

# Transmigrated into a Grandpa, Embracing the Laid-Back Life

## Chapter 251: Using public funds is the most troublesome.

[ 1,537 words ]

Su Ming quickly repaired that node, then stood up, dusting off his hands.

"Rise!"

As the final hand seal was completed.

Hum—

The "Drizzle Formation" covering the three mu of land emitted a soft hum.

The originally intermittent, unevenly distributed spiritual rain instantly became dense and uniform.

The rain threads no longer fell straight down in a stiff manner, but gently drifted with the breeze, like a layer of gauze draped over the Jade Marrow Mushrooms.

The high ground in the west received moisture, while the low-lying areas in the east no longer accumulated water.

The few mother plants that were originally on the verge of death, nourished by the dense spiritual rain, visibly showed a fading of the grayish decay on their leaves, and their previously drooping leaf tips slightly lifted, as if greedily breathing.

"Incredible!"

Steward Wu abruptly stood up and rushed into the field in three quick strides.

He took out a spirit-measuring plate and walked a circle in the field.

The needle on the plate remained steadily fixed in the exact center, not moving a hair.

"The uniformity of spiritual energy distribution... increased by seventy percent?!" Steward Wu's eyes widened as he stared at Su Ming as if looking at a monster, "Kid, you tuned this old, decrepit Drizzle Formation to run smoother than a brand new one?"

Su Ming stood to the side, his expression humble, "It's not that the formation changed, I just made it understand this piece of land better."

"Good! A great understanding of the land!"

Steward Wu was overjoyed. If these Jade Marrow Mushrooms were saved, his annual evaluation would at least be an "Excellent."

He cheerfully took out thirty spirit stones and stuffed them into Su Ming's hand, his attitude doing a complete one-eighty, his face beaming with smiles, the wrinkles blooming like flowers.

"Not bad, someone who gets things done. Brother Su, my attitude earlier was poor, don't take it to heart."

Su Ming accepted the spirit stones, clasping his hands in a respectful gesture, "You overstate the matter, Steward. Taking someone's money to solve their problem is just my duty."

"Hey, don't be in such a hurry to leave."

Seeing Su Ming about to leave, Steward Wu quickly grabbed his sleeve, lowering his voice as if afraid others might hear, "Brother Su, looking at your skill, it's a waste of talent to only fix these three mu of land. To be frank, in my garden, there are seven or eight more old formations like this that need fine-tuning. Also, there are some delicate medicinal fields that require regular nourishment of seedlings with wood and water spiritual energy..."

Steward Wu rubbed his hands together, his eyes gleaming with shrewdness, "Those Formation Peak disciples look down their noses, hiring them once is as difficult as reaching heaven, and you have to queue. Going through the official channels at the Repair Hall is painfully slow. If you have time, we could do it privately..."

He gave Su Ming a "you know what I mean" look.

Su Ming's heart stirred.

This was exactly the "long-term meal ticket" he wanted.

But he didn't show too much eagerness, instead pausing thoughtfully as if weighing the pros and cons.

"This... if I take on work privately, I'm afraid it's against the rules," Su Ming said with some difficulty.

"Rules are dead, people are alive!" Steward Wu grew anxious, "This counts as 'temporary labor.' As long as I don't report it, who would know? Besides, I'm using my own private funds to hire you, not going through official accounts, who can say anything?"

Only then did Su Ming "reluctantly" nod, "Since Steward Wu thinks so highly of me, then Su Ming can only respectfully accept. However, I'm usually tied up with miscellaneous duties and can only come during my spare time."

"No problem! As long as you can come! Payment per job, absolutely no delays!" Steward Wu patted his chest in guarantee.

...

When Su Ming walked out of the Spiritual Plant Garden, the sky had completely darkened.

Su Ming touched the extra spirit stones in his robe and the unexpectedly obtained "Moisture Stone," his steps light and brisk.

This day, though busy, had been quite fruitful.

Not only did he earn spirit stones, but he also opened up a connection with the Spiritual Plant Garden.

More importantly, he had discovered a way of survival suited to himself.

Within the colossal machine of the sect, besides those lofty elders and true disciples, there were countless middle managers like Steward Wu.

They had real difficulties, needs they didn't want to go through cumbersome procedures for, and also had small private funds they could freely control.

This gray middle ground was Su Ming's "blue ocean."

"Master, the work at the Spiritual Plant Garden is trivial, but it has the advantage of being stable," Su Ming thought to himself as he walked, reviewing the situation, "Moreover, the spiritual energy here is abundant. In the future, if I use the excuse of repairing formations to incidentally absorb some spiritual energy for cultivation here, or get some seeds, discarded medicinal dregs or something..."

"You kid, you're becoming more and more like the 'Way of Survival,'" Lin Yu laughed and scolded, "Plucking feathers from a goose as it passes, and making them say thank

you for it. But don't just focus on earning small change. That task about acquiring Red Copper ore, you should also pay attention. That's the real big prize."

"Red Copper ore..."

Su Ming looked up towards the distant Artifact Forging Peak, a gleam flashing in his eyes.

"Not in a hurry. Sharpening the axe won't delay the chopping. Let me first refine this 'Moisture Stone' into the formation, stabilize the 'Like Water Art' a bit more, then go tackle that hard nut."

The night breeze was cool, the young man's figure gradually blending into the night, like a drop of water silently merging into the vast ocean that was the Cloud Hidden Sect.

Returning to Clear Stream Valley, Wang Defa was waiting in the courtyard with a few people.

Seeing Su Ming return, Wang Defa immediately came forward to greet him, looking mysterious.

"Hall Master, you're finally back," Wang Defa lowered his voice, "Someone from the Vessel Hall came earlier, delivering a batch of scrap 'Red Copper ore slag,' saying it was for us to practice with. But looking at the quality... heh, it seems quite a bit better than usual."

Su Ming raised an eyebrow.

Just thinking about Red Copper ore, and it's delivered to the doorstep?

"Let's go take a look."

Su Ming quickly walked towards the backyard storeroom.

In the storeroom, a small mountain-like pile of dark red ore slag was heaped.

Su Ming casually picked up a piece, a trace of spiritual energy extending from his fingertip, his divine sense probing into it.

A moment later, the corner of his mouth curled into a meaningful arc.

This was no scrap slag.

This was clearly the "semi-finished products" from the Vessel Hall folks' failed refining attempts. Although the copper content within was mixed and impure, the foundation was excellent.

If refined with fire, it would indeed be difficult to purify and easily ruined by burning.

But if using his "Water Refining Method"...

...

No lamps were lit inside the hall, the light was somewhat dim.

Sitting around a mottled long wooden table were all the current core members of the Repair Hall: Old Wang, the Accounting Office supervisor; Zhang Asheng, in charge of technical matters; and Old Li, recently promoted to quality control.

Su Ming sat at the head, idly playing with a low-grade spirit stone. The stone's glow reflected on his calm face, flickering between light and shadow.

"Does everyone know why I called you here?" Su Ming's voice wasn't loud, but it echoed in the quiet hall.

Old Wang rubbed his plump hands, hesitantly saying, "Hall Master, is it because of that batch of 'scrap' recently sent by the Vessel Hall? I heard from the people below that someone from the Vessel Hall spread word that our Repair Hall is just a scrap collector, specifically picking up the garbage they don't want."

Zhang Asheng was straightforward. Hearing this, he slammed the table, making the teacups jump, "Those bastards are bullying us too much! That's not scrap! That's toxic material mixed with 'Spirit-Eroding Sand'! If we hadn't noticed and directly threw it into the furnace, a furnace explosion would be a minor issue—all the good materials in that furnace would be ruined! They're trying to wipe us out!"

Old Li puffed on his pipe tobacco, his brows locked into a deep furrow. He didn't speak, but the anger in his eyes couldn't be hidden.

Su Ming didn't respond, instead placing the spirit stone in his hand on the table with a soft "tap."

"Spirit stones, everyone likes them," Su Ming pointed at the stone, "But the way we used to earn spirit stones was through hard work. Replacing broken parts, reconnecting severed pieces—that's the work of a 'parts replacement worker.' Thin profits, and still having to watch others' moods."

He stood up and walked to the wall behind him. A huge blueprint hung there, depicting the structural diagram of the incubation formation on Spirit Beast Peak.

"Why was Lei Hu willing to pay a hundred spirit stones for the Spirit Beast Peak business, and even owe me a favor?" Su Ming turned to look at everyone, "Because I

didn't replace his formation plate for him; I solved his fundamental problem of 'fire and water being incompatible.' This is called a 'solution,' not 'repair.'"

"Starting today, the Repair Hall is changing its rules."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 252: Your Trash, My Darling

[ 1,184 words ]

Su Ming took out a scroll of documents he had prepared earlier from his sleeve and spread it open on the table. "Relying solely on basic repairs, we'll forever be the menial laborers crushed under the heel of the Vessel Hall. We need to become 'problem solvers.' The case with the Beast Peak proves that the value of diagnosis and customized solutions far exceeds that of simple repairs."

Old Wang leaned over to take a look. The document was densely packed with words, and at the very top were four large characters: "Repair Hall Technical Grading and Customized Service Standards."

"Hall Master, this... isn't this step a bit too big?" Old Wang was somewhat worried. "We don't have enough manpower. Besides you, the only one who can barely understand these 'customized solutions' and act as an assistant is Zhang Asheng."

"That's precisely why I'm going to teach you all."

Su Ming's eyes burned with intensity. "I will break down the most core material purification techniques into steps that all of you can understand. You don't need to know why it's done this way; you just need to know how much water to add in the first step, how many circles to stir in the second step, and how long to let it settle in the third step."

In his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu whistled. "Tsk tsk, assembly line operation."

Su Ming replied in his mind, "Master, it's better for them to master a practical skill than to be menial laborers for a lifetime."

...

For the next two hours, the backyard of Bing Character Seven Courtyard transformed into a temporary "lecture hall."

Su Ming did not hold back, but he also did not directly teach a fundamental method like the "Like Water Art." What he taught was a simplified version of a "Water Refining Method" based on physical properties.

"Watch closely."

Su Ming stood before a massive water vat. The vat was filled with murky, muddy water, simulating a slag solution.

"To purify materials, you don't necessarily have to use fire." Su Ming rolled up his sleeves, holding a wooden stick carved with runes. "Fire is fierce and violent, easily damaging the spiritual nature of materials. Water is gentle and yielding, benefiting all things."

