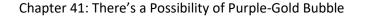
A Demoness 41



"A spirit beast?"

Jiang Hao was surprised. This month had been unusually peaceful for him. Liu Xingchen hadn't come to find him, and his master hadn't asked him anything.

Jinzhou Heng's death didn't seem to cause any commotion. It was unusual. However, unless the Law Enforcement Hall arrived here themselves, there was nothing he could do. He could only work hard to improve his cultivation and then get stronger.

The spirit beasts were within his scope of things, though. Jiang Hao made his way to the field and looked around.

The beast hadn't destroyed anything so far. It meant that the danger wasn't very high. However, those disciples still in the Lifeblood Refinement Realm were weaker and the spirit beast might prove to be far stronger for them.

Something rustled nearby. Jiang Hao slowly approached. The spirit herbs began to shake. The spirit beast had sensed his presence.

A white figure leaped and attacked; Jiang Hao dodged.

The spirit beast disappeared toward the Spirit Herb Garden.

"It's not very big but is extremely fast," muttered Jiang Hao.

Realm might not be able to keep up with the speed of the beast, let alone those in the Lifeblood Refinement Realm.
The spirit herbs rustled, and the beast attacked again. Jiang Hao blocked it with his saber.
Clang!
The powerful force forced Jiang Hao a few steps back. The spirit beast went flying backward.
"It isn't weak, either. Is the spirit beast at the Early Foundation Establishment Stage? Whose beast is this?"
The Heavenly Note Sect did not have a place to raise spirit beasts. However, most spirit beasts had owners. If it suddenly appeared in the Cliff of Broken Hearts, it was most likely owned by a disciple or a master.
Jiang Hao couldn't brutalize or kill the beast for fear of offending them.
Rustle!
Jiang Hao waved his saber. He used the Demonic Sound Slash.
Boom!
The demonic sound rumbled out like a wave. The spirit herbs stopped rustling.
The others looked at the commotion. They were alarmed. If there was a fight, they would have to run for their lives, as they didn't have the ability to participate.

"It's alright. You all can continue with your work." Jiang Hao walked toward the spirit beast.

The others heaved a sigh of relief and continued with what they were doing. However, they secretly observed Jiang Hao out of the corner of their eyes. They were all curious.

Jiang Hao pushed aside the spirit herbs and found a white spirit beast foaming at the mouth. It had fainted. It had long, floppy ears. At first glance, it looked like a huge rabbit.

Jiang Hao grabbed its ear and lifted it up. It didn't really look similar to a rabbit at close inspection. It almost looked like a human. The beast was quite adorable.

'I wonder who it belongs to.'

Out of curiosity, he activated the Daily Appraisal ability. He wanted to find out who it belonged to so he could return it. The beast would hinder others if it remained at the Spirit Herb Garden.

[Rabbit: It has not yet unlocked its spiritual intelligence. It is a spiritual beast at the Early Foundation Establishment Realm. It has a treasure that searches for the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. Once it finds the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower, it can obtain images of the place and terrain. It is a spy specially sent by Azure Mountain. It is of the bloodline of the Evil Beast. If you feed it one spirit stone a day, you can activate the hidden bloodline after seven days. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its favorability toward you.]

Jiang Hao was speechless. He had thought that this spirit beast belonged to a senior. He hadn't expected it to be a spy sent by Azure Mountain.

Azure Mountain was the orthodox sect closest to the Heavenly Note Sect. They were both powerful but did not interfere with each other's business. They had lived in peace this way for many years.

However, there had been some kind of conflict with them recently. Han Ming had gone out to train there. It was surprising that Azure Mountain had sent a

spy to find the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

The Clear Sky Sect, Heavenly Saint Sect, and Sunset Immortal Sect did not dare to act rashly. Even if Azure Mountain sent its entire force, it would be useless.

Jiang Hao looked at the beast. The treasure it held was not so simple. He didn't know how to take it out of the beast without hurting it.

The most important thing right now was to deal with the spirit beast. He should have just killed it, but Jiang Hao hesitated. It had a rare bloodline, too. However, taking it back with him would be dangerous.

He wondered if he could raise it like he was raising the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower. Perhaps he could do it in secret. It might yield a purple-gold bubble in seven days.

'If I take it back with me, I will be monitored.'

Jiang Hao decided to buy a magic collar that could trap a spirit beast and raise it in the forest behind his house, at least for seven days.

Jiang Hao left the Spirit Herb Garden. He had trapped the spirit beast in his attic. It was inconvenient to take it along with him to the market.

Nobody came to his house that much, so the beast would be fine.

Jiang Hao felt a little sad and frustrated. He knew that spies were everywhere. However, he realized that they would be constantly targeting him from now on. Everyone coveted the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

He was in a daze. He had unknowingly gotten involved in something major that affected the sect. He still had no reliable ability to protect himself.

If only he had refused to plant and raise the flower, he would not have been in this mess. Unfortunately, he had no choice in the matter.

He went to the market and bought a magic collar to restrain the spirit beast. He also bought some talisman-making materials. It cost him a total of 600 spirit stones. It was unbelievable. In the past, he couldn't even think of spending so much.. Chapter 42: The Demoness Visits Often Jiang Hao looked at the beast collar in his hands. Raising pets was indeed expensive. A collar for a beast at the Lifeblood Refinement Realm costs around 100 spirit stones. For a beast at Early Foundation Establishment Realm, it had cost him 500 spirit stones. When a pet spirit beast broke through to a higher stage of cultivation, it was important to replace the collar. Otherwise, the beast might easily break th Realm cost more than a thousand spirit stones! The more Jiang Hao thought about it, the more surprised he was at the amount of spirit stones his fellow disciples had. "Fortunately, the talisman-making materials were reasonably priced." He had bought six fine-grade talisman-making materials. They were suitable for those in the Foundation Establishment Realm and Golden Core Realm. It had cost him 100 spirit stones.

It had cost him lower than the pill formulas, anyway.

Among the Armament Masters, Alchemists, and Talisman Craftsmen,

Talisman Craftsmen seemed to be the cheaper yet more lucrative option.

