

Doctor 161

Chapter 161: Mysterious Pit

"You... How can you help..."

Xia Chenyu felt Fang Bai's sincere care, a tender spot in her heart was touched, and her nose tingled slightly.

"In this card, there's over two hundred million, of which I plan to lend you two hundred million."

Fang Bai took out a bank card from his person, waving it in front of the dazed Xia Chenyu, then continued, "Also, I have prepared three traditional Chinese medicine formulas for beauty and skincare products for you. Take them back, find someone to develop them, and once they're successful, you can introduce them to the market..."

He paused at this juncture, waiting for Xia Chenyu to digest his words, then added, "All three formulas were imparted to me by a master; they're each for whitening skin, eliminating acne, and removing scars, with significant effects. You must keep them safe. Whether your 'Beauty Company' can rise again and even surpass the Shen Family's 'Belle Group' depends on them."

Xia Chenyu stared at the bank card in Fang Bai's hand, feeling as if she was hallucinating and asked in disbelief, "Where did you get two hundred million from? And those formulas... are they real?"

"You don't need to ask about the money. The formulas are definitely real. In short, if you're willing to trust me, take the money and formulas and go back to work. If not... then pretend I never said anything."

Xia Chenyu chose to trust Fang Bai—in fact, other than trusting him, she had no other options.

And Fang Bai very soon transferred the money he borrowed from Su Yifei to Xia Chenyu, and while he was at it, handed over the three written formulas to her, once again reminding her to keep them safe.

Carrying the money and formulas she received from Fang Bai, Xia Chenyu left Yanjing that very day and returned to Zhongzhou.

Before departing, Xia Chenyu insisted on writing an IOU for Fang Bai and joked, "If my company goes bankrupt and I can't pay you back, I'll just repay you with myself! I'm delicate and soft and can warm your bed, I'll definitely be useful as a maid for you to order around!"

Three days after Xia Chenyu left Yanjing, in the early morning, a tremor occurred in the deep mountains north of Yanjing.

However, this tremor was imperceptible, the majority of Yanjing's citizens didn't even feel it—only some government monitoring agencies and a very limited number of special individuals sensed it.

These "special individuals" referred to martial artists with senses much sharper than ordinary people, or those who were born with special abilities.

Among them was, naturally, Fang Bai.

The quake happened around five in the morning, just when Fang Bai was cultivating in the mountains, and he wasn't far from the epicenter.

Fang Bai wasn't panicked by the tremor; on the contrary, he was overwhelmingly excited.

As the tremor that lasted several seconds ceased, Fang Bai discovered that the concentration of True Yuan in these mountains seemed to be increasing gradually, as if Essence Energy was spilling out from the source of the tremor.

Fang Bai looked intently in the direction of the epicenter, wondering what exactly had happened there.

The overflow of Essence Energy typically indicated one of two possibilities: either a treasure had emerged, or an Essence Stone Vein had been exposed.

Thrilled, Fang Bai stopped his cultivation, leaped down from the mountain peak, and employed his movement technique to fly toward the source of the tremor.

Though the place Fang Bai practiced was rarely visited by anyone, the epicenter of the tremor was even deeper in the heart of the mountain range.

Despite Fang Bai's swift movement technique, navigating through layers of mountains and over countless deep ravines presented some challenges. It took him half a day to travel over two hundred li and reach the location of the epicenter.

Standing atop a tall ridge and looking down, Fang Bai saw a vast, empty space between two mountain ranges, in which there appeared a huge, circular pit with a diameter of fifty meters that descended into unfathomable depths.

The Essence Energy that permeated this mountain area was overflowing from that enormous pit.

"Such a rich presence of Essence Energy indicates that beneath that pit lies either a precious treasure emerging or a massive Essence Stone Vein."

Fang Bai was so excited he could hardly contain himself; whether it was treasure or an Essence Stone Vein below the pit, it was of great significance to him and could substantially enhance his strength.

Just as Fang Bai was preparing to leap down into the pit to explore the depths, he was suddenly overcome with a sense of alertness.

He crouched low, hiding himself in dense weeds, concealing his aura completely, and then stared intently toward the northwest.

Moments later, dozens of figures skimmed through the air from the northwest, coming into Fang Bai's view.

From their movement technique and speed, Fang Bai could tell that they were all martial artists, and their strengths were not weak.

Indeed, as the distance between them closed a bit more, Fang Bai could sense the martial artist aura emanating from them, with the weakest among them being a Profound Level early-stage Martial Artist.

