to many of his doubts at that moment.

This time, he could truly comprehend the third form of the Heavenly Blade.

Early the next morning, Jiang Hao wearily closed the book. His progress had been quick this time around.

He vaguely felt that his mastery of divine abilities had become more efficient. It meant that his abilities had improved too!

The pill given by Hong Yuye was excellent. Whether it was pills, formations, or techniques, everything that came from her was exemplary.

But Jiang Hao felt a little regretful. He probably couldn't afford such a pill.

Putting away the book, Jiang Hao went to the backyard to water the spirit herbs with spirit liquid. It would sprout tomorrow. Maybe bubbles would appear too!

He then went out to buy some snacks.

On his way back, he saw the little girl from before. She was holding some snacks in her hands, which smelled very delicious.

"Little girl," Jiang Hao called out to her.

The girl raised her head to look at Jiang Hao. "Yes? How can I help you?" "Where did you buy those snacks?" Jiang Hao asked.

“These?” The girl showed him the snacks in her hands. “I bought them from

Granny Xu on the street. They’re the most delicious in the entire Heavenly Earth City.”

Jiang Hao thanked her and hurried out again.

In the eyes of the little girl, Jiang Hao loved his wife so much.

Jiang Hao placed two types of snacks in front of Hong Yuye. One looked good and tasted decent, while the other was more delicious but looked a little ordinary.

He didn’t know which one Hong Yuye would like to eat.

Jiang Hao then returned to his room to start making talismans.

He made talismans in the morning and investigated the matter with Zuo Lan in the afternoon to look for any other clues.

The next day, a pleasant fragrance wafted from the backyard and surprised everyone in the inn. Just a whiff of it made them feel refreshed and clear-minded.

Jiang Hao walked to the backyard and saw two green bubbles. He felt a bit disappointed. [Spirit Sword +1]

[Spirit Sword +1]

They could only be sold for fourteen spirit stones.

“Clear Snow... I didn’t expect him to plant that,” said Bai Qiong.

The previous day, they had gone to the Heavenly Lake and discovered the

Psychic Altar

They decided to follow Jiang Hao's advice and secretly investigate for a few days without alerting the enemy.

"This spirit herb is not easy to plant. Maybe they just planted it temporarily," Fang Jin said in admiration.

He admired Jiang Hao for being able to tend to spirit herbs while pursuing the enemy.

After that, they didn't pay much attention to it.

Since the sprouting of the Clear Snow, Jiang Hao made his talismans in the backyard. The spirit herbs would help increase the rate of success. However, he was surprised to find that his success rate had decreased!

Hong Yuye was affecting him.

His state of mind was unstable, which was one of the reasons. The other reason was that her constant scary aura made it difficult for him to focus on anything else..

Chapter 145: Another Night Passed

In theory, as long as Jiang Hao didn't look at Hong Yuye, his heart, and mind would remain calm.

However, being close to her still had some effect.

Hong Yuye instinctively emitted her aura. It was very subtle, but it was there.

It was always there whenever she zoned out and affected Jiang Hao as he sat there trying to make his talismans.

He was helpless and decided to head back to his room. He spent most of his time in the backyard when he wasn't making talismans.

Jiang Hao was mainly worried that someone would bump into Hong Yuye, and he had no idea what would happen if he wasn't there.

To him, Hong Yuye was a terrifying existence that could erupt in anger at any time, but others were unaware of it.

Once provoked, the entire inn might be destroyed. There was no shortage of ignorant and arrogant people in the world. Someone might just anger her. That was why Jiang Hao felt worried when he was in the backyard and not with

Hong Yuye.

Days went by in this manner.

Finally, it was nearing the day when Zuo Lan would perform his ritual. It was tomorrow.

During the past few days, Jiang Hao had accompanied Hong Yuye to the backyard, made talismans in the afternoon, and went out to investigate to find more clues about Zuo Lan.

In the evening, he brought back some snacks.

At night, he focused on studying the third form of the Heavenly Sword, the Meteor technique.

He had just finished comprehending it last night. It had great power, but he hadn't tested it yet. It was somewhat difficult to control.

Unfortunately, he didn't have more time. Otherwise, he would have at least comprehended the ability to use it more effectively.

"You seem to be overthinking things," Hong Yuye said.

In the backyard, Jiang Hao was taking care of the Snow Clear herbs. Under his care, occasional white bubbles popped up. His spirit was strengthened.

However, he didn't want to absorb the bubbles in front of Hong Yuye, so he didn't collect too many bubbles. With Hong Yuye's understanding of the nameless secret manual, she might notice something. But Jiang Hao was puzzled by her words. 'Overthinking?'

'You're very cautious,' Hong Yuye added.

"I'm alright," said Jiang Hao.

Although he didn't know what she exactly meant, he had always lived that way. His strength had never been enough, so he had to be very careful, especially since he was in a demonic sect.

Hong Yuye looked at Jiang Hao and chuckled. "These past few days, were you worried about others offending me?"

'Oh... that's what she means.'

Jiang Hao nodded. "I was afraid that others might disturb your peace."

"Is that so?" Hong Yuye looked at Jiang Hao. "Then let's assume that's what you were thinking about."

At that moment, she looked at the teapot on the table. "Let's change the tea."

"I... just brewed it," said Jiang Hao. The Snow Queen Spring tea was costly too. He felt it was a bit of a waste to discard the tea.

"Take out the best tea leaves you have and brew them." Hong Yuye poured the tea into the bushes.

'The best tea?' Jiang Hao instantly thought of the Red Azure tea.