After spending 600 spirit stones, Jiang Hao wanted to earn some spirit stones to compensate for spending so much. So, he thought of putting up a stall to sell talismans.

However, when he thought about the spirit beast at his house, he gave up on the idea. Right now, the spirit beast was more important. Talismans could be sold any day, but he had to deal with the beast immediately.

Hundred Flowers Lake.

Hong Yuye sat in the pavilion with a black saber on the table. It was Jiang Hao's Shadow Blade.

She picked up the saber and looked at it for a long time. Then, she flung it, and it impaled on the flowers beside the pavilion.

"Go on. Tell me," she said.

Baizhi stood respectfully with her head lowered. She nodded. She found it difficult to breathe in such a powerful presence. "After Azure Mountain's DAO conference, they suddenly decided to attack us. I think... it's because of the reappearance of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower."

"Looks like we have traitors in our midst," said Hong Yuye calmly.

"I apologize for my incompetence," said Baizhi as he knelt in apology.

Hong Yuye didn't look at Baizhi. He looked up at the clouds in the sky. "It's still early to tell. We must wait and watch. As for Azure Mountain, that's your problem. You handle it."

"I understand." Baizhi nodded. "There have been no changes in the Cliff of Broken Hearts. However, Jiang Hao's cultivation level has increased again. He may have some people who support him in secret. Devil Den might just be an excuse. He is still unable to clear his name completely. The undercover from the Sunset immortal Sect did die at his hands once again. A man at an early stage of the Golden Core Realm."

"Then continue to observe him." Hong Yuye looked at the flowers. "Since we are in a conflict with Azure Mountain, let's get our hands on some of their cultivation techniques and books."

Baizhi nodded.

The breeze blew over the flowers and Hong Yuye looked at them, entranced.

Baizhi lowered her head and remained quiet. Hong Yuye broke the silence. "Baizhi, why do you think Azure Mountain dared to attack us so suddenly? Is it because the Heavenly Note Sect is not as strong as it used to be, or is it because the Azure Mountain is growing stronger by the day?"

"Neither," said Baizhi. She looked terrified. "In the past few decades, Azure Mountain has become stronger. However, in terms of strength, they are still inferior to the Heavenly Note Sect."

As the Acting Sect Master, it was Baizhi's responsibility to ensure the sect remained strong while monitoring the growth of other sects too.

If other sects got stronger, then Baizhi should ensure that her sect became even more powerful. Failing to do that would be slacking off at her job. Baizhi was terrified the Sect Master would think she had shirked her responsibilities.

"If it is because of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower, there must be someone in the Azure Mountain who covets it for something important," said Baizhi. "Otherwise, with where the Azure Mountain is at this point, they wouldn't dare to act so rashly."

Hong Yuye's gaze focused on Baizhi. "Find out."

"Understood."

Baizhi then left the pavilion. On the way back, she thought about her next move. She wanted to put a female disciple up to test Jiang Hao. However, she had a feeling that the Sect Master didn't really think Jiang Hao was a traitor.

"The Sect master might have other plans, but I am not sure if Jiang Hao is entirely innocent," muttered Baizhi. She was the one who had submitted the list. "We need to delay the matter of the traitor for a while for now. I need to investigate Azure Mountain to find out who the mastermind is."

In the afternoon, Jiang Hao hid the spirit beast.

He went to the Spirit Herb Garden and told the people there to inform whoever came looking for the spirit beast to find him so that they could get it back.

Jiang Hao wondered if he could lure out another spy in this way. As for the spirit beast, he needed to wait for seven days to decide what to do with it.

He had taken the spirit beast to the forest behind his house. He put the collar around its neck.

By this time, the spirit beast had woken up and struggled to break free from the collar. It seemed to dislike the collar vehemently.

Jiang Hao looked at its helpless struggle for a while. He finally threw a spirit stone at it. The beast sniffed the stone and then ate it.

'Now, I only need to set up a range.' That was another function of the collar. It could be used to mark a certain area beyond which the spirit beast couldn't venture. The money for the collar was indeed worth it.

Jiang Hao wasn't good at making trap formations to keep the spirit beast from escaping. The collar did the job for him.

Just as he was about to mark the area, someone spoke from behind. The voice was calm but didn't hold any emotion. He knew that voice.

"What are you doing?"
Jiang Hao turned around. She was there again, dressed in red It was her!
Chapter 43: She's Really A Demoness
"Greetings, Senior," said Jiang Hao. "I found this spiritual beast today. I am planning to raise it."
Hong Yuye glanced at the beast on the ground. "Why do you want to raise it here instead of your house?"
"I am worried it might damage your flower."
A strong wind blew suddenly and rustled the leaves on the tree. Before Jiang Hao could react, a force hit him on his chest and sent him flying. He crashed onto a tree.
Hong Yuye grabbed the spirit beast. "You're so full of lies. Your cultivation level has increased very quickly."
Jiang Hao didn't say anything. He wasn't injured. However, he knew that if he crossed this woman, he could not win.
He wasn't sure if she could see through his cultivation. He didn't dare ask her about it.
He raised his head to see the woman lifting the spirit beast by its neck. Her slender fingers seem to squeeze its skin.

"Senior, I…"
She looked at him indifferently. "You can't kill it?"
"Hm?"
"I sure. I'll kill it." Jiang Hao sighed inwardly. There went his chance to earn a purple-gold bubble.
Hong Yuye squeezed the spirit beast's neck. It struggled. A pearl and a map fell into Hong Yuye's hands She wiped them clean and put them away.
She then threw the beast toward Jiang Hao. "Just keep it in your courtyard."
She headed toward his house. Jiang Hao was surprised. How had he not seen her in the forest?
He didn't know what she wanted this time. Did she want to check on the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower?
It was broad daylight. He suspected that someone might have followed her here. He looked around but didn't find anything amiss. He then looked at the spirit beast in his arms.
'The treasure was taken out. Does that mean I can keep it safely in my courtyard without getting monitored?'
He couldn't use the Daily Appraisal today. He decided to check once tomorrow to be sure.
The woman's observation skills were extraordinary. He couldn't make her suspicious right now.
Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief and carried the beast back to his residence. The beast had fainted.

