

A Demoness 171

Chapter 171: Divine Might

“Good morning, Junior Brother Jiang.” Liu Xingchen smiled.

“Senior Brother Liu, are you here for spirit herbs?” Jiang Hao was puzzled.

Usually, Liu Xingchen directly visited his house if he wanted to talk. It was rare to see him at the entrance of the Spirit Herb Garden.

“Indeed.” Liu Xingchen gave the list to Jiang Hao. It was a list of spirit herbs he wanted.

“So many?” Jiang Hao looked at the list in disbelief.

This was a large-scale collection of spirit herbs. There were orders for healing spirit herbs and for those for strength.

It was as if someone was preparing for battle. Jiang Hao thought about the Heavenly Saint Sect.

“Are you going to fight with the other sects?” Jiang Hao asked.

The two of them walked towards the Spirit Herb Garden. Jiang Hao gave the list to one of the people present in the garden and asked them to prepare the order right away.

“There’s the situation with the Devil’s Den, and there have been incidents involving other sects. We can’t rule out the possibility that someone is targeting us. We need to be prepared. The fight with Azure Mountain has drained us. We are still recovering. This is just so that we stay prepared,” said Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao nodded. The people of Law Enforcement Hall were very cautious. This was good. If the Heavenly Saint Sect attacked out of the blue, the sect would be ready for a fight.

"I heard that you will be going into the Devil's Den soon?" said Liu Xingchen.

"I'm going next month," Jiang Hao said.

"I heard some seniors talk about the situation in the Devil's Den. There are a lot of disciples put in that case. There are some from the top ten disciples list. Also, I heard many from the Hundred Bones Forest and the Heavenly Joy Pavilion will be there. The Law Enforcement Hall wouldn't get involved unless it was a major issue. I don't need to tell you to be careful. There is something else you need to do too," said Liu Xingchen. "You should make sure you don't make any great contributions to the sect. The Law Enforcement Hall isn't willing to let you off the suspect list."

Why?" asked Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen had helped him stay on the suspect list in the past. Besides, Jiang Hao hadn't made any special requests so the Law Enforcement Hall didn't really care much.

"It's because you have money. The Law Enforcement Hall wants to make money off of you," said Liu Xingchen.

Jiang Hao was stunned. The demonic sects were indeed absurd. Everyone wanted to make money off of him!

Liu Xingchen left the Cliff of Broken Hearts with the spirit herbs.

Jiang Hao busied himself in the garden. If the Heavenly Saint Sect really attacked in the future, the Spirit Herb Garden would be very busy.

He needed to warn Cheng Chou to make some preparations. However, Cheng Chou hadn't returned yet.

'It's been more than a month, and he's still not back...

Cheng Chou and Xiao Li had taken longer than that last time. 'I wondered if they encountered anything this time on their journey.'

At night, Jiang Hao checked the array formation in his room. After confirming that there was no problem, he entered the array formation and prepared to advance.

His strength had improved a lot from his time outside the sect. This time, he should be able to save some lifeblood and cultivation to refine his cultivation realm.

Everything was ready. Jiang Hao extracted his lifeblood and cultivation

At this moment, Jiang Hao felt a powerful spiritual energy circulating around him.

As the Hong Meng Sutra circulated, purple energy covered his entire body. The power was guided by the purple energy. It nourished his divine soul.

Jiang Hao's primordial spirit began to condense. His golden core was slowly turning into a primordial spirit.

To advance to the Primordial Spirit Realm, one had to condense one's spiritual energy into power. Only then could the power break through the bottleneck, and his cultivation realm would advance.

The process went smoothly. However, halfway through, Jiang Hao felt another force appear in his body. The force began to surge toward his primordial spirit. It was cool and gentle. It didn't disrupt his progress.

He heaved a sigh of relief. He would have been in danger if it had disrupted the process at the most crucial time.

This feeling was familiar. 'Snow God Pill? I didn't ingest the pill entirely before?'

Jiang Hao had no choice but to stay put. The cool effect of the Snow God Pill kept surging toward his forehead, as though it was trying to open up something. The power circulated continuously.

Jiang Hao saw that his lifeblood and cultivation had reached twenty-three and twenty-one, respectively.

His soul essence had condensed. Something strange appeared between his brows.

Jiang Hao wasn't in a hurry to check. He calmed himself and refined his cultivation.

Early the next morning, he slowly opened his eyes. He had advanced to a new realm and had a better understanding of his body and his mind.

Jiang Hao looked at his interface.

[Name: Jiang Hao]

[Age: 23]

[Current Stage: Early stage of the Immortal Spirit Realm]

[Cultivation Method: Heavenly Sound Hundred Revolutions, Hong Meng Heart

Sutra]

[Divine Ability: Nine Revolutions Death Substitution (unique), Daily Appraisal,

Clear and Pure Heart, Reappearance of Hidden Spirit, Divine Might]

[Lifeblood: 23/100 (can be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 21/100 (can be cultivated)] [Divine Power: 1/3 (Unavailable)]

[Golden Legend: 1/2 (Cannot be obtained)]

Jiang Hao was surprised to see a new divine ability: Divine Might.

When he had finally advanced, he had felt as though an eye had opened in the middle of his brows. That invisible eye must have been related to the new ability.

'I thought Hong Yuye gave me the Snow God Pill to help repair my ability, but I didn't expect it to give me a new ability!'

Jiang Hao touched his forehead. He could still feel that cool sensation. The effect of Divine Might was obvious. It was to exert invisible pressure.

It would come in handy in critical moments. At the same time, it could also defend against other people's psychological attacks.

Jiang Hao compared his strength to Zuo Lan's. He had only used one slash of the Demonic Sound Slash to kill Zuo Lan last time. However, he needed to be more careful if he faced anyone in the Primordial Spirit Realm in the future.

He got up to check the array and found that it was almost destroyed. The impact of his advancement hadn't been small.

After tidying up the array, he went to the courtyard to collect bubbles.

However, he saw Hong Yuye crouching beside the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. The spirit beast was unconscious. It was also tied up with a rope and hung on a branch. It swayed in the wind.

This time, it looked like the beast wouldn't survive..

Chapter 172: The Demoness' Sharp Eyes

He looked at the bruised spirit beast.

Jiang Hao felt that it would be better to leave it unconscious on the ground than to hang it up like that.

"Senior," he said and bowed respectfully.

This time, he was fully prepared. The tea leaves and the stone tablet were all in order.

"What cultivation realm are you?" asked Hong Yuye as she touched the leaves of the flower gently.

"The middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm," said Jiang Hao.

Hong Yuye got up and looked at him. "Middle stage of the Foundation

Establishment Realm? I think it's the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. What do you think?"

A terrifying aura surged. It was capable of turning everything to dust. Jiang Hao felt as though he would fall apart at any moment. He lowered his head. "Senior, your eyes are sharp. I am indeed at the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm."

Jiang Hao made it so that he looked like he was at the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

Hong Yuye didn't say anything more about it. "Did you find anything about the stone tablet?"

"I only know that three people frequently talk in that reality. They are Gui, Liu, and Xing. I go by the name Jing."

"Is that all?" she asked.

"That's all for now."

Jiang Hao felt a bit anxious. He understood how much patience was needed to become an undercover agent. Liu Xingchen and Ming Yi were like that too.

He suddenly thought of something. Now that he was in the Primordial Spirit

Realm, he might get some more information if he used the Daily Appraisal on Hong Yuye. However, she might detect his use of divine ability very easily. He had no choice but to wait for her to bring it up.

Jiang Hao wasn't sure that he had reached a level where he could use his ability without being detected.