He hadn't told her that he had bought it already. Jiang Hao feared that she might finish it too soon and would expect him to buy more with the spirit stones he had set aside for other things.

He didn't know how she had found out. Helplessly, he took out the Red Azure tea.

"Are you confused?" Hong Yuye smiled. "Heavenly Earth City isn't a very big city. There aren't many people staying in the inn. The Red Azure tea is very expensive, and it's considered something similar to a precious treasure. If someone buys it, it becomes major news for people here."

Hong Yuye looked at Jiang Hao, and her eyes glittered mischievously. "Who in the entire Heavenly Earth City would buy something like that?"

Jiang Hao realized that it had been foolish to think he could hide anything from her at all. He could have said he didn't have it.

"Do you think that you would get away by saying you didn't buy it?" Hong Yuye picked up the teacup and sniffed at it. "The fragrance of the Red Azure tea can subtly affect any other tea leaves it's kept with. You placed the Snow Queen Spring tea right next to the Red Azure tea, didn't you?"

Jiang Hao couldn't help but sigh. He needed to keep up with his knowledge of tea.

At that moment, the fragrance of the Red Azure tea emanated from the tea. It was refreshing.

After pouring a cup for Hong Yuye, Jiang Hao sat down and poured himself a cup.

Jiang Hao had spent 9,300 spirit stones on this tea. He wanted to have a cup.

The aroma of the tea permeated the air. Many people in the inn caught a whiff of it too.

Even Fang Jin and the two women were surprised by the strong fragrance of the tea.

“Red Azure tea!” Lan Jin exclaimed. “I’ve only seen our master brew it before.

Who brought such tea here?”

“The fragrance came from the backyard,” Bai Qiong said in surprise. “Who are they?”

“I don’t know what it tastes like,” Fang Jin said with some emotion. “I’ll take advantage of the tea fragrance and cultivate on the second floor. I need to prepare for tomorrow.”

Tomorrow was the day of the ritual that Jiang Hao had mentioned, and Zuo Lan would be there. They might find the lost disciple tomorrow.

Jiang Hao drank a cup of tea and felt the abundant spiritual energy. The tea was smooth and gentle, and it instantly refreshed his whole body.

This made him delighted. Instinctively, he started practicing the third form of the Heavenly Blade that he hadn’t fully grasped yet.

This time, the flow of power was smooth, as if the spiritual energy brought by the Red Azure tea was assisting him.

Jiang Hao felt as if he was holding a blade in his hand and swinging it around using the Meteor technique.

The power circulated within his body, and the technique began to take shape in his mind.

As he practiced, Jiang Hao felt that his progress in mastering the third form was becoming faster. He even began practicing the first and second forms.

For a while, he practiced all three moves.

Time passed, and the special effects brought by the Red Azure tea gradually faded away.

The pleasant and refreshing feeling slowly dissipated, but Jiang Hao had gained insights into all three forms of the Heavenly Blade.

When he opened his eyes again, the sun was directly overhead. It felt like time hadn't passed at all.

"Is it still noon?" he asked.

"Noon of the next day," said Hong Yuye.

'What?!' Jiang Hao was surprised. This was the day that Zuo Lan would appear at the altar!

Although he knew Zuo Lan would make a move today, he wasn't certain about the time. It could be in the morning or the evening.

Jiang Hao had already missed the morning. He had wasted precious time.

"Senior, we should set off," he said.

This time, they had accurate information about Zuo Lan. Hong Yuye wanted the stone tablet as soon as possible, so she would definitely go.

As Hong Yuye stood up, Jiang Hao took the teapot and looked at the tea leaves inside, thinking of using them to nourish the soil.

Drinking a cup greatly enhanced his understanding of the Heavenly Blade. He could now freely use the third form. He wondered if it would have the same effect next time.

After a moment, he checked his divine abilities and the attacks stored on his wrist guard.

Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye left the inn.

In the forest, the sun shone through the tree leaves.

Jiang Hao and Hong Yuye stood beneath the tree, looking at a distant building. That was where the altar was located.

There was a window that provided a view of the inside, but so far, there was no sign of any activity.

“We may have to wait until evening,” Jiang Hao said.

Hong Yuye leaped and sat on a tree branch.

It was too conspicuous, and Jiang Hao wanted to warn her to not attract attention. However, he didn’t dare say that aloud.

It made sense that she wanted to sit on a branch. That way, nobody would notice her.

At night, moonlight spilled from the sky, covering the pitch-black forest with a silvery veil.

Jiang Hao looked up at the moonlight, then looked in the direction of the altar.

He noticed that the altar emitted a faint glow under the moonlight. It seemed that the power was being activated, but it was still not strong enough.

At that moment, he sensed someone approaching the altar.

“He’s here..”

Chapter 146: What Can You Do To Me?

Hong Yuye sat on a tree branch, gazing into the distance.

Jiang Hao stood beneath the tree. He felt that Hong Yuye belonged to the red shadow in the darkness. It was an eerie thought.

Jiang Hao didn’t pay attention to Hong Yuye but focused on the direction of the building.

His own position was somewhat conspicuous, but the fact that Hong Yuye was sitting on the tree branch made him feel that he wouldn’t be noticed standing beneath the tree.

As for other things, Jiang Hao had made a preliminary observation and hadn’t found Fang Jin and the others so far. He didn’t know where they were hiding.

“Behave and spare yourselves the pain.”

In front of the building, four adult men escorted a group of children in black hoods. Jiang Hao observed them carefully.

Nine children and five adults.

Among the five adults, four were escorts, while the fifth one walked at the back. The four at the front were at various stages of the Golden Core Realm.

The one at the back was at the peak stage of the Golden Core Realm, but his aura was strange.

