

# Carefree Path of Dreams

## - Chapter 1: Fang Yuan |

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Clear Spirit Mountain.

These mountains went on for hundreds of kilometers, with its depths unknown, and its lands fertile. They were the lifeline of a mountain people.

At this moment, two figures were walking deeper into the mountains together. Regardless whether it was jagged rocks or thick foliage, they walked on with ease as though they were passing through an empty plain.

Before long, a valley appeared before them. The breath of the earth rose from the ground, mixing with wisps of mist, forming crystal-like dew on the green leaves. As sunlight struck the droplets, the colours of the rainbow shimmered in the air.

"Hmm...the breath of the earth rises, and it looks like springtime is permanent here. This is a decent place. Where is that guy?"

The man with a goatee, fierce eyebrows, and chicken claw-like hands asked.

He was clad in a long green robe, with a piercing look in his eyes and a sort of careless aura about him. The other middle aged minister could only smile while wiping the cold sweat on his face.

"Indeed... There's a separate sanctuary in this valley that was built by a good friend of mine. A virtuous young man lives there."

"You're still calling him virtuous at this point in time?"

The old man with a goatee asked coldly.

"Sigh... His master and I had decades of friendship between us after all. Moreover, I'll owe him one this time... Sigh..."

The minister's brows were furrowed as he gave multiple sighs.

While they spoke, the both of them had already entered the mountain valley.

This valley was not particularly large, but still had a sort of homely feel to it. A river flowed gently through the area, and its surroundings were quiet. In the centre, there was an extremely detailed haven which had tall hedges encircling it. In it grew some Vermillion Jade Rice. Each grain of rice appeared full of vitality and was also easy on the eyes.

"Oh... This courtyard, this land, they're all not bad... That old friend of yours must be quite generous. It's a pity that he's dead..."

The old man with the goatee shook his head.

"Master Wenxin isolated himself from civilisation, and did not bother himself with worldly affairs, but he was extremely well versed in medicine and botany. I only got acquainted with him by chance. That virtuous young man I spoke of was an orphan he adopted..."

The minister explained with a shrug.

Both of them continued ahead, before finally leaping over a hedge and knocking on a door.

\*Bang bang\*

The crisp sound echoed throughout the valley but there was no response.

"Hmm? No one is home?"

The minister was surprised and was even more so when the old man with the goatee barged right in.

"Hmph! Playing tricks with us?!"

Within, they found a rustic and simple layout. Other than some daily necessities, there was a small room as well. At the back of the building, there was a small door that led to a large flower garden.

A spring gurgled through the garden. The sound of flowing water merged with the beautiful, colourful flowers surrounding the spring to form a picturesque scene.

From behind a bunch of flowers, a youth stuck his head out.

"So it is Uncle Lin? Please wait for a moment! Let me finish planting this tea flower!"

He looked like he was 17 or 18, with eyes full of energy. His looks were very plain and ordinary, and he wore clothes made of rough cloth. At this moment, his sleeves were rolled up, and the hem of his pants was stained with dirt, just like a professional farmer.

"Oh, Fang Yuan, just tend to your chores first, I'm not in a hurry!"

Perhaps Minister Lin felt a little guilty, which was why he laughed sheepishly while speaking.

Planting tea plants was an art, especially for this tea flower which preferred a cool environment and did not grow well in hot areas. Thus Fang Yuan found a cool corner near the spring, and carefully placing it into the soil.

First, one had to loosen the soil, immediately water it and add fertiliser. Watering had to be done with water from a mountain spring that had been left to sit still for two days. As he executed these steps, Fang Yuan did not move quickly, instead using 100% of his focus, making people feel like they were watching an art performance.

Once everything was completed, Fang Yuan returned to the side of the spring, washing his hands and feet clean of dirt.

The spring water originated from an underwater source, so it was cool but yet not chillingly cold. It was perfect.

After cleaning up, Fang Yuan walked into the house, to face an old man with an unhappy look.

"Uncle Lin, who is this?"

He asked with a puzzled look on his face.

"Ah... Let me introduce you to him!"

Minister Lin broke into a chuckle, "This is Spirit Returning Sect's Outer Sect Deacon, Cold Iron Eagle Yu Qiuleng...Leiyue has just joined this sect..."

"Greetings Mister Yu!"

Fang Yuan broke into a big smile as he greeted his new acquaintance.

"Hmph! You savage mountain men do not know your manners indeed. I've waited for half a day, yet there hasn't been even a cup of tea!"

Yu Qiuleng snorted. If it weren't for Minister Lin holding him back from the side, he really wanted to teach this brat a lesson.

"I'm sorry, my humble abode is rather run down, hence it held me back from serving you on time..."

As for this, Fang Yuan raised his eyebrows and replied casually, before looking towards Minister Lin.

"Uncle Lin, what's the purpose of your visit?"

"Well...this...."

Minister Lin stammered a little, and only a long while later did he speak properly, face as red as a beetroot.

"Lei Yue entered the Spirit Returning Sect, which is one of the top sects within a 100 mile radius, and also has a Wu Zong in it. The sect head tested Leiyue's aptitude and liked what he saw, so he took her in as a direct disciple. Now she will only learn the sect head's martial arts, and must be of pure yin, hence... your marriage with Leiyue..."

"Hmph!"

At this moment, Yu Qiuleng spoke, "Miss Leiyue is a valued disciple of my sect head, with exceptional aptitude. She'll possibly be able to advance to Wu Zong in the future..."