"How many words have you exchanged with them?" asked Hong Yuye.

Jiang Hao lowered his head. "Quite a few."

"Is 'quite a few' equivalent to three words only?" asked Hong Yuye.

"Pretty much." Jiang Hao nodded.

Hong Yuye chuckled. "Find out who's behind the stone tablets. You won't be helping me free. When the time comes, it'll be worth it. However, if my patience runs out..."

A ray of sunlight fell in the courtyard, and Hong Yuye dissipated in the light.

Jiang Hao breathed a sigh of relief. He had barely escaped a disaster. It would be extremely difficult to find the person behind the stone tablets.

He needed to take it slow. He would appear distant and mysterious to the others so that they were curious about him, instead of coming off as suspicious.

If new people joined during that time, it would be even better. If he was no longer a newcomer, he might be accepted more willingly into the group.

As for Hong Yuye's patience, he didn't dare think about that.

There was the Immortal Peach Tree and the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower to take care of, so he might not be killed that easily. It's just that he didn't have the freedom to do as he pleased.

While Jiang Hao thought about it, he heard the wail of the spirit beast. Jiang Hao untied it from the tree branch and placed it on the ground.

"Master, did you provoke someone? Why do they keep beating me up?"

"Yes." Jiang Hao nodded. "I provoked a demoness."

"Master, you need to work hard and be careful. The more amiable you are, the more friends I will make.'

Jiang Hao chuckled. He then let the spirit beast go to the Spirit Herb Garden. He then thought about his next course of action.

'After refining my cultivation, I need to update my Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit Ability. I also need to store two attacks in my wrist guard. After that, I'll start learning the spells of the Hong Meng Heart Sutra.'

At noon, Jiang Hao absorbed the remaining cultivation points to refine his cultivation. He hid two attacks in his wrist guard and stored his power in the Reappearance of the Hidden Spirit ability.

After doing all that, he spent half an afternoon recovering his strength. He then headed to the Spirit Herb Garden to collect bubbles.

'I still need to confirm how many days it takes for the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower to spawn bubbles.'

After returning from the Spirit Herb Garden, Jiang Hao tried to study the techniques he could learn in the new cultivation realm. He still did not know what spells and techniques were open to him.

The learning difficulty was ridiculously high.

The learning difficulty was off the charts, mainly because the form of the technique was somewhat different from the ones he had encountered before.

Days passed in this manner. As expected, the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower didn't give any more bubbles.

On the fifth day, two bubbles appeared near it.

[Cultivation +1] [Lifeblood +1]

Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief. If bubbles appeared steadily at similar times, he could advance to the next stage in a year and a half.

However, his cultivation was pitifully low now.

[Lifeblood: 5/100 (cannot be cultivated)]

[Cultivation: 4/100 (cannot be cultivated)]

Two days later, Jiang Hao asked the people from the Candlelight Pill Pavilion to inspect the Black Lotus seedlings.

The one who had visited for inspection was a senior in the peak of the Golden Core Realm. He was shocked when he saw the seedlings.

“So fast?! How did you achieve this, Junior Brother?”

Lian Daozhi looked at Jiang Hao.

“I just got lucky,” said Jiang Hao. Naturally, he couldn’t tell Lian Daozhi that he had spent around a thousand spirit stones to make the seeds sprout.

“Strong people always credit their achievement to luck,” said Lian Daozhi with a smile. “I’m Lian Daozhi, by the way. And you are?”

“Jiang Hao.”

“Junior Brother Jiang, I still have dozens of Black Lotus seeds here. I wonder if your Spirit Herb Garden will accept them...”

Jiang Hao shook his head apologetically. “I’m sorry, but we can’t. This time, it was really luck. These flowers can’t sprout within two months. I hope you understand, Senior brother Lian.”

He wasn’t interested in planting more Black Lotus for now. He didn’t have enough spirit stones for that, and he was leaving for the Devil’s Den soon.

If anyone else took over this task, it’d only be trouble.

“Is that so?” said Lian Daozhi, deep in thought. “Then... will you be willing to take such orders in the future?”

“I am,” said Jiang Hao. “But it depends on the situation.”

When planting difficult herbs, they needed to be approved by the one managing the Spirit Herb Garden. If the garden accepted it and the herbs didn’t turn out well, then there would be unnecessary trouble.

No one dared to take full responsibility in such cases. Jiang Hao was willing to spend his own spirit stones in raising the seeds solely for the bubbles.

“Alright. I will have some juniors deliver the orders next time,” said Lian Daozhi. He was very pleased with the outcome. He thought Jiang Hao might have a talent when it came to planting the spirit herbs.

“There won’t be any delay in payment, so you can rest assured,” he said.

Since more than fifty alchemists from the Candlelight Pill Pavilion had been attacked and robbed because of their debt, they needed to establish their credibility once again. The other Spirit Herb Gardens were willing to accept simple orders but refused to plant the more expensive and difficult kinds of herbs.

The Candlelight Pill Pavilion was facing a crisis and wanted a reliable and simple transaction regarding spirit herbs. Golden Core alchemists didn’t lack spirit stones, so they preferred to do reliable and simple business. Those in the lower realms, like the Foundation Establishment alchemist, lacked spirit stones, so they often tried to find a cheap way out. It ended up causing trouble for everyone..

Chapter 173: The Universe in a Palm

Jiang Hao accompanied Lian Daozhi to the entrance and he left. The people from the Candlelight Pill Pavilion seemed to have a lot of spirit herbs at hand.

If he maintained a good relationship with them, the Candlelight Pill Pavilion might send more seeds to be planted in the garden.

People got offended very easily. He needed to read carefully and leave them some leeway.

At noon, Cheng Chou arrived at the Spirit Herb Garden with Xiao Li. Xiao Li looked a bit disheveled, she wasn't injured. In contrast, Cheng Chou was bruised all over.

Jiang Hao gave Cheng Chou a Spirit Rejuvenating Pill and told him to rest.

Xiao Li took out a bag of snacks. "Senior Brother Jiang, this is for you." She looked at him reluctantly.

"Where's the beast? I brought something for it too."

"It went to look for Chu Chuan. You should also go and meet him," said Jiang

Hao.

Jiang Hao wanted to ask Cheng Chou what had happened on the way. Xiao Li looked at Cheng Chou in worry.

"He'll be fine. Don't worry," said Jiang Hao gently.

Xiao Li felt at ease. She disappeared down the road. She was extremely fast.

Jiang Hao sat down and looked at the red pastries that Xiao Li had handed him. He thought it might be made up of red beans.

He activated his Daily Appraisal ability.

[Red Bean Cake: Miao Xiang personally made the cake for you. Xiao Li carried it while fighting a tiger on the way. It got contaminated by poisonous gas but is harmless. Tastes better with tea.]

Jiang Hao smiled and ate one. He chewed it properly. He felt that the texture was worse than before. Xiao Li's mother must be getting on in years. When he finished his pastries, Cheng Chou also finished his meditation.

"How are your injuries?" he asked.

"Much better." Cheng Chou quickly got up.

"Tell me about your journey," said Jiang Hao.

They had been away for nearly two months this time. He wanted to know if they had encountered any trouble, or if Xiao Li had refused to come back to the sect.

"There was no problem when we left from here," said Cheng Chou. "The two elders were very happy to see Xiao Li. They had saved up in the past few months to make delicious food for Junior Sister Xiao Li. It seemed they had prepared it for many months hoping she would come home. Xiao Li was obviously over the moon to see them. However, she was different from how she is here in the sect. She didn't eat too much. She was afraid her parents wouldn't have enough for themselves."