Seeing that these martial artists were heading towards the very same great pit in front of him, Fang Bai couldn't help but smile bitterly and shake his head.

Clearly, like him, they had sensed the waves of Essence Energy from the bottom of the pit and wanted to seek out the treasure, each hoping to claim their share.

Fang Bai watching these martial artists thought back to the time at Fuhu Mountain when he competed with disciples from Shaolin Temple, Qingcheng Temple, Misty Rain Tower, and Myriad Medicine Valley for the treasures left by a Heaven Level Martial Artist.

The only difference was that, back then, the strongest among the disciples of the four sects at Qingcheng Temple were four early-stage Profound Level Martial Artists; whereas the group before him now, although fewer in number, were considerably more powerful.

Though Fang Bai's strength had grown much since the battle at Fuhu Mountain, to snatch the treasure from the hands of these dozens of people by himself was outright impossible.

But it was equally impossible for Fang Bai to simply leave and give up on competing for the treasure.

Fang Bai silently prayed that these martial artists would repeat the scenario from Fuhu Mountain, fighting amongst themselves over the uneven division of spoils after obtaining the treasure, allowing him to appear at the right moment and gain an easy advantage.

Therefore, Fang Bai decided to do as he had done during the battle at Fuhu Mountain: remain concealed and wait for an opportunity to make his move.

The dozens of martial artists, with their robes billowing and whistling through the air, drew closer to the pit. Through a gap in the grass, Fang Bai could already make out some of their features and attire.

From their clothing, Fang Bai deduced that among them were disciples from Shaolin Temple, Qingcheng Temple, and Misty Rain Tower; the four sects that had competed at Fuhu Mountain for the Heaven Level Martial Artist's treasure, with only Myriad Medicine Valley missing.

Because of Ghost Hand, Fang Bai had no ill feelings toward Myriad Medicine Valley. He thought it curious that the disciples of the three sects he had previously encountered had all arrived, yet there was no sign of Myriad Medicine Valley; could it be that they were diligently cultivating in possession of some Heaven Level Martial Artist's treasures?

Among those dozens of martial artists, apart from the disciples from Shaolin Temple, Qingcheng Temple, and Misty Rain Tower, there were at least six or seven other sects represented, even including a few Individual Cultivation Martial Artists with no affiliation.

Upon reaching the edge of the pit, those martial artists looked around for a moment before some, unable to wait any longer, swiftly slid toward the bottom of the pit using tools they carried and the thick vines hanging into it, as agile as monkeys.

Chapter 162: Secrets at the Bottom of the Pit

Fang Bai could determine that the immense Heavenly Pit had appeared only after the tremor occurred, yet what puzzled him was the sight of those martial artists, each fully prepared as if they had anticipated something beforehand.

Upon reflection, Fang Bai considered that perhaps some martial artists had often frequented this mountainous area, sensed the dense Essence Energy here, and deduced that treasures might be hidden, thus having readied themselves for exploration early on.

Although Fang Bai had also been cultivating in the mountains for a long time, he had never ventured deep into the hinterlands, so he was clueless about any abnormalities before the Heavenly Pit emerged.

Had it not been for the slight tremor earlier that attracted Fang Bai, he would have missed the opportunity to participate in the competition for the treasure.

With someone taking the lead to enter the Heavenly Pit, others, fearing they'd fall behind, followed suit in succession.

In a brief moment, dozens of martial artists had vanished from the edge of the Heavenly Pit, descending toward its bottom to search.

Fang Bai surveyed from the bushes for a short while, ensuring no other martial artists were approaching, before he finally let down his guard and used his movement technique to reach the edge of the pit.

He glanced down and couldn't help but suck in a breath of cold air.

The Heavenly Pit was like a bottomless hole, and although sunlight reached it, the place became pitch black after descending several dozen meters, obscuring any view of its depths, leaving its true depth unknown.

Fang Bai pricked up his ears and listened intently, but could hear no activity from the bottom of the pit. Clearly, the dozens of martial artists who had gone down earlier were now beyond the range of Fang Bai's senses.

This discovery left Fang Bai astonished; with his current hearing ability, no rustling of grass within two to three hundred meters could escape his ears. Could it be that the depth of the Heavenly Pit exceeded two to three hundred meters?

Unfamiliar with the conditions at the bottom of the pit, Fang Bai didn't dare to descend rashly, so he waited patiently outside.

Only when the sun had set and the sky had dimmed did Fang Bai, who had been guarding the edge, start to hear some noise, likely from those martial artists climbing back up.