He inserted the wooden stick into the water, his wrist trembling with a strange rhythm.

"Three circles clockwise. This is 'Gathering.'"

The water in the vat began to rotate, forming a tiny vortex.

"Half a circle counterclockwise. This is 'Disperse.'"

The vortex suddenly halted, centrifugal force flinging the heavier sediment in the water towards the walls of the vat.

"Let it stand for three breaths. This is 'Settle.'"

Su Ming withdrew the wooden stick.

A miraculous layering appeared in the originally murky vat. At the very bottom was black, heavy sand. In the middle was clear water. Floating on top was a layer of extremely fine powder that shimmered with a faint light.

"Zhang Asheng, you try." Su Ming handed the wooden stick to Zhang Asheng.

Zhang Asheng took it clumsily and, imitating Su Ming's movements, began to stir. Although his movements were awkward and his control of spiritual energy was lacking, after five or six attempts, a blurry layering actually appeared in the vat.

"I did it!" Zhang Asheng looked at the bottom of the vat in pleasant surprise. "Although it's not as clear as the Hall Master's separation, at least eighty percent of the sediment has been flung out!"

Su Ming nodded. "That's enough. The remaining twenty percent, I'll handle the final processing. This way, I can free myself from repetitive, rough work and focus on the delicate tasks."

Old Wang watched from the side, his eyes gleaming.

He was the one who handled the accounts, and he immediately saw the value in this.

If the menial disciples could all master this "rough refining" technique, the Repair Hall's efficiency in processing waste materials would increase at least tenfold! This meant a significant reduction in costs!

...

Late at night, deep and quiet, in the backyard of the Repair Hall.

The pile of slag regarded as "highly toxic" was now piled in the center of the courtyard.

Su Ming had dismissed everyone and stood alone before the slag pile.

"Master, this Spirit-Eroding Sand is quite interesting." Su Ming pinched a few black grains of sand, rubbing them gently between his fingers.

"Of course it's interesting." Lin Yu's phantom drifted out, circling the slag pile once. "In chemistry... ahem, in the Dao of artifact forging, poison is often also the antidote. The reason Spirit-Eroding Sand can corrode spiritual nature is because it possesses an extremely strong 'acidic' spiritual energy structure. This kind of thing, if used to refine certain specific metals, is practically a natural catalyst."

Su Ming raised both hands, the "Like Water Art" within his body operating at full capacity.

"Rise!"

From the well in the courtyard, a water dragon surged skyward, transforming into countless fine threads of water in the air, enveloping the entire slag pile.

This time, Su Ming wasn't using the simple "Water Refining Method." Instead, he employed an advanced technique combining the "centrifugal separation" principle Lin Yu had pointed out.

Dark blue water spiritual energy weaved through the slag.

"Spirit-Eroding Sand is heavy and sticky. Red Essence Copper is light and slippery." Su Ming's divine sense was like a precise scalpel, gradually separating the two.

He manipulated the water flow to form two vortices rotating in opposite directions.

The vortex on the left was heavy and slow, firmly sucking in those black sand grains with their acidic, corrosive aura, sinking them into a specially made ceramic jar at the bottom.

The vortex on the right was light and lively, rolling up countless crimson-red metal particles, washing away the impurities on their surface like panning for gold.

\*Zzzz—\*

A grating, teeth-aching friction sound rang out in the courtyard.

A full two hours passed.

Fine beads of sweat appeared on Su Ming's forehead, and his complexion grew somewhat pale, but the light in his eyes grew brighter and brighter.

When the last strand of morning light broke through the night sky, the mountain of slag in the courtyard had disappeared.

In its place were over a dozen tightly sealed black ceramic jars on the left, and a pile of Red Essence Copper ingots shimmering with an enticing red glow on the right.

"Hah..."

Su Ming let out a long breath, looking at the pile of copper ingots, the corners of his mouth lifting. "About three hundred catties of Red Essence Copper, ninety percent purity. Based on market prices, this batch of 'garbage' is worth at least five hundred spirit stones."

"Hit the jackpot." Lin Yu chuckled. "If that Steward Sun knew he'd just given you five hundred spirit stones, he'd probably cough up blood in rage."

Su Ming walked over to the dozen or so black ceramic jars, taking out pre-written sealing strips and personally pasting them on.

Written on the sealing strips was a line of characters. The handwriting was neat and proper, yet it carried a distinct sense of dark humor:

[Special Grade Etching Material: Spirit-Eroding Sand (High Purity)]

[Source: Gift from Vessel Hall Steward Sun]

[Use: Specially breaks spiritual energy shields. Dangerous. Use with caution!]

"Place these jars in the most prominent spot in the warehouse." Su Ming patted the dust off his hands. "Since it's a gift, we should enshrine it, let everyone see the Vessel Hall's 'generosity.'"

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[ 1,314 words ]

Three days later, at the External Affairs Hall square.

A small-scale trade fair was underway.

Steward Sun from the Vessel Hall was standing before a stall with several disciples, loudly hawking a newly forged batch of magical swords.

"Come take a look! Magical swords forged from refined Red Copper, capable of cutting through iron like mud! Only fifty contribution points each!"

However, the disciples gathered around were few and far between.

In stark contrast, a long queue had formed before a small stall belonging to the Repair Hall.

Zhang Asheng stood behind the stall, holding a recently repaired old magical sword, demonstrating it to a senior brother.

"Senior brother, please look. Although this sword has been repaired, we have remelted and cast a 'reinforcement rib' along the spine. The material used is 'high-purity Red Essence Copper' personally refined by our Hall Master. Not only is its toughness better than a new sword, but its spiritual energy conduction speed is also twenty percent faster!"

The senior brother took the sword, casually twirled it in a flower pattern, and his eyes instantly lit up. "A fine sword! The feel of this is even better than the new goods from the Vessel Hall! How much?"

"Thirty contribution points," Zhang Asheng replied with a simple, honest smile. "And it comes with one free maintenance session."

"Sold!"

This scene happened to be witnessed by Steward Sun not far away.

His face instantly darkened to the color of a pot bottom.

"Where did those trash pickers get high-purity Red Essence Copper?" Steward Sun gnashed his teeth, suddenly turning his head to glare at the young man beside him. "Didn't you say that was scrap material? That Spirit-Eroding Sand was mixed in, wasn't it?"

The young man trembled with fear. "Y-yes... it was scrap! That Spirit-Eroding Sand was personally mixed in by this disciple! In theory, as soon as they fired up the furnace, it should have exploded!"

"Idiot!" Steward Sun slapped the young man on the forehead. "They didn't have an explosion at all, and they even refined the copper! This Repair Hall... is a bit strange."

He strode over to the Repair Hall's stall and said in a sarcastic, insinuating tone, "Well, well, if it isn't the Repair Hall, the professional trash pickers. What, did you manage to dig up some food from the garbage heap?"

The surrounding disciples instantly fell silent, their gazes shifting between the two sides.

Faced with the provocation, Su Ming, who had been organizing the account book, slowly raised his head.

He didn't argue, nor did he get angry. He just looked at Steward Sun with a gentle gaze, as if looking at a "wealth-scattering child," his tone sincere. "Steward Sun, you jest. Objects have no inherent nobility or baseness; it's their proper use that makes them treasures. We must also thank Steward Sun for the 'generous gift' sent a few days ago, which solved our Repair Hall's urgent material shortage. If the Vessel Hall has more of this 'difficult-to-handle' scrap material in the future, feel free to send it over. The Repair Hall will accept it all."

"You!"

Steward Sun felt as if he had punched cotton, his chest tight and suffocating.

Looking at Su Ming's calm face, he suddenly felt an inexplicable chill.

This outer sect disciple didn't seem like someone picking through trash; it was more like he was... devouring people.

"Fine! Very good!" Steward Sun laughed in extreme anger. "Since Hall Master Su is so fond of garbage, let's just wait and see! I'd like to see how long this trash-picking business of yours can last!"

With that, he flicked his sleeve and left.

Su Ming watched his retreating back, the smile on his face gradually fading.

"Wait and see?" Su Ming murmured softly to himself, his fingers unconsciously rubbing a jade slip inside his sleeve. "I'm afraid by then, you won't even have any garbage left to send."

Lin Yu lazily rolled over in the Consciousness Sea. "Disciple, keep a low profile, a low profile. We are 'problem solvers,' not 'troublemakers.' However... if trouble insists on knocking on our door, then turn it into a resource. Later, we should research how to make that batch of 'Spirit-Eroding Sand' into something for self-defense."

Su Ming gave a slight nod in reply. "Yes, Master."

.....

In the southeast corner of the Spiritual Plant Garden, waves of heat rolled.

This was a terraced field specially developed for "Fire Sun Grass."

Fire Sun Grass was the main ingredient for refining Qi Recovery Pills. It loved intense sunlight, its leaves as crimson as tongues of flame. But right now, this expanse that should have been vibrant and red was tinged with a withered, grayish pallor.

Steward Wu paced back and forth on the field ridge, his hands clasped behind his back, his two mustache ends almost pulled out from his constant tugging. The boots on his feet were caked with dark red mud, raising a puff of dry dust with every step.

"Brother Su, you've finally come."

Seeing Su Ming's figure appear at the path entrance, Steward Wu rushed forward as if seeing a savior, his face squeezing out a smile uglier than crying. "If you hadn't come, my assessment this year would probably be doomed because of this little plot of land."

Su Ming cupped his hands in a salute, his expression calm. "Steward Wu, please calm down. Let's assess the situation first."

He walked to the edge of the field and crouched down.

Most of the Fire Sun Grass seedlings before him were only about the length of a finger. The edges of their leaves were curled and blackened, as if scorched by fire. Even worse, the soil around the roots had hardened into clumps, showing a strange purplish-red color and emitting a faint smell of sulfur.

Su Ming extended two fingers, gently pinched a bit of soil, and brought it to his nose to sniff.

Pungent, dry and hot, yet mixed with an inescapable musty, damp odor.

"Water and fire clash, toxic energy stagnates."

Su Ming patted the soil dust from his hands and stood up. "The formation master hired previously, did he use a 'Heavy Water Formation' to suppress the earth fire?"

Steward Wu was taken aback, then immediately gave a thumbs-up. "Amazing! Indeed, it was an inner sect senior brother from Formation Peak. He said this earth fire was too fierce and needed to be suppressed with heavy water. But once that formation was activated, the fire was suppressed, but these grasses..."