"Xiao Li helped her mother with sewing. She helped to chop up firewood for them to use. She even fetched water for them. Her father occasionally told her how proud he was of her. Xiao Li agreed. She tried to draw on the wall to mark her height to prove to them that she was all grown up. It made the two old people laugh."

"I asked around the village. The people say that the two elders try to save up as much as they can so that they can make good food for Xiao Li when she returns. They often sit at the gate as though waiting for her."

Jiang Hao nodded. "Did you and Xiao Li take something back for them too?"

"We did," said Cheng Chou. "We bought a lot of food along the way, but they are too old to digest something like that. After the New Year celebrations, her father fell ill, so we stayed with them for a long time. In fact, we only started our journey back to the sect after he was feeling well. I bought them a lot of medicinal herbs and pills. I even helped them raise some chickens and ducks.

They might not be able to kill them for food, but they won't feel lonely." "On the way back, we were attacked. Although Junior Sister Xiao Li fights very well, there were too many of those creatures."

Jiang Hao nodded and looked at Cheng Chou. "You did very well. I can sense that your strength has improved, and your cultivation is more refined. I think you can advance to the Foundation Establishment Realm this year or maybe next year. You're very close. Take these pills."

"Thank you, Senior Brother Jiang," said Cheng Chou gratefully. "The two elders... Xiao Li's adoptive parents are getting weaker by the day. They might not last long."

"I know," Jiang Hao said softly. "We can help her visit her house at least twice a year."

If she could advance twice a year, that would be enough.

"In about fifteen days, I'm leaving for the Devil's Den. Take care of things here while I'm gone. Don't let strangers in."

The Heavenly Saint Cult had its puppets. They could easily infiltrate the garden by pretending to be someone from the sect.

If he wasn't around, it would be difficult for the others to notice it.

Cheng Chou nodded. With the spirit beast in the garden, he felt more at ease. The beast was very powerful and was very perceptive of problems.

After that, Jiang Hao spent most of his time studying the techniques of the Hong Meng Heart Sutra.

After seven days, he finally grasped the technique he was trying so hard to understand. It was called The Universe in a Palm technique.

At first, Jiang Hao had thought that this technique might be an offensive technique. On closer inspection, it turned out to be more of a sealing technique.

The Universe in a Palm wrapped everything with purple energy and stored it in his palm. It was somewhere between a sealing and a spatial technique.

Jiang Hao didn't know what exactly it was because he hadn't succeeded at it completely.

If the first technique was this difficult, the following techniques would likely be even more challenging. He would need exemplary strength and mental state to master them all.

'I have only seven days left. I wonder how much I can learn in that time.' Jiang Hao focused on studying the techniques.

On the day that he needed to leave for the Devil's Den, Jiang Hao awoke from his meditation. He got up and walked to the courtyard. The sky was still dim, and the sun was not up yet.

The spirit beast was also drooling in its sleep near the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

Jiang Hao looked at the tea set on the table. He extended his hand and circulated the Hong Meng Heart Sutra. Purple energy enveloped everything. He grasped at it.

He used the Universe in a Palm technique. Purple energy surged and covered the entire tea set. Then it returned to Jiang Hao's hand. The tea set was gone. It had disappeared from the table.

'This is useful.'

He looked at the sphere in his palm. It was made up of dense purple energy. The tea set was inside the sphere.

‘Unfortunately, it’s not stored. It was only shrunk and then sealed.’

He waved gently, and the tea set returned to the table. He turned to look at the beast. The purple energy surged once again.

In an instant, the beast was covered by purple energy and ended up in his palm. The beast was still asleep.

‘It seems weaker power won’t be able to break through the sphere. I need to practice more. The state at which it is in... it can’t withstand powerful magic.’

At that moment, a talisman flew to him. Jiang Hao placed the beast down and picked up the talisman. It was a message. He was called to gather with the others.

It was time to head to the Devil’s Den.

He wasn’t worried this time. He had advanced to the Primordial Spirit Realm and had two hidden abilities: Divine Might and the Universe in a Palm. This was an opportunity to refine his cultivation.

There would definitely be danger everywhere, but he was prepared for it..

Chapter 174: You Can Trust Me

“Get up!” Jiang Hao gently kicked the rabbit.

It was still drooling near the flower. Jiang Hao understood why she had hung up the beast on her last visit.

The spirit beast was lucky it was still alive.

“Master?” The spirit beast sat up and yawned. “Why are you up so early?”

“Take these.” Jiang Hao passed some spirit stones and spirit herbs to the spirit beast. “When Chu Chuan advances to the second stage of the Lifeblood Refinement Realm, give that to him. He should be able to advance in a few months.”

“Alright,” said the spirit beast as it accepted the things.

“Chu Chuan hasn’t asked for the tests to stop. So, you cant stop testing him every week, okay?”

“Master, leave it to me. You can trust me. I handle things pretty well in your absence,” said the beast.

Jiang Hao raised his eyebrows. He was even more worried after hearing that. However, the beast had done a pretty good job of keeping things running when he was out of the sect.

“Master, are you going out again?”

“Not really out... I’ll be within the sect.”

Jiang Hao watered the spirit herbs in his courtyard before he left. So many days had passed, and yet there were no bubbles near the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. He wondered if bubbles would spawn again.

Unfortunately, he didn’t have time to find out.

When Jiang Hao was ready to head to the Law Enforcement Hall, Han Ming suddenly arrived to meet him.

“Senior Brother Jiang, it’s been too long,” he said as he held onto his word. “Junior Brother Han, you look even more impressive than before!” said Jiang Hao.

Han Ming should be twenty-two this year. He entered the inner sect at the age of eighteen and was in the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

Four years had passed. He was now at the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

The aura surged around him. He wasn't an ordinary disciple in the Foundation Establishment Realm. He truly deserved the special ability of being favored by the spirits of mountains and rivers.

Han Ming smiled. "I came here to challenge you today. Are you free for a sparring match?"

"I'm just about to head to the Law Enforcement Hall because some of us have to gather there for a mission, but... I have a little time I can spare."

If it were someone else, he would have politely refused. However, it was Han Ming. He was always willing to spar with him.

Jiang Hao had been nineteen when he first met Han Ming. Now, he had already reached the Primordial Spirit Realm in four years. They both were at the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm at that time.

"Right here?" Han Ming asked.

"Yes." Jiang Hao nodded.

Han Ming gripped his sword, and his aura surged. He didn't attack directly. He was waiting for something to brew.

Whoosh!

A gust of wind blew, and Han Ming flickered like lightning.

Clang!

He unsheathed his sword and launched a thunderous attack at Jiang Hao.

Clang!

Boom!

Jiang Hao swung his saber and cut through the empty air behind Han Ming.

With a clang, a long sword fell and plunged into the ground. It was Han Ming's sword.

Jiang Hao's blade stopped inches from Han Ming's ear. If he hadn't stopped, Han Ming would have been gravely injured.

"Junior Brother Han, thank you for letting me win." Jiang Hao slowly withdrew his sword.

"Senior Brother Jiang, your cultivation..." Han Ming in disbelief. He had always assumed that he would break through to the next stage earlier than Jiang Hao.

"I'm in the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm now," said Jiang Hao. "I went out of the sect for a while and encountered something good. It helped me advance to the late stage."

Han Ming picked up his sword, bowed to Jiang Hao, and turned to leave. He seemed unconvinced. He wanted to be one level higher than Jiang Hao and defeat him. Then he would call him "Junior Brother Jiang."

Jiang Hao shook his head as he saw Han Ming leave, but he didn't mind.