He did not continue speaking, but the idea of a toad lusting after a swan's flesh [1] still seemed to make its way across the room.

"Oh! So that's it!"

Fang Yuan took in a deep breath, and slowly replied, "Both of you, please wait a moment."

He then stood up and walked into the house.

"Hmm?"

This reaction caught Minister Lin completely off guard.

He was sure that if he had met with such an incident when he was younger, he would definitely not have been able to keep his cool.

"Could he be preparing to wage an all-out war on us?"

Minister Lin was a little scared and looked at Yu Qiuleng at his side. Yu Qiuleng shot a glance over, making his intentions clear.

Even if this youth wanted to pull a 'panicking dog jumping over a wall' [3], he wouldn't be a match for this cold-faced iron eagle.

"Uncle Lin!"

The door to the hut burst open, and Fang Yuan walked over, holding a wooden box in his hand.

"This is the marriage certificate for Miss Leiyue and myself. Since we got engaged, I've thought about this a few times, and I realised that I can't compare to Miss Leiyue. Since Uncle Lin could come today, you're actually helping me to resolve an issue that has been on my mind for some time."

"Huh?"

Minister Lin received the box while in shock, and after he opened it he saw the marriage certificate. It was real.

Never did he expect things to go so smoothly, and he froze there for a moment, confused.

However, Yu Qiuleng stood up and walked off with a 'at least you know your place' look in his eyes.

"Sigh... Fang Yuan, I won't say much about anything else. You and Leiyue really are not fated to be together... This is a small gift, please take it!"

Minister Lin took out a small package while red-faced.

"Since it is a gift from Uncle, then I'll accept it graciously."

Fang Yuan couldn't see what was inside either, and just accepted the gift.

"Good! Good!"

The calmer Fang Yuan was, the more uneasy Minister Lin felt. He pulled Yu Qiuleng away and left swiftly.

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"Hmm, it's the deed to the land for the entire secluded valley. So Minister Lin could actually pull strings to get this. He's actually quite generous."

After the both of them left, Fang Yuan opened up the package to see a title deed, a few pieces of gold and silver, and a jade bottle.

He naturally knew that this Minister Lin set up the arranged marriage between Leiyue and himself because Master Wenxin had saved Minister Lin's life before.

But now that Fang Yuan's backer had fallen, and the girl had climbed to a much higher position, being able to discuss the marriage annulment amicably instead of falling out was already a blessing.

In reality, he didn't have much of a choice.

That was why he received their compensation gracefully. Otherwise, there would only be hate and anger, which could easily land him in more trouble.

"Instead of agreeing, should I have shouted back and eventually get eliminated in an attempt to remove any future threats?"

Fang Yuan chuckled as he mumbled to himself.

Thankfully, he was an optimistic person and had only met with Leiyue only a few times, so there wasn't any love between them.

As for humiliation, reputation, etcetera...

For a person that lived isolated in the woods, could those mountain chickens and rabbits laugh at him?

As long as he didn't care about it, his reputation in the outside world was but a strand in the wind. Nothing to worry about.

Since he wasn't afraid of losing face, not taking the compensation from the girl's party would be simply a waste.

"Eh? Vermillion Jade Seeds?"

Upon closer inspection after opening the jade bottle, he exclaimed in surprise.

Inside the jade bottle, there were little grains as shiny as jade, round and full, in a beautiful shade of vermillion. They had a fiery aura about them, potentially making people salivate while gazing upon them.

This was a valuable spiritual plant that Fang Yuan had been searching for since a long time ago. He had requested for it from Minister Lin before, and he had finally gotten it.

"Mhmm, this Vermillion Jade Rice is of the yang element, but has to be planted during a yin period [4]. I'll plant them in that newly cleared patch of land tonight..."

Fang Yuan gazed at the jade bottle one more, with a silly smile on his face.

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Outside of the valley.

"Sigh..."

Minister Lin let out a long sigh. Although he had set his mind on this a long time ago, when he saw Fang Yuan's classy and unyielding attitude today, he couldn't help but feel a tinge of regret.

"What is it? Minister Lin is troubled?"

Yu Qiuleng laughed beside him.

"The marriage has been annulled, and he has accepted the compensation. Even if he decides to cause trouble in the future, we will have the moral high ground... Of course, if you're still worried, I can go back and eliminate this problem."

"No No!"

Waving both of his hands, Minister Lin protested, "I just feel that Fang Yuan is really a decent chap, it's a pity that Leiyue..."

"Hmph, if that daughter of yours becomes a Wu Zong in the future, she'll be able to choose any young man she wants, so why should you keep thinking about a mere mountain boy?"

Lei Qiuleng sarcastically remarked.

"Of course, if you still find it a pity, you can get another one of your daughters to marry him! As long as it's not Miss Leiyue, our sect head won't care."

"Sigh..... Since this has already happened, how would I still have the face to bring it up..."

Minister Lin sighed again and picked up his pace.

The two of them walked on further into the distance until they vanished beyond the mountains.

[1] This is a Chinese idiom, which refers to someone very undeserving or under qualified yearning for something that is beyond his reach.

[2] It refers to a cornered person acting out of desperation

[3] Yin and Yang, a Chinese philosophical concept. The yin element is negative/passive/female in nature while the yang element is positive/active/male in nature. Both complement each other in order to become whole.