"Heavy water is cold and sinks; earth fire is fierce and dry."

Su Ming looked at the withered seedlings, his tone even. "It's like pouring a basin of ice water into a pot of boiling oil. The oil pot might cool down, but the food inside gets fried to a crisp. Although Fire Sun Grass likes fire, it's nurturing fire, not this kind of 'stifled fire' trapped in the soil and unable to release."

In the Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's phantom figure curled his lip, playing with a non-existent pointer in his hand. "Tsk, a classic case of failed 'acid-base neutralization.' Disciple, this is a great opportunity to make quick money. The fire poison in this soil is essentially energy stagnation. Just wash it once with your \*Like Water Art\*."

Su Ming understood in his heart, but his expression remained unchanged.

"Steward Wu, there is a method to resolve this."

Su Ming turned around, his gaze clear. "However, we cannot use formations to forcefully suppress it anymore. It requires meticulous, gradual work."

"How so?" Steward Wu asked urgently.

"Remove the Heavy Water Formation and switch to manual guidance." Su Ming pointed at the hardened soil. "I will use a unique 'Moistening Technique' to gently permeate the soil to a depth of three inches with mild water spiritual energy. Like washing silk, we will slowly neutralize and carry away the stagnant fire poison. This process cannot be rushed; it must be done gradually."

Steward Wu hesitated slightly. "Manual labor? For this entire acre of land, how much spiritual energy would that consume? Brother Su, you..."

He somewhat doubted whether Su Ming's Qi Refining fifth or sixth layer cultivation could sustain it.

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[ 1,336 words ]

Su Ming offered no explanation, simply walking up to the most severely withered seedling.

He took a deep breath, the Qihai within his Dantian rotating faintly. The spiritual energy transformed by the "Like Water Art" was no longer that violent, crashing current, but had turned into a deep blue, viscous liquid like oil, slowly dripping from his fingertip.

"Go."

Su Ming uttered a light command.

That mass of deep blue spiritual energy did not pour directly onto the leaves. Instead, it silently seeped into the soil at the roots.

Steward Wu's eyes widened.

He saw that piece of purplish-red soil, originally hard as iron, emit an extremely faint sizzling sound the instant it came into contact with the blue light. Wisps of gray smoke, barely discernible to the naked eye, rose up and then dissipated in the wind.

Immediately after, the compacted soil began to soften and become moist.

The most miraculous thing was that Fire Sun Grass plant.

The originally curled, blackened leaves, like a traveler in a long drought finally getting the first sip of sweet rain, actually began to unfurl at a speed visible to the naked eye. The scorched black on the leaves faded away, revealing a bright, vivid crimson once more.

Although it was just one plant, that aura of lifeless decay instantly dissipated for the most part.

"This... this is the Moistening Technique?" Steward Wu's Adam's apple bobbed, his eyes filled with disbelief.

An expert's first move reveals their skill.

He had cultivated spiritual plants for half his life, seen people water them, but never seen anyone control water-attributed spiritual energy with such needle-like precision.

This wasn't watering! This was clearly giving the spiritual plant a massage!

"Excellent! Masterful technique!"

Steward Wu was so excited he rubbed his hands together, his previously troubled face instantly blooming into a chrysanthemum-like smile. "Brother Su, no, Master Su! This job, no one but you can do it! Tell me, how do we treat this?"

Su Ming withdrew his spiritual energy, his complexion slightly pale—of course, this was an act.

The "Like Water Art" was inherently ever-renewing; this level of consumption was a mere drop in the bucket for him. But in business, you always have to make the client feel they're getting more than their money's worth, feel that you've paid a great price.

"This one acre of land, its accumulated problems run deep."

Su Ming wiped non-existent cold sweat from his forehead, his tone grave. "To completely eradicate the fire poison will take at least two months. I will come once a week, each session lasting two hours, to perform deep conditioning on this plot of land for you."

He paused, glancing at Steward Wu. "As for the compensation..."

"Name it!" Steward Wu now looked at Su Ming as if he were his own father. As long as he could save this land and his rice bowl, anything was negotiable.

"Eighty spirit stones." Su Ming quoted a figure.

Steward Wu's brow furrowed slightly.

Eighty was indeed not a low fee for an outer sect disciple's labor.

But he looked at that revived-from-the-dead seedling, then thought about the half-year's allowance and his future prospects he'd lose if he failed the assessment, gritted his teeth.

"Deal!"

Steward Wu fished out a heavy spirit stone pouch from his robe, but didn't hand it directly to Su Ming. Instead, he lowered his voice and leaned closer.

"Brother Su, this payment... let's not go through the official accounts."

Steward Wu's shrewd little eyes darted around. Seeing no one nearby, he whispered, "Going through official accounts requires approval from the Administration Hall, and

those bloodsuckers will take a cut. Too troublesome. This is my own private savings. Let's make a private agreement. If this garden has any more of these 'hard-to-treat ailments' in the future, you'll be my first call."

Su Ming chuckled inwardly.

This suited him perfectly.

Going through official accounts meant leaving a trail, being recorded by the sect, and possibly attracting attention from Formation Peak. A private transaction, payment upon delivery, was both safe and cost-effective.

"Steward Wu is decisive."

Su Ming took the spirit stone pouch, weighed it in his hand, then tucked it into his sleeve. "In that case, let's make a gentleman's agreement. For these two months, this land is entrusted to me."

...

After reaching the agreement, Su Ming didn't rush to leave, but immediately began the first "treatment" session.

He sat cross-legged on the ridge between the fields, his hands forming seals.

Deep blue spiritual energy fell like a gentle spring rain, covering the entire Fire Sun Grass field.

To an outsider, Su Ming appeared to be laboriously casting a spell, expending spiritual energy.

But in reality, the current Su Ming was feeling absolutely fantastic.

"Hah..."

Su Ming closed his eyes slightly, sensing the rich spiritual energy fluctuations around him.

The Spiritual Plant Garden was built upon a miniature spirit vein to begin with, and this Fire Sun Grass field concentrated vast amounts of fire and wood attributed spiritual energy.

When Su Ming operated the "Like Water Art" to perform "water-fire neutralization," the fire poison displaced from the soil, after being filtered and transformed by the "Like Water Art," actually turned into an extremely pure, warm current that flowed back into his own meridians.

Water nourishes wood, wood generates fire.

This wasn't work! This was clearly using the advantageous location here to cultivate!

The spiritual energy vortex within his body slowly rotated. The originally somewhat stagnant bottleneck in his cultivation actually showed signs of loosening under this high-intensity cycle of absorbing and releasing spiritual energy.

"Tsk tsk, killing three birds with one stone."

Lin Yu sighed within the Consciousness Sea. "Taking the man's money, using his land to cultivate, and still making him feel grateful to you. Disciple, your 'capitalist' face is becoming more and more standard."

Su Ming responded mentally, "Master, this is called resource exchange. I contributed labor and technique; he gets the harvest. It's a win-win."

Two hours later.

The setting sun cast its glow. The entire Fire Sun Grass field looked completely renewed.

Although the leaves hadn't fully regained their emerald green color, that grayish, decaying aura of death had completely dissipated, replaced by a vibrant vitality.

Steward Wu circled the field three times, the word "good" never stopping in his mouth.

"Brother Su, you've worked hard, worked hard!"

Steward Wu eagerly handed over a pot of spiritual tea. "You look a bit pale. Drink some tea to replenish yourself."

Su Ming took the tea and drank a mouthful, then retrieved several prepared empty clay jars from his storage pouch.

"Steward Wu, I have another presumptuous request."

Su Ming pointed to the pile of compacted, discarded soil he had cleared out, lying at the edge of the field. "If this 'poisonous soil' is left here by the field, I fear it might cause secondary contamination. I happen to be researching a formation to neutralize fire poison and need some samples for experiments. Could I take this waste soil away?"

Steward Wu glanced at the pile of foul-smelling muck, waving his hand dismissively. "Take it, take it! I was worried about where to dump it anyway. If you can handle it, Brother Su, you'd be doing me a huge favor!"

With a grateful expression, Su Ming carefully loaded that "poisonous soil" into the clay jars, sealed them, and stored them in his storage pouch.

Only after walking a long way from the Spiritual Plant Garden did Su Ming finally let out a long sigh of relief, a smile he couldn't suppress curling at the corner of his mouth.

"Master, that soil..."

"Treasure."

Lin Yu's voice was uncharacteristically serious. "That soil contains not only concentrated fire poison but also residue of the 'Heavy Water' left by that previous formation master. These two extreme energies have been entangled in the soil for months, forming an extremely unstable 'Thunder Fire Sand' structure."

"If you take it back and refine it using your 'Water Extraction Method'..." Lin Yu chuckled. "Just give it a little stimulation, and this stuff becomes natural 'Yin Thunder Pellets.' As for power... blowing off a Qi Refining late-stage cultivator's leg shouldn't be a problem."

Su Ming patted his storage pouch, a glint flashing in his eyes.

Eighty spirit stones, an excellent cultivation spot, plus a batch of raw materials that could be used to craft deadly, sneaky weapons.

This trip... he made out like a bandit.

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 255: Apology

[ 1,356 words ]

The evening glow dyed the Repair Hall's backyard a warm orange hue. The air carried the scent of dry earth and the faint, charred aroma of spiritual materials.

Under the old locust tree in the yard, Su Ming was bent over, holding a carving knife in his hand. He pointed at a small formation plate on the stone table before him, explaining in a low voice to Zhang Asheng beside him.

"Asheng, look at the Li Position of this 'Constant Temperature Formation Plate'. The output of fire elemental power isn't always better when it's greater." Su Ming's tone was

steady. His carving knife lightly traced an extremely fine loop at the edge of a formation line. "Too rigid and it becomes brittle; too hot and it becomes unstable. You need to add a 'reflux line' here, letting the excess heat cycle back to the formation's core to create a self-sustaining loop. It's like... leaving a vent when boiling water, understand?"

Zhang Asheng was listening intently, sweat beading on his forehead, but his eyes shone with intense focus. He nodded repeatedly. "Hall Master, I understand! It's about not letting the fire energy suffocate inside!"

Just then, the courtyard gate was gently knocked.

The knocking was neither hurried nor slow, yet it carried a steady, rhythmic quality, completely different from the usual urgent knocks of outer sect disciples rushing to get their magical implements repaired.