Han Ming was a rather peculiar person. He wasn't a bad person because he wasn't scheming against anyone. He just wanted to win. If he continued to cultivate and practice his skills, he might become very powerful one day.

Han Ming was talented and willing to work hard. The only flaw was that he got jealous too fast. Jiang Hao wondered if people would find it too easy to manipulate him.

Jiang Hao did not delay any longer. He arrived at the foot of the mountain where the Law Enforcement Hall was located.

He didn't Liu Xingchen or Ming Yi there. The spies always kept such a low profile that not many people knew about them.

"Junior Brother Jiang, you've advanced?" Mu Qi asked Jiang Hao in surprise.

"I was away from the sect a while back. I obtained some things and cultivated diligently after returning. Fortunately, I was able to advance this time," said Jiang Hao.

He used the same old excuse. It was rare but not unheard of.

"Junior Brother Jiang, you seem to have many such encounters." Mu Qi chuckled. "The others will be here soon. After we enter, you might have to go with the others in the Foundation Establishment Realm. Be careful."

"Thank you for the reminder, Senior Brother Mu."

He knew that he was being targeted by many people in the sect, and there would always be some danger wherever he went.

They waited for a while. People kept arriving at the place they gathered. Finally, disciples from all twelve branches were there.

A woman stood before them and spoke.

“Junior Brothers and Junior Sisters, since everyone is here, let’s set off. There will be someone to guide you when you enter the Devil’s Den. The Golden Core Realm cultivators will gather at the Golden Core area. The Foundation Establishment Realm cultivators will gather at the Foundation Establishment area with the others. Individual missions are possible, but insufficient achievements may result in punishment.”

‘Do we have to pay?’ Jiang Hao wondered.

Normal sect missions didn’t involve paying spirit stones as punishments. Only special missions had that requirement.

The missions were always created with the public in mind. For example, the Law Enforcement Hall’s missions were always related to something outside the sect because people usually took them to be able to venture outside the sect.

The same was true for the Devil’s Den missions.

Jiang Hao thought about it for a moment. He decided not to take the mission alone. He didn’t want to stand out.

The group rode their swords and flew to the Devil’s Den. Jiang Hao saw some familiar faces.

Xin Yuyue from the Thunderfire Peak, Zheng Shijiu from the Ice Moon Valley, and Yue You from the Flowing Waterfall were there too!

Jiang Hao had fulfilled missions with Xin Yuyue and Zheng Shijiu several times now.

At the Devil’s Den, Jiang Hao and the others were greeted by people who were ready to receive them. There were two people. One was a Primordial Spirit Realm cultivator and the other was a Golden Core Realm cultivator.

Jiang Hao knew that Primordial Spirit Realm cultivator. He had seen her before. She was Ning Xuan from the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

The Golden Core Realm cultivator was a muscular man, carrying a huge shield. It seemed like he was from the Flowing Waterfall, just like Yue You.

“If you want to go solo, you can leave halfway. For now, follow me,” said Ning Xuan and led the group away.

Jiang Hao heard the man say the same.

“Junior Brother Jiang, we meet again!” said Zheng Shijiu.

Xin Yuyue and Yue You also walked over to him.

“Senior Brother Zheng, Senior Sister Xin, and Senior Sister Yue, how nice to see you!” Jiang Hao said politely.

This time, Zheng Shijiu seemed genuinely happy to see him. He understood Jiang Hao’s strength to some extent. The fact that Jiang Hao had never attacked them implied that they didn’t need to be hostile toward one another. Besides, with Jiang Hao present, they would be much safer..

Chapter 175: The Unexpected Accident

“Junior Brother Jiang, are you in the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm?” asked Yue You in surprise.

Xin Yuyue didn’t seem surprised at all, but she was curious to know how Jiang Hao had advanced so quickly.

However, her trip to the Devil's Den with Jiang Hao before had taught her that he wasn't ordinary. He was strong.

"I had a fortuitous encounter during my journey and luckily advanced, but I am still far behind from being a true late-stage Foundation Establishment Realm cultivator," Jiang Hao said humbly.

"Mm... advancing too quickly can easily lead to an unstable foundation. Junior Brother Jiang, you should spend some time refining your cultivation," said Yue You with kind intentions.

Jiang Hao nodded gratefully.

He noticed that Yue You and Xin Yuyue were both at the middle stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm, while Zheng Shijiu had reached the peak of the Foundation Establishment Realm. There were only two cultivators at the peak of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

"The disciple you recruited... are they doing well?" Xin Yuyue asked. "The three I brought back are average, but fortunately, one of them is putting in some effort. Otherwise, I was afraid of getting chastised for bringing in useless people."

At this time, the group went deeper into the Devil's Den. Jiang Hao confirmed that there were no major problems outside.

"The three disciples I brought back are okay, but I wouldn't say they are outstanding," Zheng Shijiu said. "Perhaps in a few years, they will shine."

Jiang Hao was quite curious if he was talking about the last disciple he had picked. The person had average talent but extraordinary perseverance.

Jiang Hao thought about what to say. "I haven't paid much attention to them in the past few days, but there is one disciple that stresses me out."

“Junior Brother Jiang, you don’t need to worry too much. After all, you brought back a Golden Core Realm cultivator,” Zheng Shijiu said. He was a little envious. “I asked around after returning to the sect, and it seems that Lin MO, the disciple I recruited, entered the Law Enforcement Hall.”

He turned to look at Jiang Hao. “You know that friend Lin MO and Junior Sister Zhao had? The one you recruited. It seems that he suffered quite a blow. They are growing apart because of the gap in their strength.”

“As expected,” said Jiang Hao.

“Indeed.” Yue You sighed. “Having friends like that can be a good thing sometimes, but it can also be stressful. Junior Brother Lin Zhi is not strong enough, but if he forcefully tries to keep up, he will only invite trouble.”

“I heard that he knows how to hide. It’s only his two friends who can ever find him,” said Zheng Shijiu with a chuckle. “They probably still consider him a friend, despite their high talent and strong cultivation.”

Jiang Hao looked down at the passing woods and remained silent. Lin Zhi was already having more difficulties than the others, both in terms of cultivation and circumstances.

If it were just him alone, it wouldn’t be a problem. Unfortunately, his two friends had exceptional talent, which put immense pressure on him. It would make him feel very bad whether his friends chose to ignore him or stay with him.

In a few more years, those two friends might look down on him. It might not happen intentionally, but it would feel like that anyway. The differences always got in the way. However, it seemed Lin Zhi had secrets of his own.

‘Next time, I will use the Daily Appraisal on him.’

“We’re almost there,” said a voice from the front.

Jiang Hao and the others stopped talking and looked ahead.

They could see a barrier of light enveloping the area. It sealed off the entire region. In front of the barrier, there was a temporary defensive line with people patrolling the surroundings.

After landing, the senior who led them turned to look at them. "You can stay near here and wait for instructions. If you don't arrive when instructions are being issued, we'll assume you are going on a solo mission. Check in here every day to confirm your whereabouts. Find accommodations on your own, and then take turns investigating the situation. You have three days of rest. After three days, you'll need to move."

Jiang Hao and the others began to search for accommodations. Jiang Hao observed his surroundings, trying to confirm whether there were any powerful individuals here. He also wanted to familiarize himself with the surroundings.

He discovered three Golden Core Realm cultivators. The rest were all at the Foundation Establishment Realm.

There were no Lifeblood Refining Realm cultivators present, which was understandable. The Devil's Den was not for someone at the Lifeblood Refinement Realm.