'Why is it that whenever I see her, I feel so nervous? My emotions fluctuate too much when she is near,' thought Jiang Hao. 'I have been advancing too quickly, but my mind can't keep up. I've been advancing too quickly, but my mind can't keep up.'

He returned to the courtyard. When he got there, he found Hong Yuye sitting elegantly on a wooden chair in the courtyard. Her gaze was focused on the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

The wooden chairs and table weren't there before. Jiang Hao didn't know where they came from. He didn't ask.

"How do you care for the flower?" Hong Yuye suddenly asked.

Jiang Hao was stunned. He wondered if she thought he had not taken care of it properly. He cleared his throat to respond.

"I water it with a bowl of water."

"Every day?" Hong Yuye asked.

"Yes."

"Hm... Is that so?" Hong Yuye was then silent.

Jiang Hao placed the spirit beast on the ground in the corner and waited.

He saw that Hong Yuye still had her eyes on the flower. He brought out some tea from his house and placed it on the table. He then marked the area for the spirit beast to prevent it from escaping.

After he was done with that, he stood beside her silently. "Have you practiced the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade?"



After she left, Jiang Hao stood there in silence, looking at the tea in the cup. If he knew the tea was that bad, he wouldn't have offered it at all.

He sighed and glanced at the spirit beast. At least, he could raise the beast now.

Jiang Hao was still curious about something. He needed to know if she possessed the Heaven Extinction Yin Gu poison and if it had the same effect on her as it did on him.

He decided to visit the library..

Chapter 44: Gold Legend +1

Jiang Hao was even more confused after his visit to the library. The scriptures and scrolls did talk about the Heaven Extinction Gu Poison but mentioned nothing about its origins.

The Yin Gu poison and the Yang Gu poison were similar in their effect. The one who consumed it would stay in a sage-like state at all times, except when they saw the person who had consumed the other poison.

Jiang Hao was still in doubt whether it made her emotions fluctuate as it did with him. She was a demoness who was likely very experienced and powerful. It was unlikely that she would feel the effect of the poison at an extreme as he did.

It made him feel like he was at a constant disadvantage.

The next morning, Jiang Hao used the Daily Appraisal on the spirit beast.

[Spirit Beast: At an Early Stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm that has yet to awaken its intelligence. It is of the bloodline of the Evil Beast. If you feed it one spirit stone a day, you can activate the hidden bloodline after seven days. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its favorability.]

There was no problem with the beast anymore. He was relieved and continued feeding it spirit stones.

Seven days later, Jiang Hao walked to the courtyard to check on the spirit beast. He was disappointed to see that there was no purple-gold bubble for him.

The spirit beast was pooping a little way off. When it saw Jiang Hao, it was so startled and hid behind a spirit herb bush.

It bared its fangs at Jiang Hao. It was more aggressive than usual, but there was no sign of activation of a hidden bloodline.

Jiang Hao was puzzled. He used the Daily Appraisal, but the information he got was the same as before. There were no changes.

Jiang Hao sighed and threw another spirit stone toward it. He then observed the beast.

He did not go to the Spirit Herb Garden today as per his routine. Instead, he stayed home and secretly observed the beast.

The spirit beast didn't do anything unusual. It ran around the courtyard and occasionally nibbled on some spirit herbs.

Jianz Hao watched it the whole day and vet happened.

On the next day, he used the Daily Appraisal on the beast again. The information was the same as before. Jiang Hao was even more confused now.

'Why isn't anything happening?' he wondered. 'Maybe the beast shouldn't be allowed to eat anything else except the spirit stones for it to awaken the bloodline. It has been nibbling on spirit herbs the past few days...'

He grabbed the beast and tied it to a rope which was then tied to a pillar in the courtyard. Jiang Hao threw a spirit stone at it. It nibbled on it. Then, the beast began to struggle to be let free.

Jiang Hao gave it a spirit stone and observed it.

He used the Daily Appraisal the next day.

[Spirit Beast: At an Early Stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm that has yet to awaken its intelligence. It is of the bloodline of the Evil Beast. If you feed it one spirit stone a day, you can activate the hidden bloodline after seven days. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its favorability. Right now, its favorability towards you is negative.]

Jiang Hao sighed. At least, there was some change.

For the next six days, Jiang Hao kept it tied and fed it spirit stones. The spirit beast didn't have the intelligence to understand the situation. It only assumed it had done something wrong.

On the seventh day, the spirit beast changed slightly.

A gold bubble floated beside it. Jiang Hao was happy. His hard work was finally being rewarded. Although it wasn't the purple-gold bubble he had hoped for, he realized that this was good, too. He had never seen a gold bubble before. When he got close, the gold bubble flew toward him and fused with his body.

[Gold Legend +1]

Gold Legend and Purple-gold Legend were rare. He didn't know if the gold bubble was better than the purple-gold ones.

Jiang Hao opened his interface.
[Name: Jiang Hao]
[Age: 20]
[Cultivation: Early Stage of Gold Core Realm]
[Cultivation Method: Heavenly Sound Hundred Revolutions, Hong Meng Heart
Sutra]
[Divine Ability: Nine Revolutions Death Substitution (unique), Daily Appraisal,
Clear and Pure Heart]
[Lifeblood: 8/100 (cannot be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 10/100 (can be cultivated)] [Divine Ability: 1/3 (cannot be obtained)]
[Gold Legend: 1/2 (cannot be obtained)]
"What?! I need two Gold Legends to obtain it. Where can I find another?"
Seeing that he couldn't obtain it directly, Jiang Hao understood that gold bubbles were even more difficult to farm. It was a pity he didn't have another gold bubble. He didn't know how he could get his hands on one more gold bubble.
It was so difficult to find purple bubbles, let alone gold.

Jiang Hao looked at the spirit beast. He used the Daily Appraisal on it. Instantly, he received the information.

[Evil Spirit Beast: Early signs of intelligence. The beast is at the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. It is of the bloodline of the Evil Beast. It can be fed with seven spirit stones a day. After 49 days, the bloodline will be activated further. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its favorability. Right now, its favorability towards you is negative.]