‘They’re strong...’

Jiang Hao was surprised. The five people were very powerful. He assumed the person walking at the back must be Zuo Lan, but...

“Is he still a clone? Where is his true body?” Jiang Hao said, looking up at the woman on the tree branch.

“You don’t need to ask me. Make your own decisions and do what you need to do. I will not interfere,” said Hong Yuye.

Jiang Hao wasn’t surprised at her response.

If even the Golden Core cultivators required Hong Yuye to take action, there would be no need to bring anyone along.

‘The four in front are not clones, but I don’t feel any mental connection with the fifth one... This means Zuo Lan is hiding and that is indeed a clone. Is he going to wait for the final power to appear before coming out? Will I still have time to make a move at that point?’

It was going to be a difficult battle since most of the adults were in the Golden Core Realm. Although he hoped for a challenging fight, it would be best to crush the enemy with a single strike.

Subconsciously, he touched his eyebrow. There were no issues with his divine ability.

The Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit ability would be his greatest trump card for tonight. Whether he could take down Zuo Lan or not would depend on this ability.

The nine children were led to the side of the altar. Their heads were covered with black hoods, so Jiang Hao couldn't be sure whether there was a girl among them. Everyone wore similar clothes.

It seemed that the disciple of the Bright Moon Sect was also from a poor family.

"Stand still. Don't move. You die if you struggle," said a man as he kicked a child.

From afar, Jiang Hao heard the children whimper in fear. He waited quietly.

Once the children were bound, a man took out a knife and tried to cut their wrists.

Jiang Hao saw a sword light flash in the distance.

"You scum from the demonic sect!"

It was Lan Jin.

Jiang Hao remained calm and watched quietly from afar.

The demonic sects had a bad reputation. Even the Heavenly Note Sect was notorious in its actions. That was one of the reasons why Jiang Hao wanted to clear his name as soon as possible. It was quite troublesome to carry the name of the Heavenly Note Sect and venture to other places.

The Heavenly Note Sect wasn't a small sect, but it wasn't that great either. If it was as big as the Clear Sky School, it would be much better.

Boom!

Lan Jin took action. There were surprise attacks from two other locations near the building.

'So... the first one was a decoy,' Jiang Hao thought.

Fang Jin had injured a Golden Core Realm cultivator. Although it wasn't a severe injury, it still gave Fang Jin an advantage in the fight.

The situation was far better for Bai Qiong. It seemed that the late-stage Golden Realm cultivator was no match for her.

Among Zuo Lan's group, there was more than one cultivator in the peak stage of the Golden Core Realm.

At this moment, Zuo Lan himself was cutting the children.

Jiang Hao watched without taking any action.

Zuo Lan's true body had not yet appeared, so he couldn't be impatient. If the true Zuo Lan didn't appear, he wouldn't find the stone tablet here.

Boom!

The aftermath of the battle shook the building and exposed the entire altar to the moonlight.

Fang Jin looked at the activated altar impatiently. He was unsure what Zuo Lan meant to do.

The one at the peak of Golden Core Realm held on. It wasn't difficult to defeat this opponent, but it would take quite a while. He didn't have time to waste.

Lan Jin, who was fighting against two early-stage Golden Core Realm cultivators, called for help. She was at a disadvantage as she was fighting them alone.

Although she had outstanding strength and powerful treasures, she lacked combat experience.

“Sister, don’t be nervous. They are not your match. Keep your mind steady and analyze their movements. Think about the body techniques, and sword techniques you know. Apply them, and you’ll be able to defeat those two easily. They are not strong,” Fang Jin said to her.

“Not strong?” said one of the early-stage Golden Core Realm cultivators and laughed. “A bunch of children would be enough to deal with this little girl.”

They knew that if she got accustomed to their attacks, they would be in danger. Her spirit sword was far too powerful.

“Sister, hold on a little longer.” Bai Qiong applied her magic seal and suppressed the enemy with the power of her techniques.

She manipulated thunder, and electric light swept from all directions like multiple swords. However, it did nothing to the altar.

Fang Jin was somewhat puzzled. He still hadn’t seen Jiang Hao anywhere. He didn’t know if Jiang Hao was hiding somewhere, or if he hadn’t arrived at all.

“The people of the Bright Moon Sect are nothing special.” Zuo Lan looked at Fang Jin from the altar. “I even prepared other... methods, but it seems they won’t be necessary.”

“Zuo Lan, do you know that one of the disciples among your captives is our sect’s disciple?” asked Fang Jin.

His hands clenched on his sword, and it exerted even stronger pressure on the Golden Core Realm cultivator he was fighting.

“I know. What does it matter? What can you even do to me?” said Zuo Lan. “I heard that the Heavenly Note Sect also plans to snatch her away. If I sell her to them, I will get a substantial amount of spirit stones, won’t I?” Zuo Lan activated the altar.

"I'm guessing that you'll definitely be blackmailed by the Heavenly Note Sect and killed," said Lan Jin.

"Thanks for the warning. Maybe I'll sell her elsewhere," Zuo Lan said with a grateful smile.

"You!" Lan Jin was furious.

Zuo Lan calmly took out the stone tablet and placed it on the altar. The others didn't react, but Jiang Hao was finally interested.

The stone tablet looked similar to the ones he had. However, Jiang Hao sensed a slight difference in the aura of the tablet.

'Is it a fake?' Jiang Hao couldn't understand. 'Can a fake stone tablet still serve as a medium?'

He used the technique he learned from the nameless manual to observe and analyze the stone tablet. He found that it seemed to be connected to something.