He suddenly thought of something. In the future, if Lin Zhi and the others advanced to higher cultivation, would they choose to go out for missions?

Jiang Hao found a decent spot and started to build a wooden house for himself. He maintained his peak condition to prevent any accidents.

The next day, Zheng Shijiu found him.

"I heard that it's very easy to encounter Demon Dwellers there. Moreover, the strength of Demon Dwellers varies, so it might get very dangerous. Some people never got to leave from here."

Jiang Hao frowned. "Are they still assumed to have undertaken solo missions?"

“Huh?” Zheng Shijiu shook his head. “I think they are filed under missing persons.”

“I see.”

It would be much easier for him to leave the team. He didn’t want to leave unless it was necessary.

It seemed better to wait for his turn. It would be best if he could find some spirit herbs to plant here. He had an uneasy feeling that something was brewing here.

“Ice Moon Valley’s Zheng Shijiu, Cliff of Broken Heart’s Jiang Hao... are you here?” asked a voice.

Jiang Hao and Zheng Shijiu turned to see who was calling them.

“Yes,” they said.

“Follow me. Something happened to the reconnaissance team,” Ye Ji said in a low voice.

Jiang Hao was surprised. He hadn’t expected his turn to come so soon. He followed them anyway.

He realized that Yue You and Xin Yuyue were also there. There was also a middle-aged man with a scar on his face. He was at the peak of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

The group of six people passed through the defensive barrier and rode their swords deeper into the Devil’s Den.

“If you encounter anything dangerous, you can retreat. Don’t try to be reckless. I cannot save you,” said Ye Ji.

Jiang Hao and the others didn't say anything. This was normal. It was unrealistic to expect help from others in a demonic sect.

Zheng Shijiu and the group looked deeply worried. If the scouting team had encountered a problem, it meant danger was ahead.

It meant that they would be taking a huge risk by entering the danger zone. However, they couldn't refuse. The mission had to be carried out. Soon, Jiang Hao and the others saw signs of a fight in the forest ahead.

"Let's go down and take a look." Ye Ji slowly descended.

Jiang Hao followed along. However, the moment he landed, he sensed an attack incoming.

Ye Ji quickly noticed it too. "Be careful!"

She stretched out her hand and cast a shield spell.

Boom!

A giant rock was blocked from hitting them.

Jiang Hao immediately looked to the side and frowned. There were so many well-hidden Demon Dwellers in this place.

Ye Ji only noticed it only when it was too close to them. "Be careful!"

She was being held back by a powerful force. It was too late to think about escape.

Zheng Shijiu and the others also noticed that something was wrong. There wasn't enough time to counterattack.

Just as they were about to take this attack head-on, a beam of moonlight appeared. Jiang Hao drew his saber and swung it down.

Boom!

The moonlight slash cut through the attack and destroyed the Demon Dweller's disguise.

It was a late-stage Foundation Establishment demon.

Zheng Shijiu and the group stared in disbelief. The demon was just two meters away from them. They had been caught off guard.

Jiang Hao didn't stop there. He used the Demonic Sound Thousand Miles to arrive in front of the Demon Dweller and slashed at it.

The demon was beheaded. Jiang Hao stepped back and sheathed his saber.

"Seniors, please be careful. I think there are more of these things here.."

Chapter 176: About to Be Killed

Jiang Hao did not pay much attention to his seniors' shocked faces. His current strength was set to the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. Anyone in that realm who was perceptive enough could have done what he did.

He was more concerned about the demons around him. The demons weren't stronger than the ones he had fought before, but they had become better at hiding and disguising themselves. It seemed that they were much more difficult to deal with than before.

Zheng Shijiu and the others recovered from their shock and became alert. Yue You stomped on the ground.

Boom!

The ground shook.

Zheng Shijiu waved his paper fan and cast a spell. Snow started falling in the place.

The tremors on the ground shook the demons out of hiding. Those that remained were exposed by the heavy snow.

Clang!

Xin Yuyue attacked with her sword. Each attack was imbued with thunder and fire.

The scarred middle-aged man also leaped up at this moment and tore the demons apart with his bare hands.

Jiang Hao also joined the fray. This time, he didn't go for fatal strikes but attacked the weakest point on the demons' necks with his dagger. As each demon fell, white bubbles spawned.

[Strength +1]

[Spirit +1]

All the demons were slain. Jiang Hao walked past the corpses.

'Not even a single blue bubble.' Jiang Hao sighed.

However, he had expected that. Since he had advanced to the Primordial Spirit Realm, blue bubbles had become rarer and rarer.

When he was at the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm, he found so many blue bubbles everywhere!

If he wanted better bubbles, he would have to kill demons in the Primordial Spirit Realm, or the Golden Core Realm. But where would he find such strong demons?

“There are no survivors,” said Zheng Shijiu.

Jiang Hao went over to join them. He had made up his mind to be patient even if there were not enough bubbles to be found. He could use this time to familiarize himself with the Universe in a Palm Ability and to study the nameless manual.

“Jiang Hao of the Cliff of Broken Hearts?” said Ye Ji. There was a hint of admiration in the way she called out his name this time. She had thought that people would get injured, but Jiang Hao had done well.

“Yes,” Jiang Hao said.

“Have you cultivated spiritual techniques?” Ye Ji asked.

“Some,” said Jiang Hao. He knew some spirit techniques that had come in handy. The nameless manual had taught him so much.

Ye Ji nodded. “Be vigilant and see if the previous scouting team left anything behind.”

The five people agreed and began to investigate.

Zheng Shijiu and Xin Yuyue heaved a sigh of relief. They felt much safer with Jiang Hao around.

Yue You looked at Jiang Hao. She frowned.

She cultivated to pursue a solid foundation in her cultivation realm, so she saw many things that others missed,

Jiang Hao just killed the demon with one blow. His power was stable, and his cultivation was refined.

She felt embarrassed because she hadn't done well in front of her seniors.

Jiang Hao walked forward and looked at the innermost part of the demon cave.

The light from the sky was still shining. It was as if the whole place had some kind of celestial glow. The dangers emerged from there. This was the core of the Devil's Den.

'I wonder what happened inside.'

With a sigh, he began to ask about the whereabouts of his fellow disciples. Looking at the signs of battle, it seemed that they were chased inside.

'There is a high chance that they might have discovered something. Many trees have been destroyed in this area... It seems the fight was intense.'

"I found something!" said Zheng Shijiu.

"It's the mark of the Ice Moon Valley." Zheng Shijiu pointed at the water marks on the ground.

Jiang Hao observed the marks and found traces of faint spiritual energy swirling within.

"Can guess which direction they went in?" asked Ye Ji. "This way." Zheng Shijiu pointed to the left.

“Let’s go and take a look.”

The six people headed toward the direction of the mark. Jiang Hao was at the back.

After a short time, they arrived at the riverbank.

“The mark shows that something is underwater,” Zheng Shijiu said.

Ye Ji nodded. She took a step forward and used her powerful strength to separate the river.

Splash!

Jiang Hao saw a magical formation appearing in the water. There was indeed something there!

Zheng Shijiu and the middle-aged man with a scar on his face pulled out the people who were unconscious.

They found three people. One man and two women.

Among them, one of the women was slightly injured. The other two were pretty severely wounded., while the other two had more serious injuries.

“Sister Xia?” Zheng Shijiu recognized the woman.

“Something big has happened,” said the woman called Xia when she saw Zheng Shijiu.

“Enemies... among the demons. They wanted to trap us. We need to escape or request more reinforcement. Otherwise, we’re doomed.”

“Let’s go back first.” Ye Ji got up.