Su Ming's brow lifted slightly. He set down his carving knife, signaled for Zhang Asheng to step back for now, then stood up and went to open the door.

The latch slid open, revealing a face that was familiar yet somehow slightly unfamiliar.

The visitor wore white robes, the hem stained with a bit of dust—the mark of a long journey.

He carried a longsword on his back. His features were still handsome, but the arrogance and flamboyance that once marked his brow had lessened, replaced by a layer of weathered composure.

It was none other than Formation Peak's genius, Luo Feng.

"Junior Brother Su, my apologies for the disturbance."

Luo Feng stood outside the gate, his gaze settling on Su Ming, his expression complex.

He held a delicate jade box in his hand. Instead of stepping directly in, he gave a slight bow, his tone carrying a hint of apology. "I've come... to apologize."

Su Ming was momentarily taken aback. He stepped aside to make way, clasping his hands in greeting. "Senior Brother Luo, what brings you to say such a thing? Please, come in."

The two sat down by the stone table in the yard. Su Ming poured a cup of clear tea. The steam from the hot tea wafted up gently in the evening breeze.

Luo Feng held the teacup but did not drink. He merely let out a bitter chuckle. "Half a year ago, Elder Qingquan mentioned that after your outer sect assessment, he wished to invite you to Emerald Wave Pond for a meeting. At the time, I confidently promised I

would take you there. Yet this delay has stretched on for several months. Making you wait in vain was my fault."

Hearing this, understanding dawned on Su Ming.

Truthfully, these past few months he had been busy with the Repair Hall's expansion and his own cultivation, and hadn't really kept this matter at the forefront of his mind.

However, the fact that Luo Feng would specially visit his door to apologize for it showed genuine sincerity.

"Senior Brother, you are too serious." Su Ming offered a gentle smile. "In cultivation, time holds little meaning; several months are but the snap of a finger. Moreover, I see you are travel-worn. Your aura, though restrained, carries a faint hint of wind and thunder. I presume you accepted some formidable, important task?"

"Junior Brother Su's eyes are indeed sharp."

Luo Feng placed the jade box in his hand on the table and sighed softly. "Just before your assessment, I accepted an urgent sect mission—to refine formation plates for a Yin Vein node in the Northern Mang Ghost Domain."

"The Northern Mang Ghost Domain?" Su Ming's gaze sharpened. That was a truly perilous place, perpetually shrouded in Yin and baleful energy. Even Foundation Establishment cultivators dared not venture deep lightly.

"Exactly." Luo Feng nodded, a flicker of trepidation passing through his eyes. "That node was experiencing violent Yin energy disturbances, urgently requiring a set of core formation plates for a 'Nine Palaces Soul Locking Formation' to suppress it. This formation concerned the safety of all living beings within a hundred-mile radius. I had no choice but to devote myself entirely, entering seclusion for a full three months. It was only yesterday that I achieved some success."

At this point, Luo Feng looked at Su Ming, his gaze sincere. "Once I entered that seclusion, I missed the opportunity to take you to meet the Elder. I truly feel ashamed."

Hearing this, Su Ming's expression turned solemn. He stood up and offered Luo Feng a formal, respectful bow.

"Senior Brother, you toiled for a crucial sect mission, placed yourself in a dangerous location, and protected an entire region. This is a great act of righteousness. I, Su Ming, am merely an outer sect disciple. What virtue or ability do I possess to make Senior Brother hold such concern for me? If Senior Brother speaks of apology again, you will only belittle this junior."

These words Su Ming spoke were utterly sincere. Although he cultivated the "Way of Survival," that did not hinder his respect for those who truly had a sense of duty.

In his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu clicked his tongue in admiration. "Well said, watertight. It both praises the other party and makes you seem magnanimous. Disciple, your social etiquette is becoming increasingly polished."

Seeing Su Ming's frank and open expression, the knot of unease in Luo Feng's heart also dissipated considerably.

He pushed the jade box on the table towards Su Ming and gently opened it.

A wave of bone-chilling cold instantly spilled out, lowering the temperature in the immediate surroundings by several degrees.

Inside the box lay an ice-blue jade talisman. Its surface was carved with intricate, complex formation lines, shimmering with a radiant, flowing light. One look told it was no ordinary item.

"This is a 'Cold Jade Formation Rune'," Luo Feng explained. "It's a protective item I refined during my Foundation Establishment stage, using essence gathered from ten-thousand-year-old glacial ice. When activated, it can withstand a full-power strike from an early Foundation Establishment cultivator."

Luo Feng paused. A profound, abyss-like aura faintly emanated from him—a pressure far exceeding the Foundation Establishment stage. Though it flashed by in an instant, it sent a violent tremor through Su Ming's heart.

"Now that I've reached the Golden Core stage, this item is of little use to me." Luo Feng smiled, a trace of pride in his tone. "Consider it an apology gift. Junior Brother, please do not refuse."

"Since Senior Brother Luo has put it that way, I have no choice but to accept." Su Ming took a deep breath. Without false modesty, he accepted the jade box generously. "Congratulations on your great progress along the Dao and your successful attainment of the Golden Core."

Luo Feng waved his hand, his expression turning serious again. "Let's set aside reminiscing for now. Actually, Elder Qingquan concluded his travels and returned to Emerald Wave Pond three months ago. He specifically asked about you."

Su Ming's heart stirred. "What did the Elder say?"

"I reported truthfully about the things you've done at the Repair Hall, including that standardized process and your unique insights into material handling." Luo Feng looked at Su Ming. "After hearing it, the Elder only said one thing."

He cleared his throat, imitating the Elder's tone. "The foundational method values perseverance above all. Since he is in the process of tempering himself, let him temper a while longer. If the mind is not settled, even the highest skill is a castle in the air. Bring him to see me after your Nine Palaces formation plate is completely successful."

Luo Feng pointed at himself. "The core formation plate for my 'Nine Palaces Soul Locking Formation' is currently only seventy percent complete. It will take at most another month to finish it completely. When that time comes, regardless of your cultivation level, Junior Brother, I will personally take you to Emerald Wave Pond."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[ 1,492 words ]

One month.

Su Ming calculated quickly in his heart.

Now, he held the spirit stones earned from the Spiritual Plant Garden, plus the income from selling the Red Essence Copper just now. Resources were not lacking for the moment. One month's time, combined with the Like Water Art and his Master's guidance, was enough for him to push his cultivation to the peak of the seventh layer of Qi Refining, and he could even attempt to touch the threshold of the eighth layer of Qi Refining.

Moreover, during this period, he could also initially master a few high-level rune combinations from the Ancient Analysis of Formation Lines.

By the time he paid respects to the Golden Core elder, with cultivation and skills to rely on, he would at least not appear too shabby, and could also be more confident in striving for some core inheritances.

Thinking of this, Su Ming bowed solemnly: "Then I'll trouble you, Senior Brother. For this month, I, Su Ming, will definitely close my door to visitors, diligently study the path of formations, and live up to the elder's expectations."

With the main business concluded, Luo Feng did not immediately get up to take his leave.

He sat on the stone stool, his fingers unconsciously rubbing the rim of the tea cup, the unshakeable worry between his brows resurfacing.

After hesitating for a moment, as if he had made some decision, he turned his wrist and took out a semi-transparent formation plate.

"Junior Brother." Luo Feng's voice was a bit dry, "Actually, my visit this time, besides apologizing, also has a request... concerning the final hurdle of this 'Nine Palaces Soul-Locking Formation'—the 'Soul-Suppressing Core'."

Su Ming's gaze fell upon the formation plate.

This was an unfinished formation plate, carved entirely from warm, gentle "Soul-Nourishing Jade." But at the center of the formation plate, there was an extremely obvious vortex of spiritual energy, violent and chaotic.

"This formation needs to use 'Soul-Nourishing Jade' as the base, to inscribe the 'Nine Palaces Soul-Suppressing Lines'." Luo Feng pointed at that vortex, his brow tightly furrowed, "But the problem is, Soul-Nourishing Jade has a gentle, nourishing nature; while the Soul-Suppressing Lines need to draw upon the Yin murderous aura power from the Northern Mang Ghost Domain, which is focused on suppression. Their attributes are completely opposite."

"I've tried seventeen types of harmonizing runes, even used the 'Material Purification Method' you taught me before to treat the Soul-Nourishing Jade, but I still cannot completely resolve this conflict."

Luo Feng sighed, his eyes full of defeat, "Once the murderous aura enters the jade, the Soul-Nourishing Jade instinctively repels it, causing continuous damage to the formation plate. According to current projections, this formation plate will collapse on its own due to internal conflict in at most three years."

A three-year collapse was undoubtedly a failed product for a grand formation intended to suppress a Yin vein for a hundred years.

Su Ming took the formation plate but did not speak immediately.

He held his breath and concentrated, closed his eyes slightly, and the Like Water Art within him quietly circulated.

"Master, activate 'Observation Micro'."

"Alright, ten spirit stones, please." In the Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's voice sounded.

The next moment, the world before Su Ming's eyes changed.

The formation plate was no longer a solid object but transformed into countless flowing lines.

With the assistance of Lin Yu's soul power, he clearly saw that within the internal structure of the Soul-Nourishing Jade, the gentle white soul power and the cold black murderous aura were like water and oil, clearly separated.

Luo Feng forcibly used runes to bind them together, but at the contact surface between the two, intense repulsion reactions were constantly occurring, as if countless tiny explosions were continuously tearing the formation plate's internal structure apart.

This was not a problem that could be solved by runes at all. This was a conflict of physical properties.

Su Ming exited the "Observation Micro" state, gently placed the formation plate back on the table, and shook his head: "Senior Brother, forgive my bluntness. This is not due to insufficient attainment in formations on your part, but rather that you've walked the path too narrowly."

"Walked the path too narrowly?" Luo Feng was stunned.

Su Ming did not answer directly, but asked in his heart: "Master, how do you solve this kind of 'oil-water separation' situation over there?"

Lin Yu lazily yawned: "Simple. Since oil and water don't mix, then don't let them come into direct contact. Add a middle layer, make a 'sandwich' structure. Or use a surfactant... oh no, there's no surfactant here. Then use physical isolation."

"If you treat the conflict as 'momentum', forcibly harmonizing it is like rowing upstream." Lin Yu's voice in Su Ming's mind became a bit more serious, "Why not... act according to the momentum?"