"Is the fake stone tablet connected to the real one and used as a medium?"

Jiang Hao was shocked.. Zuo Lan was this cautious?

Chapter 147: Instant Kill

Seeing the fake stone tablet resonate with the real one, Jiang Hao knew that the real stone tablet was nearby.

If he captured the real person, he might get more information. However, it would be difficult to identify him.

‘Should I use the stone tablet to investigate?’

It might alert the enemy, and the distance was not close enough to pinpoint the exact location.

If the enemy became aware, who knows what would happen? If he fled, it would be difficult to find him again.

At present, the altar held little value for Jiang Hao. He decided to wait.

Since Zuo Lan sought the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm, he might appear when the power manifested in the altar.

Jiang Hao glanced at Hong Yuye. He wanted to tell her that being cautious was normal. Even Zuo Lan was being very cautious.

Hong Yuye saw through his thoughts. “Are you trying to tell me that most people are cautious?”

‘Yes. There are always stronger enemies around, so it helps to be on guard.’

“It’s different.” Hong Yuye gently shook her head. “You are fundamentally different from him. You don’t want to offend anyone, nor do you want others to pay attention to you. Zuo Lan is quite the opposite. He is not afraid of trouble or being watched. He considers himself clever and wise, and unafraid of being found out. He leaves no room for errors. He is confident enough to enjoy himself.”

“Confident?” Jiang Hao looked at the altar as it began to emit light.

He finally understood. Zuo Lan knew that the people from the Bright Moon Sect would appear. He also knew that other owners of the stone tablets were in the Heavenly Earth City. Yet, he had gone ahead with the preparations and conducted the ceremony on the altar.

He successfully held back Fang Jin and the others, initiating his final plan right under their noses. He had made all the preparations beforehand.

While being cautious, he also seemed to have enough confidence in himself.

Understanding this, Jiang Hao decided to work harder in improving his cultivation in the future.

Boom!

Fang Jin kept unleashing powerful spells and bombarding the surroundings. He saw the altar fully activate and gather an immensely powerful force within it.

Once this power condensed completely, he didn't know if they could get out alive, let alone rescue the disciple from their sect.

"Junior Sister Bai, attack!" Fang Jin said.

Bai Qiong understood. She stepped back and muttered something. Thunder needles penetrated the surroundings of the building.

She flew into the air, her long hair swaying in the wind.

Thunder radiated from her body and surged in the sky.

Then thunderous roars echoed and hit the ground.

"The Heavenly Thunder Formation!" Bai Qiong shouted, and countless thunderbolts came from the earth, resonating with the thunder in the clouds.

Boom!

They collided in the sky. Countless thunderbolts covered the entire building and attacked the altar.

“You set up the Heavenly Thunder Formation here? I thought you had some hidden cards.” Zuo Lan sneered, standing atop the altar.

His body emitted light, and a new power surged in the surrounding, which was driven by his will.

Faced with this Thunder Formation, Zuo Lan merely made a pinching gesture. The stone pillars around the altar began to glow with a blood-red light.

The light converged into a barrier that covered the altar.

Boom!

The thunder struck down.

The nine children bound to the stone pillars screamed.

“This Blood Demonic Formation uses their blood as a trigger. Keep attacking, and when their blood runs out, the formation will break,” Zuo Lan said to Bai Qiong.

Bai Qiong found herself in a dilemma. She hesitated. Right then, something struck her.

“Your weaknesses are too apparent.” Zuo Lan sneered. “Do you know why these nine children are covered in black hoods? I made it so that you won’t be able to recognize the one from your sect. What if your disciple was never here?”

Hahaha...

Fang Jin frowned. The tremendous power of the altar made them stop.

If the enemy could control that kind of power, they had no other means to fight him.

“You aren’t stupid. I’ll grant you that. But you aren’t very clever either,” said

Zuo Lan. “There should be someone else with you. Why hasn’t he arrived yet? I’ve made many preparations to welcome him. I hope he hasn’t run off.”

By now, he had absorbed the majority of the power, and the aura of the Primordial Spirit Realm emanated from him.

Fang Jin felt helpless. However, he was also curious. Where was Jiang Hao? What was he waiting for?

Lan Jin still didn’t believe that Jiang Hao was that strong, so she wasn’t surprised that he was hiding.

“If they don’t want to come out, then so be it.” Zuo Lan crouched down and placed his hand on the stone tablet.

Jiang Hao narrowed his eyes. The clone intended to transmit the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm to the original body.

Although he didn’t understand the nature of this power, he had to be cautious. He needed to capture the direction of the power’s aura and prevent the fusion with the original body.

He couldn’t let Zuo Lan’s original body obtain that kind of power.

Just as Jiang Hao prepared to make a move, he discovered that the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm was moving toward the bottom of the altar and was getting absorbed instantly.

A powerful force burst forth from beneath the altar. ‘Zuo Lan is right under the altar?’

Jiang Hao felt a bit disappointed in himself. It was too late.

He could sense that the altar itself was covered in numerous formations, but he didn't expect someone to be hidden within it.

Boom!

The power of the Primordial Spirit Realm erupted. The altar couldn't withstand so much power, so it exploded.

A continuous roar shattered the altar, and debris flew in all directions. The first to bear the brunt of it all were the children.

"Oh no..."

Fang Jin and the others wanted to rescue them. The children were suffering. However, they were stopped by Zuo Lan's men.

At that time, nine spirit swords suddenly descended from the sky and landed in front of the nine children with a loud bang.

They blocked the flying debris.

"Who is it?" one of Zuo Lan's men asked.

Bai Qiong noticed a person standing behind him, aiming his at the man's neck.