Jiang Hao heaved a sigh of relief. He could still feed the beast. There was a possibility that he could obtain more gold bubbles!

It would take as long as 49 days, and seven spirit stones a day. Although the number of spirit stones to be fed was a lot, Jiang Hao felt that he could manage it if he kept earning more spirit stones consistently.

Hao didn't want to make a mistake for fear that it would drag out for another 49 days. That would mean starting over and a waste of the previous 343 spirit stones.

The poor spirit beast had no chance for freedom. The days passed quickly. Jiang Hao didn't leave the Cliff of Broken Hearts at that time. He didn't want to risk it. He had also exhausted his spirit stones. Fortunately, he saw a gold bubble appear on the last day.

[Gold Legend +1]

Chapter 45: Primordial Heavenly Blade

Jiang Hao had remained careful and vigilant for more than a month. Fortunately, no one had come looking for him. Even Liu Xingchen hadn't approached him to report on the Jinzhou Heng case. Perhaps Liu Xingchen was busy or he had chosen to turn to the other side.

Either way, Jiang Hao couldn't help it. He couldn't control other people's decisions. No other spies had approached him yet. Everyone knew that he had captured the spirit beast, but no one had come to claim it. The days passed by peacefully. He received the gold bubbles steadily.

Jiang Hao opened his interface.
[Name: Jiang Hao]
[Age: 20]
[Cultivation: Early Stage of Golden Core Realm]
[Cultivation Method: Heavenly Sound Hundred Revolutions, Hong Meng Heart
Sutra]
[Divine Ability: Nine Revolutions Death Substitution (unique), Daily Appraisal,
Clear and Pure Heart]
[Lifeblood: 29/100 (can be cultivated)] [Cultivation: 32/100 (can be cultivated)] [Divine Ability: 1/3 (cannot be obtained)]
[Golden Legend: 2/2 (can be obtained)]
'My Lifeblood and Cultivation have improved. It's much faster than before.'
His Lifeblood and Cultivation might be full in another half a year. He could then try to advance to the intermediate stage of the Golden Core Realm.

Perhaps in a few more years, his cultivation would surpass Liu Xingchen's.

Senior Sister Ming Yi was also in the early stage of the Golden Core Realm. Although she was still stronger than him, he was in much less danger than before. If she decided to blow her disguise and attack him, he needed to be able to fend for himself.

It was better to plan a sneak attack and ambush her if he wasn't confident in his ability.

After making sure he had absorbed the gold bubble, Jiang Hao stood up and walked to the well to wash his hands.

Gold bubbles were very rare. They could either hold something extraordinary or entirely useless. He hoped he could get something good out of it. He had spent far too much effort, energy, and spirit stones for this to go to waste.

Jiang Hao walked into his house and sat cross-legged on the floor of his room. He chose to obtain whatever the Gold Legend would offer. In an instant, he felt endless chaos. He stared at it in shock while something moved in that chaos.

A crisp sound rang out.

Clang!

Something fell and the chaos retreated. When it cleared out in the middle, Jiang Hao saw that it was a silver-white saber that had fallen from above and split the chaotic energy.

It was impaled on the ground and stood upright before him. He grabbed the hilt of the saber and pulled it out of the floor.

There was a loud boom when the saber was freed, and everything around him disappeared. The chaos cleared up. Jiang Hao looked around. His house was exactly as it had been before. Nothing had changed.

He held the saber in his hand. He felt the urge to split the sky open with it. Its power surged in a majestic wave.

Jiang Hao felt its power. This saber could kill anything, even someone at the early stage of the Golden Core Realm. He would even dare fight someone at the intermediate stage with this blade in hand. In fact, he looked forward to it.

Jiang Hao sighed at his thoughts. The saber had caused his emotions to run wild. He was thinking recklessly. Upon closer inspection, he found that the sleek blade was about 3 feet long and 3 cm wide.

"This saber looks pretty cool. I can feel a biting cold from just touching it. I wonder..."

He was curious about the origin of the blade. He activated the Daily Appraisal.

[Shiyu: The Primordial Heavenly Blade was forged in the chaos. It has the will of the Primordial World and the ability to split the sky open. It can be used as a life-bound magic weapon for growth.]

"Shiyu?" Jiang Hao thought it was an odd name for a blade. However, names didn't matter. The saber was powerful. Now that he was on the path of learning the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade, it was only fitting to use a saber like this.

Besides, he wasn't wealthy. No matter how many spirit stones he could save, he had no chance of buying something as precious as this.

Jiang Hao looked at the spirit beast which was tied outside in the courtyard. It wasn't struggling anymore. Now that it had gained intelligence, it understood the situation.

It had become used to being tied. So, it accepted this as the normal way of life. It sat in silence and patiently waited for someone to feed it.

Jiang Hao waved the saber. The cold surged and swept across the courtyard. The spirit beast, which was staring at Jiang Hao, trembled in fear. The rope snapped, and it fell to the ground in submission.

Jiang Hao saw the trembling beast and shook his head. He stared at the saber.

He began to refine the blade. Although he wanted to practice the Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade, he decided not to use Shiyu and keep it as his trump card.

Therefore, he resolved to buy some other saber for now. He wanted to keep this special blade hidden away.

The Half Moon Blade he possessed presently was enough for now. If it cracked, he would change it to something else.

"I need to check up on the beast."

Jiang Hao wanted to know if he could keep feeding the spirit beast to activate its bloodline further. If that was possible, he could get more gold bubbles. The next day, Jiang Hao used the Daily Appraisal on the spirit beast..

Chapter 46: War With Azure Mountain

[Evil Spirit Beast: Early signs of intelligence. The beast is at the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm. It is of the bloodline of the Evil Beast. It can be fed with 100 spirit stones a day. After 49 days, the bloodline will be activated further. Feeding it spirit stones every day can increase its

favorability. Right now, it's scared of you.]

Jiang Hao exclaimed when he saw the information. He was now curious how far the bloodline could be activated. However, there was a downside. He had to feed it 100 spirit stones every day!