As they headed out, Jiang Hao turned back to look at the place but didn't feel anything amiss.

"Don't worry. There are seniors of the sect inside the Devil's Den. Our area is on the outer side. There shouldn't be any powerful demons here," said Ye Ji.

The others nodded but couldn't say anything more. Soon, they returned to their campsite.

Ye Ji asked them to take the wounded people to the alchemists while she escorted Xia to the Golden Core Realm cultivators. They needed to discuss the situation and take action.

"Do you think what Senior Xia said is true?" Xin Yuyue asked.

"Where there's smoke, there's fire. There must be some danger around here," Yue You said. "We should be prepared."

"If we are trapped inside and need support from the sect, will they come on time?" Jiang Hao asked.

"It's hard to say." Zheng Shijiu frowned. "If we are trapped here, it probably means that the Gold Core Realm seniors are also trapped. Otherwise, they would run to help. I think that the sect will provide support in that case. If the sect had enough manpower to spare, we might be getting more reinforcement soon."

Jiang Hao sighed inwardly. The heavenly Note Sect didn't have enough manpower right now. They had suffered great losses in the previous battle with Azure Mountain. Besides, they were in conflict with the Blackheaven Sect, so many people had been dispatched to the mines.

The Heavenly Saint Sect was also becoming restless for a battle. They might infiltrate the Devil's den.

If they were trapped here, they had to look out for themselves. The situation wasn't looking good..

Chapter 177: I Don 't Need Evidence To Kill You

The next day, Jiang Hao didn't receive any clear information or instructions. Perhaps the seniors were uncertain themselves, or maybe they were waiting for reinforcements.

Since there was no news, Jiang Hao could only investigate on his own. Every morning, he observed his surroundings for clues.

After three days, there was no progress. The only thing they could do was work on their cultivation and be patient.

This time, Jiang Hao focused more on the Light and Dust technique and studied the third form of the Heavenly Blade.

He couldn't learn the fourth form yet. Currently, the fastest attack technique was the third form: The Meteor.

If the demons had transformed from prey to hunters, the Meteor technique would be effective against them.

But there was one thing that made him curious. How were the demons able to form traps?

The demons only acted on impulse. They weren't intelligent lifeforms. They didn't have the intelligence to plan traps for their enemies.

'Are there people helping them, or are the demons really capable of higher intelligence?'

Jiang Hao felt that the latter was more likely. When it came to spirit beasts, the powerful once possessed some form of intelligence. Perhaps demons were the same...

Five days later, there was an eruption outside.

Jiang Hao walked out of his makeshift cabin and saw two disgruntled Foundation Establishment Realm cultivators.

“What exactly is going on? Are we going to be trapped here as prey to the demons?” one of them shouted.

“If that’s the case, we might as well leave now,” the other added.

The words of the two people puzzled the other disciples. Jiang Hao looked around and realized that none of them knew about the current situation. They seemed to be hearing the news for the first time.

“What are you talking about?” someone asked.

“Don’t you know?” one of the two men said. ‘We heard the demons are somehow different from before. They plan elaborate traps to ensnare us!’

“What?”

“Is this true?”

They were unaware of the whole situation.

Jiang Hao lowered his head. It seemed the wise choice to make right now would be to leave this place. However, this was a sect mission. They couldn’t just leave!

Everyone waited for the seniors in Golden Core Realm to arrive and explain everything to them.

‘How will they explain, tough?’ thought Jiang Hao. Will they tell the truth?’

Jiang Hao wasn’t as anxious as the others. He was just waiting and observing the situation to make the best choice.

"Silence!" A loud voice boomed from above.

Ye Ji stood high above and looked at everyone. Finally, her gaze fell on the two Foundation Establishment Realm cultivators who caused the commotion.

One was tall and the other looked fierce. Neither of them seemed like easy opponents.

"Senior Sister Ye Ji, everyone wants to know the truth. Are we going to be trapped here?" asked the tall disciple.

Ye Ji flew down. She stared at the two people calmly. "Where did you hear about this?"

"We heard it from someone," said the fiercer one of the two.

"Who did you hear it from?" Ye Ji asked.

"We can't tell you. We just want to know if it's the truth," said the tall disciple.

Ye Ji remained calm. "People who know about this matter have been with us for the past few days. Nobody else knows about this unless... you are traitors colluding with the demons."

The sudden accusation shocked the two disciples.

Before they could respond, Ye Ji made a move. There was a golden burst of power. Ye Ji reached out from a distance and strangled the fierce disciple.

Blood spurted out. His body twisted. There was a loud bang, and he died on the spot.

“You...” The tall disciple was trembling in fear. “What evidence do you have to accuse us? Aren’t you afraid of the consequences of killing disciples on a hunch?”

“Evidence?” Ye Ji smiled. “Look around. This is neither the sect nor the Law Enforcement Hall. Being suspicious is enough to get you killed here.”

She gathered a powerful force in her hand and threw it.

Boom!

The tall disciple was instantly obliterated.

The other people were so frightened that they didn’t dare to make a sound.

Jiang Hao was also quite surprised that Ye Ji had killed them on the spot. ‘If no one knew about the information, could the two really have been traitors?’

If it wasn’t true, would they have challenged a Golden Core Realm cultivator?

Jiang Hao decided to examine the corpses. He activated the Daily Appraisal.

[Corpse of Gao Hu: Inner Sect disciple of the Flowing Waterfall. In the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. He had multiple forceful breakthroughs without caring about his body. He suffered many hidden and internal injuries in the process. He was under the demon’s influence. He wanted to get stronger and undermine the Heavenly Note Sect.]

‘So, they really were traitors!’

Jiang Hao was surprised. He wondered if Ye Ji had actually known it, or if she had just acted on a hunch and killed them.

“Well... you know about it now. What they said is true. But we haven’t received orders to evacuate. You can choose to retreat at your own risk or go solo to fulfill the missions... or stay here quietly and wait for further instructions,” said Ye Ji. She turned around and left.

Her words left the others astonished. The disciples looked at each other. Most chose to stay where they were.

Evacuating without orders was a serious offense. Nobody dared to do it.

Going solo to fulfill the mission would be suicidal if this was a trap. It was better to stay put and wait for further instructions.

Jiang Hao returned to his wooden cabin.

In the following days, there were no more internal investigations after the initial exploration of the surroundings. It seemed that being trapped here had become an inevitable situation.

The demons hadn’t launched an attack so far, though.

“It’s been too quiet.” Jiang Hao walked out of his cabin, feeling uneasy.

The others were feeling the same. They were bored and scared. They were also becoming impatient.

Jiang Hao was uneasy because the Golden Core Realm cultivators hadn’t contacted the sect yet. There had been no news. So far.

The Devil’s Den was within the sect. It wouldn’t take long to send a message to the sect and to get a response. But there was nothing!

Jiang Hao flew out on his sword. Their campsite wasn’t very far away from the outside.

He frowned. There was a presence in front of him. He sensed a faint spiritual energy. He increased his speed.

Finally, he arrived at the edge of the forest. The faint energy was still there. Jiang Hao raised his hand and gently touched the faint energy fluctuation.

Whoosh!

An invisible ripple blocked his hand.

Jiang Hao withdrew his hand and sighed. 'So... we have lost contact with the outside. That was why the sect was being so quiet.'

As he turned back, he saw Ye Ji approach..

Chapter 178: A Massive Attack

Jiang Hao didn't feel surprised to see Ye Ji.

"Senior Sister Ye Ji," he said in greeting.

Ye Ji was at the Golden Core Realm. However, compared to someone like Miao Tinglian, her Golden Core Realm wasn't as strong. She probably wasn't a formidable disciple.