The dagger flew and embedded itself in the neck of the man. The man attempted to escape but another spirit sword appeared in front of him and pierced through his chest.

"Who?" gurgled the man as blood flowed out from his neck. "Who is it?" Another spirit sword stabbed into his back. It pierced through his body.

He coughed up a mouthful of blood. His face filled with terror.

Then, one after another, numerous spirit swords appeared from all directions and impaled themselves into the man.

Only then did Jiang Hao arrive before him, and he slowly grabbed his storage treasure. "Don't worry. You won't die alone.."

Chapter 148: Crushing Zuo Lan with Absolute Strength

Bai Qiong was rooted to the spot. The person had taken only a span of a few breaths to kill the man.

She found it unbelievable as she looked at Jiang Hao. What cultivation realm is he in?'

Both Fang Jin and Lan Jin had stopped fighting. They stepped back, surprised by Jiang Hao's arrival.

Why has he appeared now? The power of the Primordial Spirit Realm was already released. There was no time!

"You finally came! Were you waiting for me?" asked Zuo Lan. This time, the real Zuo Lan was present.

'Primordial Spirit Realm...' Jiang Hao sighed inwardly.

He didn't want to fight someone in the Primordial Spirit Realm. Among the enemies he had faced till now, Zuo Lan seemed the strongest.

Jiang Hao wasn't confident. If Hong Yuye didn't help, he had no choice but to fight alone.

He didn't know if Hong Yuye would intervene after his defeat.

"I came for the stone tablet." Jiang Hao looked at Zuo Lan.

Zuo Lan appeared to be in his late twenties, with a pale complexion and well-defined facial features. His tall figure exuded strong spiritual energy.

"Peak of the Golden Core Realm?" Zuo Lan looked at Jiang Hao in disdain. "Do you plan to snatch the stone tablet from my hands? Coincidentally, there is something I want from you. Your presence has disrupted our plan. You think you came looking for me, but I have been the one looking for you all this time."

Jiang Hao sighed in his heart.

"Who is the person behind you?"

"You'll know when you meet them." Zuo Lan looked at Jiang Hao disdainfully.

"You're lucky. If it was up to me, I would've just killed you."

Jiang Hao lowered his head. He wanted to launch a sneak attack, but Zuo Lan's clone was behind him. There was no opportunity for a surprise attack.

He could only confront him head-on. As for the stone tablet, he didn't ask for it. If he won, it would be in his hands.

If he lost, it would be meaningless to ask anything at all. He would be dead.

Zuo Lan didn't make a move, but he turned to look at Fang Jin and the others.

"All of you from the Bright Moon Sect can leave with your disciple. I'm not interested in you anymore."

"I don't believe your words." Fang Jin didn't hesitate and got ready to attack.

Bai Qiong and Lan Jin followed suit.

At this moment, one person at the peak of the Golden Core Realm and two others in the early stage of the Golden Core Realm moved toward Jiang Hao.

Fang Jin swung his long sword.

Bai Qiong attempted to activate the Thunderstorm Formation again.

Lan Jin gritted her teeth and raised her sword.

However, just as they were about to attack, a blade light suddenly swept past their eyes.

It was the third form of the Heavenly Blade technique: the Meteor.

Clang!

The blade resembled the shadow of the moon. It flew like a shooting star.

Jiang Hao appeared in front of the person in the peak of the Golden Core Realm. He slashed at him.

He was killed with a single slash. The blade did not stop at that. It reappeared in front of the other two in the early stage of the Golden Core Realm.

The blade passed like a meteor rain.

In just a couple of slashes, the two cultivators were instantly beheaded.

The third form of the Heavenly Blade Technique, combined with various footwork and blade techniques, allowed him to swiftly approach the enemy, kill them, and then proceed to another.

Just one slash could kill seven people consecutively.

When he reached the fourth person, Jiang Hao circulated the Hong Meng Heart Sutra at full force.

He arrived in front of Zuo Lan, who was in the Primordial Spirit Realm. “Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit!”

The power of the peak of the Golden Core Realm appeared from the center of his forehead and fused in his body.

He intended to use the third form of Heavenly Blade again. At the same time, purple energy emerged and spread across his entire body, covering the blade in his hand.

Slash!

Jiang Hao used his strongest power to unleash a powerful slash.

The Meteor technique’s speed was unrealistic. Zuo Lan couldn’t even recognize it until Jiang Hao was right in front of him.

Zuo Lan didn’t dare underestimate the enemy and used his defensive magic treasure.

Boom!

Crack!

Bang!

The purple energy swept and shattered the defensive magic treasure. The blade slashed Zuo Lan's arm.

With a bang, Zuo Lan was sent flying. Blood poured out from his arm. He was heavily wounded by the slash.

Everyone was stunned. Jiang Hao's attack and Zuo Lan's injury had happened in a blink of an eye.

It had all been too fast.

Jiang Hao didn't stop. After knocking Zuo Lan away, he landed beside Zuo Lan's clone.

Without hesitation, a long spear appeared in his hand, covered by the purple energy. He then struck it. Zuo Lan's clone didn't even have time to react when Jiang Hao's spear shattered its skull.

The purple energy surged. Jiang Hao launched another attack. This time, he used the first form: Moon-Slaying.

Moonlight flashed past. This time, Zuo Lan began to counterattack. He swung his eight-sided sword to fight Jiang Hao.

"You're not in the Golden Core Realm," said Zuo Lan. "No! I don't believe someone at the Golden Core Realm can be my match in a fight!"

Clang!

Power erupted as the saber and the sword collided. Jiang Hao was enveloped in the purple aura, suppressing his opponent with overwhelming force.