Su Ming's eyes flashed. He dipped his finger in the tea water and drew a circle on the stone table.

"Senior Brother Luo, you've been trying to make the Soul-Nourishing Jade 'accommodate' the murderous aura, or make the murderous aura 'adapt' to the Soul-Nourishing Jade. This is like trying to wrap fire in paper, it will naturally burn through."

Luo Feng frowned: "Then, in Junior Brother's opinion?"

"Divide and rule, with the Void as the boundary."

Su Ming's finger drew an S-shaped curve in the middle of the circle, like a Tai Chi diagram.

"Make the Soul-Nourishing Jade into a 'sandwich structure'." Su Ming said while gesturing in the air, "The outer layer still inscribes the Soul-Suppressing Lines, drawing

the murderous aura, focusing on attack; the inner layer uses gentle materials like 'Moisture Stone' as a buffer, nourishing the soul power, focusing on protection."

At this point, Su Ming paused and looked at Luo Feng, "The most crucial part is, between the inner and outer layers, don't use any runes to connect them. Instead, use 'Void Stone Powder' to outline an extremely thin 'Void Buffer Zone'."

"Void Buffer Zone?" Luo Feng's pupils contracted sharply.

"That's right." Su Ming's voice was calm, "Let the two forces circulate and flow within the formation plate without contacting each other, yet transmit the pressure of 'momentum' through the Void Zone. The murderous aura presses against the Void, the Void squeezes the inner layer, the inner layer rebounds under pressure, nourishing the soul power."

Su Ming pointed at the water-stain Tai Chi diagram on the table: "Just like Tai Chi, Yin contains Yang, Yang contains Yin, but the boundary between Yin and Yang is clear, only then can it last long without decay."

The courtyard fell into deathly silence.

Luo Feng stared at the water-stain diagram on the table, his entire person as if petrified.

The look in his eyes changed from initial confusion to shock, and finally transformed into deep bewilderment and struggle.

"This... this is no longer purely a formation..." Luo Feng muttered to himself, his voice trembling slightly, "This is almost a fusion of 'artifact forging' and 'formation laying'! And this line of thinking... is too 'clever'! Even somewhat... heretical!"

As a genius of Formation Peak, the education Luo Feng received was always "using formations to control objects." Formations were noble, runes were omnipotent, materials were merely servants carrying the runes. If materials were disobedient, then use higher-level runes to suppress them.

But the solution Su Ming proposed was to admit the powerlessness of runes and instead utilize the structural properties of the materials themselves to circumvent the problem.

In the eyes of traditional formation masters, this was simply "taking shortcuts," it was a "heretical path."

"Formations should use runes to control all things. How can we change the fundamental structure due to material limitations?" Luo Feng suddenly looked up, a flash of resistance in his eyes, "If it's like this, wouldn't it make us formation masters seem incompetent?"

This was the fundamental difference in their philosophies. Luo Feng pursued the "purity of the Dao," while Su Ming pursued "solving the problem."

Facing Luo Feng's question, Su Ming's expression remained unchanged. He just calmly asked in return:

"Senior Brother, why do formations exist?"

Luo Feng was taken aback and instinctively answered: "Naturally to gather the power of heaven and earth to achieve the desired goal."

"Then if the powers of heaven and earth themselves conflict, and the formation forcibly gathers them, causing the formation plate to collapse, does this count as 'achieving the desired goal' or 'creating disaster'?"

Su Ming pointed at that unstable formation plate. His tone was light, but each word struck like a hammer, "The purpose of this formation is 'soul suppression,' to protect the peace of an area. If, in pursuit of the 'purity' of formation Dao, it causes the formation plate to decay prematurely, souls cannot be suppressed, and the common people suffer harm instead, wouldn't that be putting the cart before the horse?"

Su Ming stood up, looking at the last trace of sunset in the sky: "My method may be 'clumsy,' may be 'clever,' perhaps even unworthy of refined discussion. But it can make this formation plate operate stably for ten, twenty years, truly accomplishing the effect of 'soul suppression'."

He turned his head, looking directly into Luo Feng's eyes: "Senior Brother, the means serve the purpose. Isn't this the fundamental purpose of formations?"

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

c 256

One month.

Su Ming calculated quickly in his heart.

Now, he held the spirit stones earned from the Spiritual Plant Garden, plus the income from selling the Red Essence Copper just now. Resources were not lacking for the moment. One month's time, combined with the Like Water Art and his Master's guidance, was enough for him to push his cultivation to the

peak of the seventh layer of Qi Refining, and he could even attempt to touch the threshold of the eighth layer of Qi Refining.

Moreover, during this period, he could also initially master a few high-level rune combinations from the Ancient Analysis of Formation Lines.

By the time he paid respects to the Golden Core elder, with cultivation and skills to rely on, he would at least not appear too shabby, and could also be more confident in striving for some core inheritances.

Thinking of this, Su Ming bowed solemnly: "Then I'll trouble you, Senior Brother. For this month, I, Su Ming, will definitely close my door to visitors, diligently study the path of formations, and live up to the elder's expectations."

With the main business concluded, Luo Feng did not immediately get up to take his leave.

He sat on the stone stool, his fingers unconsciously rubbing the rim of the tea cup, the unshakeable worry between his brows resurfacing.

After hesitating for a moment, as if he had made some decision, he turned his wrist and took out a semi-transparent formation plate.

"Junior Brother." Luo Feng's voice was a bit dry, "Actually, my visit this time, besides apologizing, also has a request... concerning the final hurdle of this 'Nine Palaces Soul-Locking Formation'—the 'Soul-Suppressing Core'." Su Ming's gaze fell upon the formation plate.

This was an unfinished formation plate, carved entirely from warm, gentle "Soul-Nourishing Jade." But at the center of the formation plate, there was an extremely obvious vortex of spiritual energy, violent and chaotic.

"This formation needs to use 'Soul-Nourishing Jade' as the base, to inscribe the 'Nine Palaces Soul-Suppressing Lines'." Luo Feng pointed at that vortex, his brow tightly furrowed, "But the problem is, Soul-Nourishing Jade has a gentle, nourishing nature; while the Soul-Suppressing Lines need to draw upon the Yin murderous aura power from the Northern Mang Ghost Domain, which is focused on suppression. Their attributes are completely opposite."

"I've tried seventeen types of harmonizing runes, even used the 'Material Purification Method' you taught me before to treat the Soul-Nourishing Jade, but I still cannot completely resolve this conflict."

Luo Feng sighed, his eyes full of defeat, "Once the murderous aura enters the jade, the Soul-Nourishing Jade instinctively repels it, causing continuous damage to the formation plate. According to current projections, this formation plate will collapse on its own due to internal conflict in at most three years."

A three-year collapse was undoubtedly a failed product for a grand formation intended to suppress a Yin vein for a hundred years.

Su Ming took the formation plate but did not speak immediately.

He held his breath and concentrated, closed his eyes slightly, and the Like Water Art within him quietly circulated.

"Master, activate 'Observation Micro'."

"Alright, ten spirit stones, please." In the Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's voice sounded.

The next moment, the world before Su Ming's eyes changed.

The formation plate was no longer a solid object but transformed into countless flowing lines.

With the assistance of Lin Yu's soul power, he clearly saw that within the internal structure of the Soul-Nourishing Jade, the gentle white soul power and the cold black murderous aura were like water and oil, clearly separated.

Luo Feng forcibly used runes to bind them together, but at the contact surface between the two, intense repulsion reactions were constantly occurring, as if countless tiny explosions were continuously tearing the formation plate's internal structure apart.

This was not a problem that could be solved by runes at all. This was a conflict of physical properties.

Su Ming exited the "Observation Micro" state, gently placed the formation plate back on the table, and shook his head: "Senior Brother, forgive my bluntness. This is not due to insufficient attainment in formations on your part, but rather that you've walked the path too narrowly."

"Walked the path too narrowly?" Luo Feng was stunned.

Su Ming did not answer directly, but asked in his heart: "Master, how do you solve this kind of 'oil-water separation' situation over there?"

Lin Yu lazily yawned: "Simple. Since oil and water don't mix, then don't let them come into direct contact. Add a middle layer, make a 'sandwich' structure. Or use a surfactant... oh no, there's no surfactant here. Then use physical isolation."

"If you treat the conflict as 'momentum', forcibly harmonizing it is like rowing upstream." Lin Yu's voice in Su Ming's mind became a bit more serious, "Why not... act according to the momentum?"

Su Ming's eyes flashed. He dipped his finger in the tea water and drew a circle on the stone table.

"Senior Brother Luo, you've been trying to make the Soul-Nourishing Jade 'accommodate' the murderous aura, or make the murderous aura 'adapt' to the Soul-Nourishing Jade. This is like trying to wrap fire in paper, it will naturally burn through."

Luo Feng frowned: "Then, in Junior Brother's opinion?"

"Divide and rule, with the Void as the boundary."

Su Ming's finger drew an S-shaped curve in the middle of the circle, like a Tai Chi diagram.

"Make the Soul-Nourishing Jade into a 'sandwich structure'." Su Ming said while gesturing in the air, "The outer layer still inscribes the Soul-Suppressing Lines, drawing the murderous aura, focusing on attack; the inner layer uses gentle materials like 'Moisture Stone' as a buffer, nourishing the soul power, focusing on protection."

At this point, Su Ming paused and looked at Luo Feng, "The most crucial part is, between the inner and outer layers, don't use any runes to connect them. Instead, use 'Void Stone Powder' to outline an extremely thin 'Void Buffer Zone'."

"Void Buffer Zone?" Luo Feng's pupils contracted sharply.

"That's right." Su Ming's voice was calm, "Let the two forces circulate and flow within the formation plate without contacting each other, yet transmit the

pressure of 'momentum' through the Void Zone. The murderous aura presses against the Void, the Void squeezes the inner layer, the inner layer rebounds under pressure, nourishing the soul power."

Su Ming pointed at the water-stain Tai Chi diagram on the table: "Just like Tai Chi, Yin contains Yang, Yang contains Yin, but the boundary between Yin and Yang is clear, only then can it last long without decay."

The courtyard fell into deathly silence.

Luo Feng stared at the water-stain diagram on the table, his entire person as if petrified.

The look in his eyes changed from initial confusion to shock, and finally transformed into deep bewilderment and struggle.