To become a formidable disciple, it wasn't enough to rely solely on cultivation. One needed to have innate potential, like Han Ming. His talent and potential far exceeded those of ordinary disciples at his level.

Jiang Hao's current rate of progress was enough to make him a formidable disciple. The only reason he hadn't become one yet was because his talent was only above average. Also, there were speculations that his advancement was due to treasures and other encounters. He was also in the suspect list of the

Law Enforcement Hall, and they thought he had ties with traitors of the sect.

Ye Ji approached Jiang Hao calmly. "You found it."

"When did it happen?" Jiang Hao asked.

"Probably on the day you arrived. We were supposed to inform the sect as soon as we rescued the people. Unfortunately, we couldn't get out." Ye Ji stared at Jiang Hao. "Are you afraid, Junior Brother Jiang?"

"A little," said Jiang Hao.

"I couldn't tell," said Ye Ji and smiled.

"Do you think others know about this apart from the three of us at the Golden

Core Realm?"

"I think I'm the first to know," said Jiang Hao. He didn't think that the others had tried to venture outside.

"You're the seventh," said Ye Ji. "What do you think of the six people that were with you? Know anything about anyone?"

"I don't know," Jiang Hao shook his head.

Ye Ji was a little surprised by how calmly Jiang Hao handled the situation. "You seem quite calm. It's admirable. What do you think our current situation is?"

“Not very optimistic.” Jiang Hao followed her and landed on the ground. “I was curious why the sect hadn’t sent reinforcement.”

“Several reasons,” said Ye Ji. “We report to the sect once a month. The last report we sent was on the day your group arrived. It’s been only eleven days since then. Secondly, we studied this barrier and realized that it emanates from the core of the Devil’s Den. If we resolve whatever is happening at the core, the barrier might disappear. Otherwise, there will be a continuous flow of power supporting this barrier, which makes it immensely difficult to break free. So...”

Ye Ji turned to look at Jiang Hao. “Even if the sect knows, the first priority is to enter the core and solve the problem to clear a path. We must rely on ourselves for now.”

“Can I help with anything, Senior Sister Ye Ji?”

“Yes. I think there is something you can help with.” Ye Ji looked at Jiang Hao solemnly.

“If it were any other time, we could just wait. However, our magical artifact that detects demons is warning us that a large horde of demons is approaching. It won’t be long before they attack. At other times, we could contact the sect for reinforcement, but this time, it’s different. We are trapped.”

Ye Ji paused and looked at Jiang Hao. She thought she would see fear or helplessness in his eyes, but there was nothing. No excitement, no fear, nothing.

He only looked a little surprised. Ye Ji felt that the person in front of her was something else entirely.

Most people panicked when they heard such news.

Jiang Hao was taken aback. They had become the prey to the demons. The situation didn’t really look good for any of them..

Chapter 179: I’ve Become a Tool

Returning to the campsite, Ye Ji walked ahead. She turned around with a smile. "You can find me anytime if you run into trouble, Junior Brother Jiang." Jiang Hao nodded. He activated the Daily Appraisal on her.

[Ye Ji: Inner disciple of the Misty Cloud Peak. At the early stage of the Golden Core Realm. She used enchantment on you eighteen times as an attempt to capture your heart by making you infatuated with her beauty and personality so that you would willingly follow her to the core of the Devil's Den. She wanted you to shield her from danger, even if it meant dying for her. You are a tool for her. She destroys the tool she can't use.]

"Well, I intended to go into the core of the Devil's Den anyway."

He did want to go there. Once inside, he could face the dangers there alone. Without anyone else there, it would be easy to fight and survive until the reinforcements arrived.

He could even search for demons who were in the Primordial Spirit Realm or the Golden Core Realm. He might find more bubbles!

The only thing he needed to worry about was finding a way to escape attention.

"I'll wait for your confirmation tomorrow," said Ye Ji.

After bidding farewell to her, Jiang Hao returned to his cabin. Nothing was surprising about the appraisal result. The people in the demonic sect functioned that way. It was normal.

They used people for their own advantage and discarded them when they ran out of use.

The only thing that puzzled Jiang Hao was that she had used enchantments on him eighteen times! He hadn't even felt anything.

'It seems I need to do some research when it comes to charms and enchantments. I need to find something in the nameless manual that helps me detect it while being used on me. Maybe I can use it to my advantage someday.'

Jiang Hao rummaged through his storage treasure. He found three books on charms and bewitchment. He wanted to read them right away, but he noticed something on the stone tablet.

Messages appeared in the group. They were the same people as before.

However, there was an invitation. Someone was inviting him to join in on the conversation at midnight.

‘Maybe this is the person Hong Yuye is looking for!’

Jiang Hao hesitated and then decided to join in that night. He was an undercover agent, after all. He watched their conversation for a while.

It was a conversation between Gui and Xing.

[Gui: The giant python I’ve been chasing ran away. D*mn it! I was about to capture it. But it won’t escape from me. I cursed it! Its strength will weaken little by little. When I catch it, I’ll skin it! How dare that beast eat my things without my permission!]

[Xing: Even if it becomes weaker, you might not be able to find it. Didn’t you say it has the ability to conceal itself?]

[Gui: Just wait until I find it. I’ll crush it with my bare hands!]

It seemed Gui had something important taken away from her... by a python.

‘An ability to conceal itself?’ Jiang Hao was envious that a beast had such an ability.

After that, they started discussing the night’s gathering.

[Gui: Senior Dan Yuan will join us tonight. I wonder how many others will join the conversation.]

[Xing: I think many will drop in.]

[Gui: That newcomer is probably reading our conversation right now. I wonder if he'll join in too.]

[Xing: He might join us. Otherwise, it's useless to own a stone tablet.]

Jiang Hao watched for a while and then put away the stone tablet. His purpose was to go undercover. He needed to find out who was behind all the stone tablets.

If he wanted to do that, he needed to blend in with the group. Just watching their conversation might not be helpful.

'Dan Yuan? Is that a name or a code for something?'

Jiang Hao thought about it but couldn't figure it out. He might be able to find out tonight.

He read the books on charms and waited for midnight to arrive.

At the main defense line, in the camp of the Golden Core Realm cultivators, three people sat cross-legged on the ground.

Ye Ji sat on the left. A gloomy-faced man sat on the right. In the middle was a muscular man with a large shield by his side.

"You invited a late Foundation Establishment Realm cultivator?" asked Lan Feng, the gloomy-faced man. "He isn't strong enough. He'll just be a cannon fodder. What's the use of taking him along?"

"What if he's willing to sacrifice himself for me?" Ye Ji smiled. "He is very sharp. He detects danger and acts very efficiently. I already charmed him. If there is any danger, he'll die saving me."

“What was his name again? Jiang Hao of the Cliff of Broken Hearts?” asked Jin

Long, the muscular man. “He is still on the suspect list of the Law Enforcement Hall. You’d better be careful.’

“We aren’t going to do anything to him!” said Ye Ji.

“Jiang Hao from the Cliff of Broken Hearts... That name sounds familiar,” said Lan Feng.

“The demons have many treasures, but I’m not sure this place has any. If you want to go through with this, I won’t stop you. You’d better destroy anything that’s inside and succeed.’

“Of course!” said Ye Ji. “It will be a great achievement. I’ll be the last one standing.”

Lan Feng snorted.

“What’s so funny?” Ye Ji asked.

“Nothing,” said Lan Feng. “It’s not that I look down on people you recruit, but.. let’s talk about this Jiang Hao. He is just in the late stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. What can he do? I know a bit about him. I remember that he advanced through some lucky encounters on his journey. He hides in the Spirit Herb Garden and does nothing! But he might have some treasures or techniques on him...”