A slash forced the opponent back. He then used the second form of the Heavenly Blade: Mountain Suppression.

With a bang, the surrounding buildings and trees instantly turned into rubble. Despite being heavily injured by Mountain Suppression, Zuo Lan swung his sword toward Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao used the third form of the Heavenly Blade: The Meteor. He flitted out of the way. He appeared in front of Zuo Lan again and slashed at him. The eight-sided sword cracked.

Jiang Hao disappeared once again, only to reappear behind Zuo Lan. The second slash came unexpectedly, striking his neck.

Blood gushed out. Zuo Lan clutched his neck in horror. "How is this possible?! Who are you?"

Even as someone in the Primordial Spirit Realm, he was getting crushed by an opponent in the Golden Core Realm!

At this moment, a meteor flashed by. Before anyone could react, a long knife pierced through Zuo Lan's chest.

Several knives flitted past and impaled themselves on Zuo Lan's sides and back.

When the meteor dissipated, Zuo Lan was heavily wounded. He was kneeling on the ground. Jiang Hao stood in front of him, activating his wrist guard to use Mountain Suppression.

A scream of agony echoed in the air. As a crushing strength pinned him down,

Zuo Lan's blood splattered everywhere.

Jiang Hao withdrew the purple energy and sheathed his blade.

His Half-Moon Blade was filled with cracks. He sighed.

At this moment, he was overcome by exhaustion briefly.

It was all because of the nameless manual that he had been able to mask himself.

As expected, facing someone in the Primordial Spirit Realm was too much work. He couldn't be this reckless in the future.

Fortunately, Zuo Lan hadn't had the time to refine his cultivation. Otherwise, Jiang Hao would have been in trouble.

Of course, he still retained one trump card. He hadn't revealed his Primordial Heavenly Sword, Shiyu.

"Now, can you start answering my questions?" said Jiang Hao indifferently.

At this moment, the three people from the Bright Moon Sect came back to their senses.

Lan Jin's face was filled with fear as she looked at Jiang Hao under the moonlight. The figure standing on corpses was a terrifying existence. She wanted to hide behind her seniors. His indifference and calmness made her even more scared.

'How could someone in the Golden Core Realm kill someone in the Primordial Spirit Realm?'

At that moment, she finally understood what her senior brother had meant when he said that one had to keep a low profile and try to befriend others outside the sect.

If she had somehow offended this person, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Lan Jin felt fortunate that she had followed her senior's advice.

Fang Jin and Bai Qiong were equally shocked. Jiang Hao's immense strength was awe-inspiring..

Chapter 149: Taking Stock of the Gains

Jiang Hao stood in front of Zuo Lan. He then turned his head to look at Fang Jin and the others.

Lan Jin trembled in fear. Fang Jin and Bai Qiong felt their scalps tingling.

"You should focus on saving your disciple first," Jiang Hao said to them.

The nine children were still bleeding at the altar. If left unattended, their lives would be in danger.

Fang Jin and the others finally snapped out of it.

"Thank you, Disciple Jiang. We've been careless," Fang Jin said.

The three of them went to rescue the children, hoping to see their junior sister among them.

Jiang Hao turned back to Zuo Lan.

At this moment, Hong Yuye appeared by his side.

Jiang Hao picked up Zuo Lan's storage treasure.

Fortunately, Zuo Lan had withstood the impact of the Mountain Suppression technique to some extent. His storage treasure was undamaged.

Jiang Hao found five thousand spirit stones inside, along with a stone tablet and a book.

‘Five thousand more!’

He handed the stone tablet to Hong Yuye. She put it somewhere out of sight and looked at Jiang Hao.

“Give me the other two as well,” she said.

Jiang Hao knew she wanted to combine the three tablets.

After handing over the stone tablets, he turned to the injured Zuo Lan. “What was your purpose in coming here?”

“Purpose?” Zuo Lan coughed blood. He struggled to speak, but the desire to survive was clear in his eyes. “Will you spare my life if I tell you?” Jiang Hao didn’t answer. He simply stared at Zuo Lan.

Zuo Lan chuckled and felt his consciousness grow fuzzy. His vitality was dissipating. No matter what happened now, he would die.

“I was here to investigate the Heavenly Note Sect,” he said weakly.

‘Why?’ Jiang Hao was confused.

Other than the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower, what else was worth investigating in the Heavenly Note Sect?

‘The mining site...’

That was the only thing Jiang Hao could think of.

“We are only following orders. Each person who possesses a stone tablet has a different mission.” Zuo Lan’s voice was soft. “My mission was merely to find out about the history of the Heavenly Note Sect.”

“Who are you taking orders from?” Jiang Hao wasn’t particularly interested in the history of the Heavenly Note Sect.

However, Zuo Lan’s investigation might be related to the book Jiang Hao had found in his storage treasure. He planned to check it later.

Zuo Lan was in a weakened state. His head was lowered and blood flowed from his mouth.

“I... have a question,” he said weakly.

“What is it?” Jiang Hao asked.

“You... What cultivation realm are you at?” Zuo Lan made an effort to look at

Jiang Hao. “Are you in the Primordial Spirit Realm?”

“I’m at the peak of the Golden Core Realm,” said Jiang Hao truthfully. “You will be killed,” Zuo Lan said. “There are many people in this world who envy geniuses... many.”

“I know,” Jiang Hao said.

That was why he didn’t want to attract attention and preferred to cultivate quietly. When he became invincible, he wouldn’t have to worry anymore.

Unfortunately, Hong Yuye had already discovered his cultivation realm now. Jiang Hao didn’t know if she would make a move against him soon. He still needed some cards up his sleeve.