He could not bear it. He would have to feed it in two cycles if he wanted two gold bubbles to obtain two Gold Legends!

100 spirit stones every day for 49 days meant a total of 4900 spirit stones! This would require him to make more powerful talismans. Even then, he didn't think he could sell it enough to afford 100 spirit stones a day to splurge on the beast.

He let the spirit beast be. He would tie it up when he could afford to feed it 100 spirit stones per day.

The spirit beast was slowly getting used to walking around in the courtyard. It had been tied up for so long that it had forgotten to walk properly.

"Come here," said Jiang Hao gently.

The spirit beast turned to look at him. It then walked up to him in fear.

"Can you understand me?" Jiang Hao asked.

The spirit beast nodded! Jiang Hao pointed at the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower growing in the courtyard. "Don't touch that flower, alright? You can eat the spirit herbs all you want. Just don't go near that flower."

The beast stared at the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower and then nodded.

Jiang Hao hoped that it understood him properly. He headed to the Spirit Herb Garden.

The past two months were very peaceful. His cultivation had advanced very slowly in that time, but the months had gone without any trouble. However, he needed to secure his safety first.

If he wanted to live a peaceful and quiet life, he needed to get stronger without bringing attention to himself.

He needed to keep a low profile. If the Heavenly Note Sect expanded, then he would already be strong. Otherwise, if the sect fell, he could always clear his name and start anew.

He had already been targeted by different sects. It would be very difficult to clear his name in the future. He needed to get stronger and ensure his own survival.

He needed to be stronger than the spies, or even stronger than that woman. Only then would he be safe. He needed to do it step by step. For now, the most important thing was to earn more spirit stones.

In the Spirit Herb Garden, when Jiang Hao received the list of the day's orders. Most of the orders were for supplies of spirit herbs for healing purposes.

"I heard that the sect is preparing for a fight with the Azure Mountain," said Cheng Chou.

"Really? Are they going to go all out?" asked Jiang Hao.

Jiang Hao hadn't left the Cliff of Broken Hearts much, except to run errands. Neither the Cliff Master nor his fellow disciples asked him for anything, so he was unaware of this.

"Yeah," said Cheng Chou. "Our sect has sent a lot of armies to fight. It seems like they want to take Azure Mountain down. That is why we have so many orders for the spirit herbs these days."

Jiang Hao frowned. He knew about the friction between the Heavenly Note Sect and the Azure Mountain. Han Ming had gone to train a few months ago.

He hadn't expected that both sides would want to fight directly.

Jiang Hao didn't understand why he wasn't recruited to be sent to fight. No disciple would dare to refuse if asked.

He didn't want to go, but it was unusual that he wasn't called when everybody else was being sent out to fight. 'Is it because I am on the radar of the Law Enforcement Hall?'

He felt that the Law Enforcement Hall was probably still keeping an eye on him. If they doubted him to be the traitor, they definitely wouldn't want him leaving the sect and spilling its secrets.

"Prepare the orders. Hurry," said Jiang Hao.

Cheng Chou nodded.

After that, Jiang Hao inquired a little about the situation of the battle. From what he knew so far, the Heavenly Note Sect still had the upper hand in the fight.

Cheng Chou asked him if he wanted to join the fight as well. Jiang Hao shook his head. He didn't care to mention that he was on the Law Enforcement hall's radar.

Cheng Chou told him that many disciples had willingly joined the fight since it was such a good opportunity to train and increase one's cultivation. The ones who come back might get to join the inner sect.

Jiang Hao didn't comment. Everyone had different opinions. Some people liked to climb the ladder of hierarchy. Jiang Hao just wanted some stability.

For the next few days, Jiang Hao helped out in the Spirit Herb Garden.

Occasionally, he went to the market to sell some Divine Sword Talismans, Pain -Relieving Talismans, and Spirit Concentration Talismans.

In seven days, he earned around 300 spirit stones. The sales had been good this time. It must have been because of the battle with Azure Mountain. Everyone wanted some strong defensive talismans, but Jiang Hao didn't have any. The Pain-Relieving Talisman was just too basic. If he had made some powerful defensive talismans, he could have earned more spirit stones.

In the next few days, the spirit beast occasionally followed Jiang Hao to the Spirit Herb Garden. Under Jiang Hao's warning, it remained docile and didn't cause trouble like before.

Jiang Hao had gone to collect bubbles as usual. However, he found a group of strangers in the Spirit Herb Garden. "The Snow Lotus Pavilion sent some people to help us since there are not many people around here anymore," said Cheng Chou. Jiang Hao nodded. He looked around. He found something unusual that day. In the middle of the garden, a man was trying to bury something. Jiang Hao strode forward. He unsheathed his Half Moon Blade and pressed it against the man's back. "What are you doing?" Cheng Chou immediately retreated. The spirit beast blinked in confusion. The others also began to retreat. Everyone knew that Jiang Hao was an inner disciple, but they knew his temperament. He wasn't someone who made trouble unnecessarily. He would never take out a weapon if there wasn't any danger around.. Chapter 47: Spilling Blood The young man felt the blade on his back. "Immortal Elder, please spare my life!" He lowered his head and begged for his life. "What?" asked Jiang Hao calmly.

"Immortal Elder, I..."

Jiang Hao swung his saber and left behind an afterimage of the saber in the air. The next moment, the young man's hand was severed. This sudden attack stunned the young man. He stared at Jiang Hao with contempt. At the same time, he began to retreat. "Do it then!" he shouted. Jiang Hao stabbed the hilt of his saber into the ground and lifted it into the air. Boom! The explosion shook the ground. The others dispersed and hid behind the spirit herb bushes. Jiang Hao didn't stop. He quickly arrived in front of the group of people. The long saber impaled one of them and killed him on the spot. There were four of them. Jiang Hao was fast. Three of them dropped dead. When he reached the last one, the person had already activated the magic treasure in his hand. Jiang Hao swung his Half Moon Blade. A light flashed. He used the First Form of The Heavenly Blade, the Moon-Slaying technique. Bang! The shadow of the saber cut through the sky with the light of the moon. The saber split the magic

The man looked at Jiang Hao in puzzlement and hatred. Black fumes attacked him. However, Jiang Hao was quick. He appeared behind the man with the saber against his throat.

treasure and the palm of the person's hand into two.