"This... this is no longer purely a formation..." Luo Feng muttered to himself, his voice trembling slightly, "This is almost a fusion of 'artifact forging' and 'formation laying'! And this line of thinking... is too 'clever'! Even somewhat... heretical!"

As a genius of Formation Peak, the education Luo Feng received was always "using formations to control objects." Formations were noble, runes were omnipotent, materials were merely servants carrying the runes. If materials were disobedient, then use higher-level runes to suppress them.

But the solution Su Ming proposed was to admit the powerlessness of runes and instead utilize the structural properties of the materials themselves to circumvent the problem.

In the eyes of traditional formation masters, this was simply "taking shortcuts," it was a "heretical path."

"Formations should use runes to control all things. How can we change the fundamental structure due to material limitations?" Luo Feng suddenly looked up, a flash of resistance in his eyes, "If it's like this, wouldn't it make us formation masters seem incompetent?"

This was the fundamental difference in their philosophies. Luo Feng pursued the "purity of the Dao," while Su Ming pursued "solving the problem."

Facing Luo Feng's question, Su Ming's expression remained unchanged. He just calmly asked in return:

"Senior Brother, why do formations exist?"

Luo Feng was taken aback and instinctively answered: "Naturally to gather the power of heaven and earth to achieve the desired goal."

"Then if the powers of heaven and earth themselves conflict, and the formation forcibly gathers them, causing the formation plate to collapse, does this count as 'achieving the desired goal' or 'creating disaster'?"

Su Ming pointed at that unstable formation plate. His tone was light, but each word struck like a hammer, "The purpose of this formation is 'soul suppression,' to protect the peace of an area. If, in pursuit of the 'purity' of formation Dao, it causes the formation plate to decay prematurely, souls cannot be suppressed, and the common people suffer harm instead, wouldn't that be putting the cart before the horse?"

Su Ming stood up, looking at the last trace of sunset in the sky: "My method may be 'clumsy,' may be 'clever,' perhaps even unworthy of refined discussion. But it can make this formation plate operate stably for ten, twenty years, truly accomplishing the effect of 'soul suppression'."

He turned his head, looking directly into Luo Feng's eyes: "Senior Brother, the means serve the purpose. Isn't this the fundamental purpose of formations?"

## **- Chapter 257: This casting costs forty spirit stones**

### **Chapter 257: This casting costs forty spirit stones**

[ 1,359 words ]

Luo Feng opened his mouth, but no sound came out.

He stared at the youth before him, who only had Qi Refining cultivation, yet it felt like a thunderclap had exploded in his mind.

After a long while, he slowly closed his eyes.

From the depths of his memory, the teachings of his master, Xuanheng Zhenren, surfaced: "Feng'er, your exceptional talent is both a blessing and a tribulation for you."

The highest realm of the path of formations is 'the formation merging with heaven and earth.' You always think about 'making heaven and earth conform to the formation,' but you forget that 'the formation can also conform to heaven and earth.'"

"The formation can also conform to heaven and earth..."

Luo Feng murmured softly. The unique pressure characteristic of the Golden Core realm around him began to fluctuate violently, then receded like a tide, becoming calm and profound.

After a long moment, he opened his eyes. The confusion within them was completely gone, replaced only by clarity.

He took a deep breath, stood up, and performed a deep, formal bow to Su Ming.

"Junior Brother, your words woke me from my dream."

Luo Feng's voice carried an unprecedented sense of lucidity. "I have learned. You are right. My 'cleverness' is petty cleverness; your 'clumsiness' is true great skill. This formation plate... I will craft it according to your line of thinking."

This bow was not to cultivation level, but to the "Dao."

After seeing Luo Feng off, night had completely fallen.

Su Ming stood alone in the courtyard. Moonlight spilled over him, casting a long shadow.

He opened his palm. The ice-blue Cold Jade Formation Rune lay quietly in his hand, emitting a faint, cool glow.

"Master, one month," Su Ming said softly, slowly closing his fingers to grip the rune tightly. "I need to break through to the seventh layer of Qi Refining and prepare enough 'chips' for the trip to Emerald Wave Pond. Since I'm going to meet a big shot, I can't go empty-handed."

In his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu stretched lazily. "Naturally. Meeting a Golden Core elder empty-handed is improper. We should at least bring some of our 'local specialties' to impress that old man."

"And..." Lin Yu's tone shifted, becoming somewhat money-grubbing. "Although that guy Luo Feng gave us the formation rune, the idea for the 'Void Stone Powder' was ours. That counts as technology shares, right? We'll have to find a chance to discuss profit-sharing with him later."

Su Ming couldn't help but smile, turning to look at the workshop inside the Repair Hall, still brightly lit.

There, Zhang Asheng was leading several menial disciples, working by lamplight late into the night, polishing a batch of newly delivered, worn-out magical implements. The clinking sounds of hammering were particularly pleasing in the quiet night.

That was the sound of money, and also the sound of a foundation.

"Then... let's take on a few more 'private jobs,'" Su Ming said, the corner of his mouth lifting slightly.

.....

The Moonlight Stone within the Clear Stream Valley cave dwelling emitted a hazy, clear glow.

Su Ming sat cross-legged before a stone table. In front of him lay the dark-gold formation plate named "Minor Void Spirit Attraction Formation," and beside it was a brocade pouch he had exchanged for at the Administration Hall.

The pouch was open, containing a small pinch of fine sand that shimmered with cold, starry radiance—Stardust Sand.

Just this small pinch had cost him a full forty spirit stones.

The eighty spirit stones he had just earned from Steward Wu hadn't even warmed his pocket before half were gone in the blink of an eye.

"Stop looking so pained, your expression is like you're cutting off your own flesh," Lin Yu's illusory figure hovered mid-air, pointing at the formation plate. "We need to review. In the previous attempts, most of the attracted Source Substance dissipated the instant it contacted the present world."

Su Ming withdrew his gaze from the Stardust Sand, lightly tapping the table with his fingers. "This disciple has also been pondering this matter. The previous formation line structure seemed to overly pursue 'breadth,' trying to cast a wider net. But the barrier between the Void and the present world is extremely thick. A wide net means divided force, and divided force means loose pores."

"Exactly," Lin Yu snapped his fingers. "To use the words of my hometown, the frequency is off. The fluctuations of the Void are high-frequency and dense. Our formation is a coarse band; most of the good stuff leaked through."

Su Ming didn't understand the term "band," but he grasped the meaning.

He pulled out the well-thumbed "True Meaning of Basic Rune Deconstruction" from his robe, flipped to the page about "Spirit Attraction," and pointed at several ancient patterns.

"Master, Senior Brother Luo Feng once mentioned the principle of 'rune resonance.' If we change these three core 'Gathering' character runes to the ancient 'Spirit Attraction' pattern in a 'spiral' shape, and supplement it with Stardust Sand to stabilize space, could we make the ripples generated by the formation stop spreading outward and instead drill deep?"

As he spoke, Su Ming gestured with his finger in the air, making a downward drilling motion. "Like... drilling a well."

Lin Yu's eyes lit up. His soul body floated down to take a closer look at the diagram. "Changing a flat net into a deep-water drill bit? Interesting. Disciple, your comprehension is almost catching up to one ten-thousandth of mine in my prime. Want to try?"

Su Ming said no more. He cleansed his hands, lit incense, and adjusted his breathing.

At this moment, he transformed back into the precise, calm Hall Master of the Repair Hall.

Stardust Sand was extremely hard. It required repeated washing and grinding with water spiritual energy until it turned into a viscous, starry slurry. Su Ming circulated the "Like Water Art." A dark blue glow shimmered at his fingertips, enveloping the expensive sand grains.

Half an hour later, a mass of liquid shimmering with a silver-blue luster floated in his palm.

Su Ming held his breath and concentrated. Using his divine sense as a brush, he guided this slurry, carefully covering it over the original lines on the formation plate. He didn't completely erase the old lines but made extremely bold modifications at key nodes.

He deliberately outlined originally smooth lines with subtle serrations, and at the end of each rune, he curled them inward to form a microscopic vortex.

This was an extremely mentally taxing task.

Sweat trickled down Su Ming's temples, dripping onto the stone table with a soft "plop," but his fingers gripping the formation plate were as steady as a rock.

"Li position, shift to Kan position, retract three inches inward..." Su Ming muttered under his breath, his eyes reflecting the complex formation lines.

When the final stroke was completed, the formation plate emitted a dull hum, like an ancient beast waking from slumber and snorting.

The originally dim plate surface now faintly exuded a deep, sucking force. Even the surrounding light seemed to be swallowed by it somewhat.

"It's done."

Su Ming let out a long breath. Not bothering to wipe his sweat, he immediately took out five spirit stones and embedded them into the grooves.

"Master, get ready."

"Been waiting. Let's eat!" Lin Yu rubbed his hands together, though he couldn't produce any sound.

Su Ming struck out with a hand seal.

Hum—

This time, the formation plate didn't emit its usual light, cheerful tremor. Instead, it produced a low, suppressed vibration. No visible ripples spread through the air, but in Su Ming's perception, the space above the formation plate seemed to have collapsed inward.

The feeling was like a bottomless vortex suddenly appearing on calm water. All fluctuations were forcibly constrained within a foot-wide area, collapsing inward with frantic intensity.

"Such strong suction!" Su Ming felt the spiritual energy within his body being drawn out by the formation plate like a breached river. His expression changed slightly, and he hurriedly increased his output.

The effect of the Stardust Sand manifested. The originally highly unstable spatial ripples, bolstered by the starlight, became tough and condensed.

A quarter of an hour passed.

At the central Void node of the formation plate, instead of spewing large clumps of gray waste gas, it began to seep out wisps of extremely fine, thread-like material, resembling tobacco shreds.

"It's here!" Lin Yu's expression turned serious, even carrying a trace of tension.

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 258: This is a losing proposition no matter how you look at it.

[ 1,341 words ]

At first glance, the tobacco shreds still appeared grayish and murky, but within that grayness, an extremely sharp, bright flash would occasionally streak through.

Su Ming activated his "Observation Micro State," and his pupils contracted sharply.

Deep within those turbid gray impurities was actually a silver thread, as fine as a strand of hair, mixed in! It swam through the gray mist like a nimble silver fish, emanating a clear, cold, and aloof aura.

"Silver thread! It's silver thread source substance!" Lin Yu's voice even changed pitch, unable to suppress his excitement. "Disciple, steady! Don't let it escape!"