“Zuo Yutian...” said Zuo Lan.

"Is he from the Great Thousand God Sect too?" Jiang Hao asked.

"Yeah..." Zuo Lan's aura was fading away. "It's him. We were given orders by him, but I don't know about the others."

Jiang Hao nodded. "Where are the other stone tablets?"

"They probably escaped," Zuo Lan said. His voice became fainter and fainter.

"Do you know who crafted the stone tablets?"

"No, I don't know..."

Jiang Hao looked at Zuo Lan and remained silent. He was dead.

Jiang Hao sighed and turned to look at Hong Yuye. "Senior, do you know anything about Zuo Yutian?"

Hong Yuye shook her head. "Let's go back."

Jiang Hao nodded. There was nothing for them here anymore.

After taking away the storage treasures from the enemies, he stabbed the bodies two more times to make sure they were really dead. Then, he bid farewell to an astonished Fang Jin and the others before disappearing into the woods.

Meanwhile, Fang Jin and his group managed to rescue the nine children. Their junior sister was among them too!

After several setbacks, they finally met the disciple stolen from their sect. However, a little boy by her side worried them.

However, what worried them the most was Jiang Hao. His motive and purpose weren't as simple as they had thought.

They didn't question too much. Fortunately, they weren't at odds with Jiang Hao. They were somewhat friendly at this point.

"For the next three days, don't disturb me," said Hong Yuye before she went into her room and closed the door.

Jiang Hao was happy for some leisure time. Three days without worrying about Hong Yuye was akin to a holiday for him!

But he couldn't stray too far from Heavenly Earth City, as it would be easy for others to discover his location.

During these three days, he planned to explore the city, but the immediate priority was to examine the gains from the recent encounter.

Perhaps tonight was another night of obtaining sudden wealth for him!

Jiang Hao began to take stock of his spirit stones. He had around 3,806 spirit stones on him. Now, with Zuo Lan's defeat, he had found 5,101 spirit stones in his storage treasure. In addition, there was a book of records.

Jiang Hao placed the book on the table and organized the spirit stones.

After putting the spirit stones into his own storage treasure, he opened the clone Zuo Lan's storage treasure but found nothing inside.

“That’s weird,” muttered Jiang Hao. “There should be more. There should at least be something inside!”

Five thousand spirit stones was a lot of money. Zuo Lan was good at making money, but he must have spent a lot, considering everything he had done. Jiang Hao was already satisfied with the amount he had now, but he was puzzled that he found no other treasures at all. ‘Does he have a stronghold somewhere else?’

‘What a pity... not even one person survived.’

Jiang Hao proceeded to inspect the storage treasures he had picked up from the other four Golden Core Realm cultivators.

They weren’t particularly wealthy either, with one having 926 spirit stones and the other having 1,103 spirit stones.

‘They were poor too...’

Jiang Hao realized that the Golden Core Realm cultivators from the Heavenly

Note Sect were much wealthier. After all, being affiliated with the Heavenly Note Sect granted them access to some cultivation resources, while these individuals had to constantly purchase resources with their own spirit stones. It made sense that they were poor unless they accumulated spirit stones for several years like Shi Xin.

The two cultivators’ storage treasures contained some other items. There were foundation-building pills, as well as some average-quality treasures, along with a few healing talismans. Together, they could be sold for around three to five hundred spirit stones.

Next, he opened the storage treasure that belonged to the late-stage Golden Core Realm cultivator and found that this person wasn’t much better off than the previous two. They had 1,300 spirit stones, a decent-quality foundation-building spirit sword, and two bottles of commonly used pills for the mid-stage Golden Core Realm. These items were worth around one to two thousand spirit stones.

There wasn't much else of value.

Finally, he took out the storage treasure that once belonged to the peak Golden Core Realm cultivator. Upon inspection, he found no spirit stones inside. However, there was a note. The first line read:

"I know that I may not come back alive this time, so I have hidden all the valuable things elsewhere."

Jiang Hao was taken aback. He had never expected to encounter someone like this in the cultivation world..

Chapter 150: Young Master and The Maid

Looking at the note, Jiang Hao couldn't help but laugh. It was the first time he had obtained such a storage treasure. There was more written on it:

"I have reached the peak of the Golden Core Realm and have been accumulating spirit stones to make a breakthrough to the Primordial Spirit Realm. I have been saving for sixty-eight years, and I have a total of 39,868 spirit stones, along with numerous talismans, treasures, and pills. I also have a formation for seclusion. These are my lifelong savings, but unfortunately, I might die here. I'm telling you all this just to let you know that you missed out on tens and thousands of easily obtainable spirit stones by killing me. Although I'm dead, you will remember my name.

Disciple Donghuo."

Jiang Hao felt a little regretful. He sighed warily. "Disciple Donghuo... I'll remember your name, alright."

He truly hadn't expected to encounter such a strange cultivator in this world. He felt a little sorry for killing him. However, he didn't want to encounter someone like him again. It was quite frustrating. If what the note said was true, then he had missed out on an opportunity to become very wealthy. With the spirit stones he already had, he could have obtained a total of forty thousand spirit stones! Suddenly, the spirit stones in his own storage treasure didn't bring him as much joy as before. One had to admit that Donghuo was quite adept at playing with people's minds.

In the end, Jiang Hao put away the note, thinking that he could place it in someone else's storage treasure next time so that others could experience this.

After carefully calculating the spirit stones he possessed, Jiang Hao realized that he was still quite wealthy. He had a total of 12,263 spirit stones. This time was different. He didn't need to purchase the tea again! Deducting the three thousand spirit stones for the Law Enforcement Hall and another three thousand for purchasing treasures, he would still be left with six thousand spirit stones.