The man fell to the ground. The first man he had attacked tried to retreat. He stared at Jiang Hao and hesitated. Then, he ran.

Jiang Hao appeared next to him in the blink of an eye and knocked him on his temple with the hilt of his saber.

The person fainted.

Jiang Hao turned to Cheng Chou. "Go and get someone! Hurry!"

Cheng Chou knew what to do. He ran off.

The spirit beast was so scared that it was trembling in fear. It had only had a basic level of intelligence, but it still felt that it would be cut down if it visited the Spirit Herb Garden again.

Jiang Hao looked at the others. "You can all get on with your work. Everything is okay now. Please don't approach the damaged part of the garden for a while."

The part of the Spirit Herb Garden where he stood was damaged a bit. Fortunately, the damage wasn't that great.

He had noticed the strangers the moment he arrived and had a feeling that they had been here to cause him trouble.

He inspected the thing in the ground that the man had been trying to bury. It had a strange spiritual energy fluctuation. Only then did he realize that it was a Dharma treasure.

The intruders weren't here to cause mere trouble. They had intended to blow up the Spirit Herb Garden instead!

If they had succeeded, it would have been a great loss for the Cliff of Broken Hearts.

Jiang Hao hesitated a moment. He then used the Daily Appraisal on it.

[Puppet A: Yan Hua of the Heavenly Saint Sect planted a puppet seed in it. This time, it was used to destroy the Heavenly Note Sect's Spirit Herb Gardens in an attempt to weaken the place and allow the Azure Mountain to invade.]

'Yan Hua of Heavenly Saint Sect?' Jiang Hao had never heard of the person before. However, the people from the Heavenly Saint Sect were truly dangerous.

If Jiang Hao hadn't appraised it, he would have thought it was any other ordinary seed.

He suspected that the Heavenly Saint Sect knew of the existence of the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower and wanted to be the first to destroy it. They wanted to do their best for Azure Mountain.

Mu Qi arrived at the Spirit Herb Garden after a while. He carefully examined the area and looked at the dead man. He then heaved a sigh of relief.

"I heard that the other Spirit Herb Gardens suffered quite a lot of damage. Fortunately, all of you are safe and sound," said Mu Qi. "I will report this to the Cliff Master." He turned to Jiang Hao. "I will have to rely on you if something like this happens again, Junior Brother. Thank you for defending the garden and those within it."

"Senior Brother, you are too kind. You don't have to thank me." Jiang Hao lowered his head.

Mu Qi was a formidable disciple. Jiang Hao had met him a few times. His cultivation realm wasn't lower than Liu Xingchen's.

Jiang Hao knew that Mu Qi wasn't someone to mess with. He had largely avoided him in the past because Jiang Hao knew of his strength and respected him.

Mu Qi took away the puppet seed. He assured them that he would update everyone if he found something more. He needed to rush to the mine for now.

Jiang Hao nodded. 'Did something happen at the mine?' He was curious.

The Heavenly Note Sect hadn't had any peace in the past few days. Jiang Hao prepared himself for the possibility that the sect could be breached at any time. He couldn't just sit back and do nothing.

However, there was one thing that bothered him. If the Heavenly Note Sect got breached, how would he leave with the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower? He would be a target for everyone.

After that, the Spirit Herb Garden prohibited entry for strangers. There were no more sneak attacks.

The other Spirit Herb Gardens had indeed suffered quite a lot of damage. There was a lot of pressure on the Cliff of Broken Hearts to supply more spirit herbs to make up for the shortage.

Three weeks passed. Jiang Hao was busy from morning till night. Finally, the orders decreased when the other Spirit Herb Gardens recovered. Everyone felt much more relaxed.

By now, everyone knew that Jiang Hao had a pet spirit beast that occasionally followed him into the garden.

The spirit beast was familiar with the people in the Spirit Herb Garden. After activating its hidden bloodline twice, it even learned to speak.

However, it didn't dare provoke anyone. It was especially scared of offending Jiang Hao.

"Aww... what does my cute little spirit beast want to eat today?" asked Cheng Chou.

"You can call me Uncle Rabbit," said the spirit beast arrogantly. Its voice was deep and mature, like a man's.

"Uncle Rabbit, what do you want to eat today?" Cheng Chou was used to the beast's antics by now.



The spirit beast was so terrified when it saw him that it backtracked on its statement. "I can eat carrots just as well. I love carrots!"

Cheng Chou was surprised. Jiang Hao ignored the spirit beast.

He asked Cheng Chou about any recent developments in the ongoing war. Cheng Chou told him that the Heavenly Note Sect was holding its ground. Many disciples of the Azure Mountain had been captured.

They were all thrown into the Lawless Tower. Some of them had been put to work in the mines.

Jiang Hao felt that that was a fate worse than death. He then headed out of the garden toward his house.

Jiang Hao felt unimaginably exhausted these few days. He had been taking care of the Spirit Herb Garden diligently because if anything happened to it, he would be held accountable. There was immense pressure on him.

He was also afraid that the puppets might turn up again to try to destroy the Spirit Herb Garden. There had been no sneak attacks after the last incident, but Jiang Hao remained alert.

As for the spirit beast, it always followed him to the Spirit Herb Garden. It was still in the early stage of the Foundation Establishment Realm.

Jiang Hao felt that it was good to be cautious. Right now, with everything that was happening, it was dangerous to let his guard down.

Although he hadn't faced any sort of threat from outside, even with the battle between the Heavenly Note Sect and Azure Mountain going on, he still felt that it paid to remain on guard at all times.

The only stress he felt was because of his work. He had spent every waking hour maintaining the Spirit Herb Garden so he hadn't found any time to earn spirit stones. On the bring side, his cultivation had increased.



Jiang Hao wasn't sure if the next few months would be as peaceful as the present month. The advantage of a cultivator was that they lived long, but that was the disadvantage as well. Their enemies lived long, too.

It wasn't easy to cultivate quietly in the Cliff of Broken Hearts if you had plenty of enemies.