Without needing Lin Yu's reminder, Su Ming had already fully activated the \*Like Water Art\*. His dark blue spiritual energy transformed into a flexible, resilient net, tightly covering that tiny area.

The Xuantian ring's light blazed brilliantly, like a starving tiger pouncing on its prey, suddenly generating a powerful suction force.

That "silver fish" struggled in the air for a moment, seemingly wanting to burrow back into the void. But trapped within the stable channel constructed by the Star Pattern Sand and bound by Su Ming's spiritual energy, it ultimately couldn't escape.

\*Whoosh.\*

A flash of silver light vanished into the ring's surface.

The next instant, Su Ming felt a wave of cool, refreshing sensation wash over his mind. His divine sense, originally somewhat depleted from setting up the formation, recovered more than half in an instant under this coolness. Even his thinking became unprecedentedly clear.

Within his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu had his eyes closed, a look of intoxication on his face. His originally somewhat illusory legs now seemed to solidify a bit more, even the cloud patterns on his shoes were clearly visible.

"Hah..." Lin Yu let out a long exhale, opened his eyes, his gaze bright and clear. "The kick is strong. This single strand of silver thread is worth the total of the previous ten extractions combined! And it has very few impurities, requiring little effort to purify."

Su Ming slumped to the floor. He looked at the spirit stones that had exhausted their spiritual energy and crumbled into powder, then glanced at the Star Pattern Sand on the formation plate whose luster had dimmed, and gave a bitter laugh. "It's effective alright, but the cost..."

After running for just half a shichen, the forty spirit stones worth of Star Pattern Sand was completely consumed, and five spirit stones had turned into useless dregs.

This single "silver thread" was entirely bought with money.

"This is called 'pay-to-win'," Lin Yu said in high spirits, floating in front of Su Ming. "Although the cost is high, the direction is right. As long as we can keep getting money, this teacher's soul body recovery has hope. At that time, forget about guiding you in formation cultivation, even helping you deduce the missing subsequent parts of the \*Like Water Art\* won't be difficult."

Hearing this, the look of heartache in Su Ming's eyes faded, replaced by a glint of determination.

He took out those several pottery jars filled with "poisonous soil" from his storage pouch and placed them on the stone table.

"If that's the case, then we need to speed up our money-making pace." Su Ming's fingers lightly stroked the cold surface of the pottery jars. "Master, you said before this 'Thunder Fire Sand' can be made into a nasty surprise for people?"

"Of course." Lin Yu chuckled, pointing at that pile of mud. "This is a natural 'high-explosive grenade' blank. With just a bit of refinement and carving a few unstable 'Burst' runes on it... tsk tsk, our Repair Hall's new product has a prototype."

...

Inside the stone chamber, Su Ming sat cross-legged, his brows tightly furrowed.

A wisp of dark blue spiritual energy slowly traveled along his meridians. When it reached the core of his Dantian Qihai, the originally smooth spiritual flow suddenly stalled. It was like a rushing river hitting a hidden reef, stirring up chaotic ripples.

\*Hiss.\*

Su Ming sucked in a sharp breath of cold air, a fine layer of cold sweat beading on his temples. That pain wasn't heart-wrenching, but rather like a bone-deep parasite—an extremely fine steel needle repeatedly pricking the most vulnerable soft flesh.

The damage to his Dao foundation.

As his cultivation advanced and his spiritual energy grew more abundant, the hidden danger brought by this crack became increasingly apparent.

With trembling hands, Su Ming fished out a small white jade bottle from his robes. Pulling out the stopper, a rich milky fragrance mixed with clear, cold spiritual energy assailed his nostrils.

Beast Spirit Milk.

This was the "extra" earned from Lei Hu.

Su Ming tilted his head back and carefully let a single drop fall into his mouth.

The spirit milk melted upon touching his throat, transforming into a stream of warm heat that rapidly enveloped the crack within his Dantian.

That stabbing pain eased slightly, like applying a layer of cool menthol ointment to a wound.

But that was all.

After a moment, the medicinal effect dissipated, and that feeling of obstruction and stagnation surged back, even appearing clearer and more grating because of the previous relief.

"Stop trying."

Within his Consciousness Sea, Lin Yu's voice sounded lazily, carrying a touch of helplessness. "Although this Beast Spirit Milk is good stuff, it's for strengthening the physiques of young spirit beasts. What you have is a 'Dao Injury,' a crack in the foundation. Using this kind of wall-painting paste to patch a load-bearing wall's crack, aside from seeking psychological comfort, isn't very useful."

Su Ming put down the jade bottle and gave a bitter laugh. "Master, your disciple naturally knows this. But if this pain isn't suppressed, my cultivation efficiency drops by at least thirty percent. If I forcefully try to break through, I'm afraid my Dantian would explode before I even touch the threshold of the seventh layer of Qi Refining."

Lin Yu sighed, his figure swaying slightly above the ring. "This is a bottomless pit. Wanting to mend the heavens is as difficult as ascending to the sky."

Su Ming fell silent.

His fingers rubbed against the cool jade bottle, and his thoughts couldn't help but drift back to the meeting at Spirit Beast Peak three shichen ago.

...

Back then, the Jade Water Python's snake eggs had just hatched.

Three small, greenish-blue snakes poked their heads out within the precisely temperature-controlled formation, flicking their tongues.

Lei Hu, that burly, rough man, was actually so moved his eyes turned red. If not for being mindful of the fragility of the newly hatched snakes, he probably would have given Su Ming a bear hug.

"Brother Su! From now on, you are my sworn brother Lei Hu!" Lei Hu's booming voice made the surface of the cold pool tremble. "Take this Beast Spirit Milk! If anyone dares bully you, just mention my name, Lei Hu!"

It was also at that moment that a young man dressed in a moon-white robe walked out from the back hall.

The man looked to be only in his early twenties, with a fair, clean face and a gentle smile at the corner of his mouth, standing out starkly from the surrounding Beast Peak disciples who were all covered in murderous aura. But the moment he appeared, the previously boisterous Lei Hu instantly shut his mouth and respectfully called out, "Senior Brother Qin."

Qin Yi.

A Beast Peak disciple, rumored to be raising a Foundation Establishment stage mutated spirit crane.

Qin Yi didn't look at the three small snakes. His eyes, which seemed gentle but were actually deep and profound like a deep pool, immediately landed on Su Ming.

That gaze wasn't aggressive, but it felt like a soft brush, sweeping over Su Ming inside and out.

"Repair Hall, Su Ming?" Qin Yi spoke, his voice like jade striking jade. "I heard from Junior Brother Lei. You didn't forcibly alter the formation but instead followed the earth veins, using a guiding method to resolve the danger of the cold pool. That thinking is ingenious."

Su Ming's heart tightened slightly.

This feeling of being seen through wasn't pleasant. He bowed slightly, putting on a look of fearful respect. "Senior Brother flatters me. This junior brother was just lucky, having happened to read a few miscellaneous books about the coexistence of earth fire and cold springs, and simply followed the example."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[ 1,398 words ]

"Luck?"

Qin Yi smiled, slowly walking to the edge of the cold pool. He reached out and gently fiddled with those few formation flags. "The formation layout is rigorous, the nodes precise. This is not luck. And..."

He turned around, his gaze burning as he stared at Su Ming. "I observed the positions where you set up the formation, junior brother. It seems you intentionally avoided the 'startle point' most sensitive to the young snakes. Even someone who doesn't understand formations can see that when this formation operates, those three snake eggs not only don't reject it, but actively draw in spiritual energy. Junior brother, you seem to have a unique sensitivity to spirit beast auras as well?"

The hairs on Su Ming's back instantly stood on end.

When he had set up the formation, he had indeed used Lin Yu's "observation micro state" perspective to see the fluctuations inside the snake eggs. He then adjusted the frequency of the spiritual energy flow to synchronize it with the breathing of the eggs.

Such a minute detail was actually seen through by Qin Yi at a single glance?

"Senior brother, you misunderstand."

Su Ming's expression remained unchanged, his mind racing as he gave the safest explanation. "The Repair Hall usually repairs miscellaneous items for various peaks and has dealt with many damaged beast pens from the Spirit Beast Peak. This junior brother noticed that spirit beasts prefer tranquility over movement, gentleness over harshness. Therefore, when setting up the formation, I deliberately chose the mild variant runes of 'returning wind' and 'moistening things'. These are just rigid principles from books. This junior brother was merely copying them mechanically."

"Rigid principles from books, huh..."

Qin Yi looked deeply at Su Ming for a moment but did not pursue the matter further.

With a flick of his wrist, an exquisite porcelain bottle flew towards Su Ming.

"This is 'Beast Spirit Elixir'," Qin Yi said casually. "It greatly benefits the growth of spirit beasts. I see you carry a faint scent of plants and grass on you, junior brother. You must frequent the Spiritual Plant Garden often? If you ever have the fortune to obtain a spirit pet in the future, this elixir can help it gain intelligence."

Su Ming caught the porcelain bottle. It felt warm and smooth to the touch.

"Thank you, Senior Brother Qin, for bestowing this medicine." Su Ming bowed again, his posture impeccable.

Qin Yi nodded, then took a communication jade slip from his sleeve and handed it over. "The formations on the Spirit Beast Peak are mostly related to living creatures, complex and ever-changing. Those junior brothers from the Formation Peak often only understand static formations, not living beings. If you encounter any thorny problems in the future, I might still need Junior Brother Su's assistance. This is my communication imprint."

This was a formal gesture of friendship.

Su Ming received it with both hands and solemnly put it away.

Only after walking a long way from the Spirit Beast Peak did Lin Yu whistle in the consciousness sea. "This Qin Yi is a perceptive person. What he saw wasn't just your formation skill, but your philosophy of 'acting according to the momentum'."

...

Back in the stone chamber, Su Ming withdrew his thoughts and also took out that bottle of "Beast Spirit Elixir", placing it together with the "Beast Spirit Milk".

"Senior Brother Qin giving this elixir... there was more to his words."

Su Ming lightly tapped the table with his finger. "He said I 'currently have no spirit pet', yet he gave me an intelligence-opening elixir. Master, do you think he noticed something?"

"Noticed what? Noticed your master's handsome and dashing soul body?" Lin Yu snorted with laughter. "Don't scare yourself. At most, he thinks you are meticulous. Since you can take good care of snake eggs, raising a cat or dog in the future probably won't be a problem either. This is a long-term investment."