“If he dies... who would take his storage treasure?” asked Lan Feng. “I take 70%, and you take 30% of anything we find in his storage treasure,” said Ye Ji.

“60/40,” said Lan Feng.

“Then let’s do this. We rely on our own abilities,” said Ye Ji.

“Okay,” said Lan Feng.

Jin Long didn’t get involved. He would rely on his formation for defense. It was the safest.

He could hang on till the end. Since they were trapped, they needed to do everything they could to survive.

Jiang Hao closed the book on charms. He hadn’t read everything yet. From what he had understood so far, charms were activated through body language, eyes, and speech.

There was also an entry about its effect: making the other person feel infatuated with the spellcaster.

If one possessed natural charm, it was easier to cast the spells and bewitch others. Every word and movement intensified the enchantment. It could even make people fall irrevocably in love with the spellcaster.

‘It is no wonder so many people are willing to avenge Senior Sister Yun Ruo. They even throw away their own future and go undercover just to kill me, so they can avenge her!’

It was a given that some people went to the extreme to get what they want, but so many people refuse to let go even after all this time.

Jiang Hao sighed. ‘Senior Sister Ye Ji is trying to do the same to me. Thankfully, charms and bewitchments are useless against me because of the Heaven

Extinction Gu Poison.’

He didn’t know whether he was happy or sad about it.

Chapter 180: The First Gathering

It was time. Jiang Hao didn't hesitate. He projected his thoughts into the stone tablet.

He explored its interior with his consciousness.

If anything happened, he could retract his thoughts immediately. Soon, the public area appeared before him.

It was different from the last time.

This time, boundless starlight flowed beneath his feet like a brilliant river, with the sun and moon revolving around the celestial sphere. It was spectacular.

Jiang Hao stood on a star. It was difficult to move around.

He turned to his right and saw the woman from before. Liu and Xing stood to Gui's right.

'Just four people like before...'

The four of them were not in a straight line. Xing was at the front, followed by Gui, and Liu at the back.

Jiang Hao looked up and saw a man sitting high above. He knew that was Dan

Vilan

"Senior Dan Yuan..." The other three clasped their hands in a salute.

Jiang Hao followed suit. He didn't want to provoke them. He had made enemies everywhere. He wasn't going to put his life in danger for this undercover operation.

Jiang Hao just needed to be patient. If he acted suspiciously, it would not only be dangerous but he would also be kicked out of here.

"It's been a long time. It seems others are busy," said Dan Yuan. His voice was soft. He looked at Jiang Hao. "Friend, are you a newcomer?"

"Yes. I just started," Jiang Hao said truthfully.

"We're all friends here, Jing. Where are you from?"

"I just arrived at Hidden Cloud Prefecture. I'll be here for a while," Jiang Hao said.

"Hidden Cloud Prefecture? That's close to where I'm right now," said Gui. "I'm in the Heavenly South Prefecture."

"I've been on the sea lately," said Liu with a smile.

"I'm in the eastern region in the Heavenly Sky Prefecture," said Xing.

Jiang Hao was surprised. Everyone stated their location without hesitation. So, they had been right before. It was a rule for one to mention their location.

"Hidden Cloud Prefecture... I have something to ask you," said Dan Yuan with a smile.

Jiang Hao nodded. Since he was an undercover agent, he had to play along. If he couldn't help them, he would be of no value. He needed to play along. "Do any of you have any doubts about cultivation?" Dan Yuan looked at the four of them.

"Senior, I want to ask if someone who is not from the Great Thousand God Sect can still cultivate the Great Thousand Spiritual technique," said Gui.

“Great Thousand Spiritual technique?” Dan Yuan smiled. “Is it for the sake of the Great Thousand Divine Avatar? If so, I don’t recommend cultivating it. If not, then there’s no problem.”

“Why can’t we cultivate it?” asked Gui, puzzled.

“Because the Great Thousand Divine Avatar has a fatal flaw that can only be compensated for by practicing the cultivation techniques in the Great Thousand God Sect. Other people who learn it will die. It’s fine to learn it as an ordinary spiritual technique, but you don’t really need it.”

“I see.” Gui nodded.

Liu and Xing also asked their own questions. They also asked about various techniques.

However, the information was too limited. Jiang Hao couldn’t really understand much about the people from just a few questions.

He only knew a bit more about Gui. She was at the Heavenly South Prefecture and was currently chasing a python who took her things.

Dan Yuan answered their questions one by one. His gaze shifted to Jiang Hao. The others also looked at him.

“Since we have all gathered here, it must be fate that brought us together. Don’t worry, young friend. You don’t need to pay anything for the answers you seek,” said Dan Yuan.

Jiang Hao thought about it for a moment. He didn’t know what he should ask. There was no problem with his cultivation. He didn’t want to ask about techniques. What else was there to ask about?

However, if he didn’t ask something, he would be the odd one out. It would make the others unwilling to talk to him.

“Where can I find the Snow God Pill?” he asked.

He thought that maybe he could ask about charms and enchantments, but he couldn't muster up the courage. Charms were usually practiced by women spellcasters, so he felt self-conscious.

He couldn't ask about the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade, or about the Light and Dust technique. He didn't want to reveal too much information.

"The Snow God Pill?" Dan Yuan was quite surprised. "Well... that's not related to cultivation, but since you're new here, I'll answer your question. The Snow God Pill is extremely rare. Among the eighteen sects, only the powerful sects have them. The Sunset Immortal Sect has one. I think the Clear Sky School and the Bright Moon Sect also have them. It is rumored that the Clear Sky School even has a formula to make one, but it is hard to produce because it's very difficult to find the materials. The best time to take the pill is before advancing to the Primordial Spirit Realm. There is a chance that it can offer you a divine ability when you advance. With it, the speed of advancement will be fast. The benefits are numerous."

"As for obtaining it, you can actually get it directly. You will have to find a child with exceptional talent and send them to the Clear Sky School. They will obviously take such a disciple under their wing."

Jiang Hao was surprised. He had taken the pill before advancing to the Primordial Spirit Realm, and it had given him a divine ability!

He didn't know if Hong Yuye had intended it to be so. It was highly likely she had planned it all.

"Thank you for giving me the information, Senior," said Jiang Hao.

Now, he had a better understanding of the Snow God Pill. It was unexpected that the Sunset Immortal Sect had one.

"Senior, do you have any missions?" asked Gui.

"I do have one," Dan Yuan said. "I want you to help me find something." "What is it?" Xing asked.

“The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower,” Dan Yuan said calmly. “I just need information about it. Anything you can find. It’s appearance, fragrance, blooming cycle, etc. You can exchange that information for a favor from me.” “Just information?” Jiang Hao asked.

“The Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower? It’s the first time I’ve heard of it,” said Gui.

“It’s a divine item that is said to have fallen at the beginning of heaven and earth. That’s all I know for now,” said Xing.

“Information is enough, but it would be best if you could find the location of it,” said Dan Yuan.

Jiang Hao nodded. Obviously, he wasn’t going to tell them that he had the flower in his courtyard.

However, it confirmed something. Dan Yuan wasn’t in the southern region. Otherwise, he would already know that the flower was in the Heavenly Note Sect

The Heavenly Saint Sect, Blackeaven Sect, and Azure Mountain all knew that the flower was in his courtyard. They had sent many spies.

The Sunset Immortal Sect was probably unaware of it. ‘Should I reveal a little bit about the flower?’ thought Jiang Hao..