He opened the book titled "Seven Forms of Heavenly Blade" and turned to the part on the second form. The second form out of the seven was Mountain Suppression.

Jiang Hao had learned and practiced the first form for a while now, and he was pretty much familiar with it. The first form was Moon Slaying. It was an aggressive technique.

However, he increasingly felt that he lacked combat skills. He needed to hone his combat skills if he wanted to use that technique much more effectively.

The second form was different from the first. After a few days of reading the chapter on it, he learned that the key to defeating an enemy was by using the power of nature.

He read the poem written on it as he refined his saber. The Primordial Heavenly Blade was perfect to practice the second form.

A month later, Jiang Hao was just heading out after collecting bubbles in his courtyard when the spirit beast trotted alongside him. "Master, why are you up so early? Can I come with you?"

"If you cause trouble, I will deny I ever raised you. Understand?"

He did not know that the spirit beast would develop into... this. It was always trying to be witty and talkative.

"Of course! Everything will be fine. In the future, I will take care of you like you take care of me."

Jiang Hao stopped by the stream and meditated. After a while, a ball of energy condensed by the stream.

He held the Primordial Heavenly Blade, Shi Yu, and gently lifted it up.

The spirit beast was puzzled when it sensed massive energy radiating from the saber.

When the saber swung down, it looked like the force of a huge mountain was pressed down on it. The majestic aura was astonishing.

Jiang Hao slashed at the stream. There was a loud thump. The stream sloshed and the water rose. It was as though something heavy had fallen into the water and caused such an impact. The water sprayed everywhere.

After a long while, the stream returned to normal. The gravel disturbed by the sloshing water was also wiped clean. It was as though nothing had happened at all.

Jiang Hao smiled. The second form was stronger than he expected. He just needed to build his speed. Otherwise, this technique wouldn't help him in an emergency.

He put the Primordial Heavenly Blade away and headed to the Spirit Herb Garden.

He felt that he needed to earn more spirit stones soon. He not only needed to buy tea leaves but also a better saber. His Half Moon Blade wasn't going to last long. There were already multiple cracks on it.

Jiang Hao stopped in his tracks. Liu Xingchen was waiting for him. He had a bad feeling about this.

"Junior Brother, I haven't seen you for months. I hope you have been doing well. I did hear about your contribution recently."

"It was nothing. I was just doing my job," said Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen gestured for Jiang Hao to keep walking. They headed to the Spirit Herb Garden together. "Mu Qi was injured in the mines.."

Chapter 49: Spies From Other Sects In The Mines?

"Senior Brother Mu Qi is injured? How?" Jiang Hao was surprised.

Mu Qi was a formidable disciple. His cultivation realm was very high, and he was stronger than most of the other disciples. Someone must have pulled a sneak attack on him.

"He was helping out in the mines," said Liu Xingchen solemnly. "Junior

Brother, I assume you have already heard about the fight between the

Heavenly Note Sect and the Azure Mountain?"

"Yes," said Jiang Hao. "I heard that our sect still has the upper hand in that fight."

"Yes. Elder Baizhi personally got involved this time. The other elders aren't staying idle as well. The Cliff Master, the Pavilion Master of the Heavenly Joy Pavilion, the Peak Master of the Thunder Fire Peak, and the Valley Master of the Ice Moon Valley are all involved in the fight. Besides, Azure Mountain already had internal fights to deal with. Things aren't looking good for them

right now. We are still winning."

"However, they just finished the DAO Conference," he continued. "Many experts from the conference are willing to lend a helping hand toward Azure Mountain. Last month, Elder Baizhi injured the Sect Leader of the Azure Mountain pretty badly. Our sect had the advantage for now."

"Many who were captured have been thrown into the Lawless Tower or have been forced to work in the mines."

"So, the ones captured aren't just from Azure Mountain? There were people from other sects as well?" asked Jiang Hao.

Liu Xingchen nodded. "Yes. Many try to make an attempt to free the ones captured. That was how Mu Qi got injured. He did catch them in time and sent them into the Lawless Tower."

Jiang Hao nodded. However, he was puzzled. Liu Xingchen might not have come all this way just to inform him about that.

Although they weren't hostile with each other, Liu Xingchen wouldn't give him a second glance, much less talk to him, if it wasn't something important.

Soon, Liu Xingchen revealed the purpose of his visit. "Mu Qi is injured, so he cannot help out anymore. We need someone from the Cliff of Broken Hearts to replace him. At the moment, you look like a person who is suitable for the job. You will most likely be approached with the offer."

Jiang Hao lowered his head and remained quiet. He had nothing urgent that needed his attention at the Spirit Herb Garden. There was nothing wrong with replacing Mu Qi at the mines. Moreover, the spirit beast was there to defend the garden if something happened.

"Thank you, Senior Brother." Jiang Hao said gratefully. Knowing this in advance would help him prepare mentally when he was summoned.

"Junior Brother, do you still remember the spy you killed?" Liu Xingchen suddenly mentioned Jinzhou Heng.

"I do. How could I forget?" Jiang Hao nodded.

Nothing happened after the incident. No one had come looking for him.

Nobody even asked how he had managed to do it. When someone in the Foundation Establishment Realm killed a person in the Golden Core Realm, it usually made people curious. However, nobody approached him.

"The matter might not be resolved yet," said Liu Xingchen. "Jinzhou Heng was from the Sunset Sect. He came here to kill you to avenge Yun Ruo. She had just broken through to the Golden Core Realm. Not much is known about her, except that she was simple and honest. No one knows what she did to make Jinzhou Heng sacrifice himself for revenge."

"We were going to arrest him that morning, but he made his way to you. We don't know who tipped him off about you. There are others too who were after you, you know. We captured around five people. They are held at the Law Enforcement Hall for now. We had to hunt them down in these past few months."

It was no wonder he hadn't visited Jiang Hao. "Who is the other spy?"

"He is from the Ghost Shadow Sect. He was thrown into the Lawless Tower. He might be sent to the mine soon. Coincidentally, he has worked as a miner before. We are still investigating it. There might be traitors in the mine. Junior Brother, you need to be careful when you join the mine."