'I can finally raise the spirit beast properly! I might only obtain a golden bubble... a pity! How long would it take to get two?'

Regardless of whether the spirit beast could awaken its dormant bloodline, it was evident that it would require many spirit stones. He still didn't have enough spirit stones. Shaking his head, Jiang Hao checked his own condition.

He wasn't in good shape after killing Zuo Lan.

"The Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit ability is indeed powerful but quite exhausting," muttered Jiang Hao. "I should take the Spirit Regenerating Pill early to avoid any complications. The Half Moon Blade has cracked again... Jiang Hao sighed.

"The Half-Moon Blade wasn't strong enough to be used with all the three forms of the Heavenly Blade. Maybe using the Primordial Heavenly Blade would have been easier."

"Although Zuo Lan possessed the power of the Primordial Spirit Realm, he hadn't refined his cultivation yet. Someone truly in the Primordial Spirit Realm would be much stronger. Next time, I need to be less reckless..."

Jiang Hao reflected on himself. Just because he had killed Zuo Lan didn't mean he could take on someone who was in the Primordial Spirit Realm anytime. He needed to remember that.

After meditating for a moment, Jiang Hao confirmed that his body had no hidden injuries.

After resting tonight, his strength would be restored fully.

However, he needed to store some energy in the Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit, and he also needed to restore the attacks in his wrist guard.

He just had to decide which two forms to use from the three forms he had already learned. Each had its own unique characteristics and strength.

Moon-Slaying was a powerful offensive technique. Mountain Suppression overwhelmed and suppressed the opponent, and the Meteor gave him unbelievable speed.

Mountain Suppression was a must, as its imposing force was astonishing.

Between Moon-Slaying and the Meteor...

After some hesitation, Jiang Hao chose Moon-Slaying.

The Meteor was physically demanding. If he was gravely injured, he might not be able to use that power.

But Moon-Slaying was different. It could be used directly without the consumption of energy.

With these decisions made, Jiang Hao began his cultivation.

Early the next morning, Jiang Hao activated the Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit and restored his power of the Golden Core Realm at the center of his forehead. Then, he rested to recover his strength.

At Noon, Jiang Hao stored the two attacks, Moon-Slaying and Mountain Suppression, in his wrist guard.

After completing these things, he let out a sigh of relief. He was restored to his peak condition, but he was still lacking a proper blade.

“It’s a pity that the marketplace only opens once a month. It’s a bit inconvenient.”

Jiang Hao would make do with an ordinary blade for now. Occasionally, green bubbles also contained swords.

Although he wasted quite a few swords last night, he still has some spirit swords left. It would be enough for now.

However, if he wanted to unleash enough power, he needed a good blade.

Jiang Hao watched the people below from his window. He brewed a pot of tea for himself. He used the Snow Queen Spring tea.

Although he was in good condition now, the tea made him feel even more refreshed.

Of course, part of the reason was that he had twelve thousand spirit stones on him. He felt good when he had money on his hands.

It made him more willing to make a pot of tea that cost around fifty-five spirit stones.

Afterward, he began thinking about the next course of action.

Zuo Lan was killed. It would be very difficult to find stone tablets unless there was a substantial breakthrough with the three stone tablets they already had.

They would have to search from one city to the next.

“There are still two and a half months left. I wonder if there will be any progress... Zuo Yutian... I have to find some clues about him.”

These were matters that Hong Yuye needed to be concerned about, but the problem was that Jiang Hao was pressed for time. He had to return to the sect within three months.

After pondering for a while, Jiang Hao got up and left the room. He wanted to wander around the city.

When he went downstairs, he heard a little girl exclaiming loudly.

“No, you can’t send the young master away. Wherever he goes, I’ll go too!”

Jiang Hao was puzzled when he saw Fang Jin and the others in the hallway. They appeared frustrated.

In front of them stood a frail little girl, holding onto an equally frail little boy and refusing to let go. The boy appeared to be around eleven or twelve years of age. The girl must be around ten.

Upon closer inspection, Jiang Hao noticed her eyes. Despite her frail appearance, her determined eyes exerted its will.

He knew that the little girl had exceptional talent. It was no wonder she was chosen by the Bright Moon Sect.

Then Jiang Hao turned to look at the little boy. He looked conflicted as though he was making a hard decision.

Upon careful observation, Jiang Hao felt that there was something strange about the boy. It seemed he exuded various auras but all of them were weak.

“Is he unwell?” Jiang Hao asked curiously.

Bai Qiong noticed him. "Fellow Disciple Jiang, hello," she said.

"I apologize for any inconvenience caused, my friend," said Fang Jin bitterly.

Lan Jin remained silent. She had learned her lesson.

Fortunately, Jiang Hao wasn't a person of bad temperament. Otherwise, if he kept a grudge against her, even her seniors might not have been able to protect her.

"That's alright," said Jiang Hao. He looked at the little girl. "Is this your junior sister? She doesn't seem willing to leave with you."

"Indeed.... We can't make a decision right now. We will have to wait for our senior uncles to arrive," said Fang Jin. He explained the situation briefly to Jiang Hao.

The young girl was Chu Jie. She used to be a maid in the Chu family. All that was left of the Chu family now was the young master, Chu Chuan. They relied on each other and survived for three years.

Although life was tough, Chu Jie continued to serve as a maid to her young master.

She had a single-minded determination and only saw her duty to the Chu family. She insisted on staying by her young master's side.

Chu Jie refused to be separated from him..