"I hope so." Su Ming put away the elixir.

Regardless of Qin Yi's deeper meaning, this connection had been established. But the most urgent matter at hand was still the issue of his Dao foundation.

"How is the intelligence gathering going?" Lin Yu asked.

Su Ming took out a stack of grass paper filled with writing from his storage pouch.

Over the past few days, using opportunities like going to the Spiritual Plant Garden to fertilize or to the Formation Peak to exchange materials, he had made indirect inquiries. He even spent contribution points at the Administration Hall to check publicly available medicinal herb charts. Finally, he had pieced together some intelligence regarding "repairing meridians and Dao foundation".

"The situation is not optimistic."

Su Ming pointed to the first line on the paper. "First is 'Earth Vein Spirit Milk'. This substance is produced from tens of thousands of zhang deep beneath the sect's main peak, condensed from the essence of the earth veins. It has miraculous effects on repairing meridian damage."

"Sounds good. What's the 'not optimistic' part?"

"This thing is considered a strategic resource of the sect." Su Ming smiled bitterly. "Only inner sect core disciples who have rendered great merit, or Golden Core elders, are qualified to apply for it. If using contribution points to exchange... one drop requires fifty thousand contribution points. And you have to queue. It's said the current waiting list is already five hundred years long."

"Five hundred years..." Lin Yu clicked his tongue. "You probably won't live that long. Next."

Su Ming pointed to the second line. "Aquamarine Jade Marrow. This is a heavenly treasure born in the extreme cold depths of the sea. Its nature is extremely gentle, capable of reshaping the Dao foundation and nurturing the Qihai. Its effect is better than Earth Vein Spirit Milk, and the side effects are smaller."

"Sounds reliable. Where can it be found?"

"Auction houses, or secret realms." Su Ming sighed. "This thing isn't under sect control, but precisely because of that, it's extremely scarce on the market. The last time it appeared was three years ago at the 'Myriad Treasures Pavilion' annual auction. A piece only the size of a thumb fetched a sky-high price of three thousand mid-grade spirit stones."

Three thousand mid-grade spirit stones.

Converted to low-grade spirit stones, that's three hundred thousand.

A suffocating silence fell over the stone chamber.

Su Ming looked at that string of numbers and felt his teeth ache.

All his current assets combined amounted to only a few hundred low-grade spirit stones. The gap between them was simply an insurmountable chasm.

"This is cultivation."

Lin Yu's voice sounded somewhat distant, carrying a trace of self-mockery. "Wealth, companionship, methods, location—wealth comes first. Without money, even your life isn't your own. Disciple, it seems our previous money-making speed was still too slow."

Su Ming silently nodded.

Relying on repairs, watering the Spiritual Plant Garden, even adding in refining waste materials... wanting to gather such a huge sum would take until the monkeys grow old and the horses grow horns. By then, the grass on his grave would probably be taller than a person.

"We need to find a way to open up new sources of income."

Su Ming's gaze fell on a corner of the stone table.

There, several tightly sealed ceramic jars were placed.

They were precisely the "waste soil" mixed with Heavy Water and fire poison he had brought back from the Spiritual Plant Garden a few days ago.

"Master, that 'Yin Thunder Pellet' you mentioned before..." Su Ming's voice was very low, his eyes flashing with a light called "ambition". "If we could refine them in batches, what level of power could they achieve?"

"That depends on your craftsmanship."

Lin Yu perked up, floating above the ceramic jars like a chemistry professor guiding an experiment. "The stuff in these jars right now is the rough form of 'Thunder Fire Sand'. The fire and water spiritual energy inside are in a delicate balance, like a tightly stretched rubber band."

"If..." Lin Yu extended a finger and drew a circle in the void. "...you use the penetrating force of the 'Like Water Art' to remove another thirty percent of the impurities inside, making the spiritual energy structure even purer. Then, carve an unstable 'burst'

character rune at the core. For the outer shell, use the Red Essence Copper you refined to make a 'fragmentation' structure..."

Lin Yu chuckled, his smile carrying a mischievous, trouble-stirring slyness. "One pellet going off would shatter the protective spiritual shield of a late-stage Qi Refining cultivator. A Qi Refining Perfection cultivator would be shaken for a good while. If you throw three or five together... hehe, below Foundation Establishment, all beings are equal."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

[ 1,049 words ]

Su Ming's breathing quickened slightly.

This kind of power, this kind of single-use consumable, was absolutely hard currency in the cultivation world.

Especially for those wandering cultivators who licked blood off knife blades year-round, or for sect disciples preparing to explore secret realms, this was practically a divine artifact for preserving life and turning the tables.

"But this thing is too dangerous and too ostentatious."

Su Ming quickly calmed down, his brow furrowing slightly. "If people found out I made it, the Vessel Hall bunch would probably be the first to jump out and cause trouble. It might even attract the Enforcement Hall's attention."

"Who told you to sell it directly?"

Lin Yu rolled his eyes. "We are the 'Repair Hall'; our main business is 'repairing.' We can sell 'spirit purification services' or go through black market channels. Besides, isn't that good brother of yours, Wang Defa, always looking for a chance to prove his loyalty? This kind of dirty, heavy work is the perfect time to test him."

Su Ming pondered for a moment, his fingers tapping rhythmically on the table.

Risk and reward always coexisted.

The injury to his Dao foundation couldn't be delayed; the three hundred thousand spirit stone deficit pressed down on his head like a mountain.

If he didn't take a gamble, he could only wait passively for death.

"Let's do it."

Su Ming suddenly looked up, a flash of determination in his eyes. "But we have to change the name. Can't call it 'Yin Thunder Pellets'; that sounds too demonic. Since it's made from the Spiritual Plant Garden's soil, with water and fire harmonized..."

The corner of his mouth lifted into a pure, harmless smile. "Let's call it 'Bumper Harvest No. 1' Soil Loosening Pills. A specialized agricultural tool for reclaiming wasteland and blasting apart stubborn rocks."

"...Your naming ability, this teacher concedes defeat." Lin Yu's mouth twitched. "What the hell kind of name is Soil Loosening Pills."

.....

Early the next morning, Repair Hall.

Wang Defa was leading several menial disciples in taking inventory of the worn-out magical implements recovered yesterday. Seeing Su Ming walk in, he hurriedly went to greet him.

"Hall Master, good morning!" Wang Defa beamed, his face glowing. Ever since following Su Ming, he had straightened his back even within the outer sect. Who wouldn't call him "Brother Fa" when they saw him?

Su Ming nodded, his gaze sweeping over everyone before finally settling on Wang Defa.

"Old Wang, come with me to the backyard."

Arriving in the backyard, Su Ming activated a soundproofing barrier.

Seeing this, Wang Defa's expression immediately turned serious, instinctively lowering his voice. "Hall Master, has something happened? Did those grandsons from the Vessel Hall come to cause trouble again?"

"It's not a bad thing; it's business."

Su Ming retrieved a newly refined, dark red sphere the size of a walnut from his sleeve.

The sphere's surface was rough, looking just like a lump of red mud that had been kneaded into a relatively round shape. It emitted no spiritual energy fluctuations, so ordinary that no one would pick it up if thrown by the roadside.

"This is?" Wang Defa took it, puzzled. It felt slightly heavy and a bit warm in his hand.

"This is a new... auxiliary tool our Repair Hall has developed."

Su Ming pointed at a large bluestone rock in the corner of the yard used for testing swords. "Stand back a bit and throw it at that rock. Remember, when you throw it, channel a wisp of spiritual energy to activate it."

Though Wang Defa didn't understand why, he never hesitated in carrying out Su Ming's orders.

He retreated five zhang as instructed, exhaled a wisp of spiritual energy, and flicked his wrist.

The "mud pill" traced a parabolic arc, landing precisely on the bluestone.

Boom!

A dull, explosive roar suddenly erupted.

There was no earth-shattering flash of light, only a dark red shockwave mixed with countless tiny fragments that instantly burst forth.

That bluestone, hard as iron and capable of withstanding chops from a low-grade magical implement, actually had a corner instantly blasted to pieces. Its surface was blown into a deep pit the size of a bowl, surrounded by dense, spiderweb-like cracks.

Even more terrifying was that the dust from the explosion seemed to carry a fire poison that caused one's spiritual energy to stagnate.

Wang Defa's mouth hung open, staring dumbfounded at the rock, then at his own hand.

That thing just now... was caused by that mud pill?

"This... this power..." Wang Defa's throat felt dry. "If it hit a person..."

"This is for blasting rocks."

Su Ming corrected him calmly. "Of course, if one encounters some unseeing demon beasts or certain cultivators with ill intentions, it can also be used to 'invite them to the other side.'"

He looked at Wang Defa, his gaze profound. "Old Wang, you've been around the outer sect for many years. You should be familiar with black market channels, right?"

Wang Defa's body shuddered.

Looking at Su Ming's young yet steady face, he suddenly understood that this Hall Master's ambitions were far from just repairs and patches.

This was a large ship.

A ship that could ride the wind and waves, but could also run aground and sink.

But Wang Defa didn't hesitate in the slightest. Having struggled at the bottom for so many years, he understood all too well how fleeting opportunities were.

"Familiar!"

Wang Defa gritted his teeth, a flash of ruthlessness in his eyes. "Hall Master, rest assured. How to sell this thing, who to sell it to, how to keep us clean—I, Wang Defa, know the ropes perfectly! Even if the Enforcement Hall investigates, they absolutely won't find a single hair from Clear Stream Valley!"

Su Ming nodded in satisfaction, patting Wang Defa on the shoulder.

"Good. This thing is called 'Bumper Harvest No. 1.' Remember, we are selling agricultural tools, delivering warmth to those hardworking wandering cultivator brothers reclaiming wasteland."

"Additionally," Su Ming changed the subject, "help me keep an eye out for any news on the market about 'Water Jade Marrow.' Even if it's fragments or just a clue, tell me immediately."

"Yes, sir!"

Wang Defa accepted the order and left, his steps heavier yet more resolute than when he arrived.

Su Ming stood in place, looking at the shattered bluestone, gently rubbing his fingers together.

"Master, the first step has been taken."

"Mmm, quite a stir." Lin Yu commented. "However, relying solely on these 'Soil Loosening Pills' to earn three hundred thousand is still a bit precarious. We still need to dig up something with higher added value."

Share to your friends

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