"It is difficult for the Law Enforcement Hall to investigate in the mines. They have their own rules, so it affects the investigation."

"Thank you, Senior Brother, for warning me," said Jiang Hao gratefully. "I remember you saying Yun Ruo had some influence in the Sunset Sect. She had someone of higher status who was obsessed with her. Was that Jinzhou Heng?" "No." Liu Xingchen shook his head.

Jiang Hao didn't ask anything else. It was clear that the Sunset Sect still posed a threat to him. As for the Ghost Shadow Sect, he didn't really care about it.

The Ghost Shadow Sect might be targeting the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower and not him personally. However, the Sunset Sect wanted him dead.

Jiang Hao needed to worry about the mine for now. It was very easy for traitors to attack him when he entered the cave.

Not only did he need to worry about all that but also those who hated him in this sect. However, Liu Xingchen told him not to worry about the Heavenly Joy Pavilion for now, as they were busy fighting against Azure Mountain. They had no time or energy to spare to deal with him.

Jiang Hao was grateful for the information, but he remained alert anyway.

After Liu Xingchen left, Jiang Hao went to the Spiritual Herbal Garden alone. He saw Mu Qi at the entrance. He looked very pale.

Chapter 50: Captives from the Immortal Sect

Mu Qi smiled. "As fine as I can be. How have you been, Junior Brother?"

"I am alright," said Jiang Hao. "Why are you standing here, Senior Brother? Did you need something from the garden?" asked Jiang Hao despite knowing very well why he was there.

"I was waiting for you," said Mu Qi. "I wanted your help with something." Jiang Hao pretended to be confused.

"I might not be able to go to the mine for now," said Mu Qi. "It was my responsibility, but it seems like I will have to rely on you, Junior Brother. Will you replace me at the mine? Don't worry about the Spirit Herb Garden. I will visit it regularly and make sure it's safe."

Jiang Hao nodded and accepted his offer. It wasn't like he could refuse, after all. If he did, he would be asking for trouble from the entire sect.

However, he was curious if Mu Qi wanted to leave the mines because it was dangerous or if there were some other reasons behind it.

'I never tried to use Daily Appraisal on him!'

Jiang Hao activated the Daily Appraisal.

[Mu Qi: Formidable disciple of the Cliff of Broken Hearts of the Heavenly Note Sect. He is at the late stage of the Golden Core Realm. He once had an affair with a Saintess from the Heavenly Saint Sect, Miao Tinglian. He obtained an ancient inheritance in the mines. To be safe, he deliberately injured himself and returned to the Cliff of Broken Hearts to absorb the treasure.]

Jiang Hao was at least relieved that he wasn't attacked by a spy in the mine. Otherwise, the mine would have been dangerous for him as well.

'The Heavenly Saint Sect seems to have its claws everywhere. I wonder if Mu Qi will turn into a traitor in the end. If he does, he will target me first.' Jiang Hao was calm. "When do I need to leave for the mine?

"At noon today, preferably," said Mu Qi. He appeared relieved because Jiang Hao hadn't rejected him. "Thank you so much. I will offer you a portion of my rewards as a token of gratitude."

Jiang Hao headed straight to the mine after that. He left the spirit beast at the Spirit Herb Garden. Mu Qi promised to take care of it.

'I wonder if the beast will be the same when I return.'

It was inconvenient, but he couldn't take the beast along with him to the mines. He had given express instruction to the spirit beast to water the Heavenly Fragrance Dao Flower.

The mine was on the other side of the Heavenly Note Sect. After receiving the tools from Law Enforcement Hall, he headed toward the mine.

Most of the miners were in the Lifeblood Refinement Realm. People who had lower realms than that weren't allowed into the mine because they couldn't keep up with the kind of labor and strength that was required for mining. Outside the mine, Jiang Hao could see nothing but desolation. He saw a portion of the mountain that was blasted off to make space for caves that led deep inside. There were guards at the entrance.

Jiang Hao noticed that the mine was right at the edge of the sect. It was no wonder that nobody came to save those who encountered trouble here.

There were towers near the mine. These were for defensive purposes. He also saw some stalls that were created to serve as shops.

"Well... it at least feels self-sufficient," muttered Jiang Hao. He walked to the innermost building which served as the reporting office. It was also the manager's residence.

He entered a small room where a middle-aged man sat at a desk. "Jiang Hao, inner sect disciple of the Cliff of Broken Hearts. In the middle stage of the

Foundation Establishment Realm. Here to take over Mu Qi's work. Correct?" "Yes." Jiang Hao nodded. He observed the manager.

He was stronger than Liu Xingchen and Mu Qi. He stared at Jiang Hao, sizing him up.

"Well... your cultivation isn't very high," said the middle-aged man, Wu

Yuanwu. "You will work under Wei Lie." He gestured to a small, bald man.

The man, Wei Lie, led him out of the building. He wasn't very polite. "Since you are here to work under me, you have to listen to me. I don't care if you are a formidable disciple or an inner sect disciple. If I tell you to go east, you go east. If I tell you to go west, you go west. Understand?"

Jiang Hao nodded.

The man had a scar on his face that made him look ferocious. He was at the early stage of the Golden Core Realm, too. Jiang Hao knew he was strong. "Also, you can't just enter and leave as you wish. It's dangerous around here."

Soon, they met with the other miners. The five of them then headed to the Lawless Tower and waited for the prisoners to join them.

There were three men and two women. They looked ragged. The clothes they wore differed from each other. It was clear that they weren't from the same sect.

The five of them stared at the group with hatred.

The blue-robed woman spat on the ground. "You evil filth who follow the demonic path! One day, our Immortal Sect will end you all!"

Wei Lei slapped her across the face. The impact split her lip. A trickle of blood bloomed under her lips.

He didn't say anything else to them. "Let's go!"

"Where are you taking us?" asked one of the men.

Wei Lei punched him in the stomach until he vomited blood. "If you say another word, I will end you so you can't make any more noise."

Jiang Hao looked at the prisoners and couldn't help feeling sorry for them. He was also wary of people who might be hiding among the sect to try to save them..