This time, Fang Bai didn't retreat far, but instead hid in a patch of bushes a hundred meters away, thinking that as long as he was cautious, he wouldn't be discovered. And even if he was, no one could catch up with him if he chose to run.

Before long, shadows leapt up from the pit, the very martial artists who had descended earlier.

What surprised Fang Bai was that while there were sixty to seventy people who went down, only thirty to forty came back up, and half of them bore wounds and bloodstains, while the rest were also in disarray and looked quite wretched.

Seeing this, Fang Bai deduced that those martial artists had gone through a fierce battle at the bottom of the Heavenly Pit. As for who their opponents were, Fang Bai was uncertain, but it certainly didn't look like infighting had occurred.

Fang Bai pondered and felt that those martial artists must have encountered an extremely precious treasure at the bottom of the pit.

This was because precious treasures were usually guarded by spirit beasts.

The more valuable the treasure, the more formidable the spirit beast guarding it. Perhaps those martial artists had clashed with the spirit beast guarding the treasure and suffered heavy losses, returning without success.

At this thought, Fang Bai was both delighted and concerned.

Delighted because those martial artists hadn't obtained the treasure, meaning he still had a chance.

Concerned because if those martial artists couldn't overcome the guardian spirit beast together, his hope of braving it alone was even slimmer.

"Damn it, thought there'd be some treasure down there, but it turned out to be just a broken cauldron, causing me to make a wasted trip and even get injured!"

"Your injuries are still okay; my neck was almost bitten off!"

"That Lightning Mink was really damn powerful! Its attack power is a bit stronger than a high rank Profound Level martial artist, and its speed is astonishingly fast!"

"Alas, we didn't manage to get anything this time, and our losses are severe! It's going to be a huge joke when word gets out!"

"Six of us from 'Misty Rain Tower' came, and now only I and Junior Brother Yu are left! Damn it, an unavenged insult is not a gentleman's deed, we must catch that Lightning Mink and skin it alive!"

"If we could make that Lightning Mink our pet, it would be an enormous boost to our strength!"

"Dream on, that Lightning Mink is even slightly stronger than you, Taoist Qingling. Do you really think you can tame it?"

"I think there's something unusual about that cauldron... Otherwise, why would there be such a powerful Lightning Mink guarding it?"

"Regardless of whether it's a treasure or not, I'm not planning to go down there again. Whoever wants to go can go!"

"Let's do this: we'll leave some people here to guard the place, while the rest of us retreat and call for more allies to come and explore again."

"That's the only way..."

The martial artists who had climbed up from the Heavenly Pit gathered around its edge, some healing and regulating their breath, others speaking in low tones. Seeing that it had turned dark, they left four Yellow Level High Rank Martial Artists to guard the pit while the others departed the way they had come.

Hidden in the grass a hundred meters away, Fang Bai overheard all of their conversation.

When he heard them mention the "broken cauldron" and the "Lightning Mink," Fang Bai felt a stirring in his heart.

If the Essence Energy of this mountain region was emanating from that cauldron, then it was definitely a very powerful Spiritual Artifact.

In the world Fang Bai had been reborn from, cauldrons were usually used for two purposes, as a Spiritual Artifact for attack and defense, and for concocting Elixirs.

No matter the use, as long as it was a Spiritual Artifact, Fang Bai would find a way to make it his own.

There was no helping it, who could blame him when Cultivation Resources in this world were so extremely scarce?

Even the Red Essence Stones, which Fang Bai wouldn't have even glanced at in his previous life, were now treated as rare treasures here.

After watching the gang of martial artists disappear from sight, Fang Bai picked up a handful of dust and smeared it across his face as a simple disguise. Then he rose from the grass and walked casually towards the edge of the Heavenly Pit.

Fang Bai decided to descend into the bottom of the Heavenly Pit himself to have a look, even though those martial artists had spoken highly of the Lightning Mink down there, he felt confident in his ability to protect himself.

As for the four Yellow Level High Rank Martial Artists left to guard the edge of the Heavenly Pit, Fang Bai didn't consider them a threat at all.

"Who goes there?"

As soon as Fang Bai appeared, the four guarding martial artists spotted him. They stood side by side, watching Fang Bai with a vigilant expression.

Now that the sky was completely dark, and with Fang Bai's face smeared with dust, even though the moon and stars shone brightly, the four martial artists couldn't make out Fang Bai's true appearance.

Fang Bai didn't even bother with them and walked straight to the edge of the pit, peered down, then kicked a stone into the pit and listened intently for any sound.

A moment later, he heard the faint noise of the stone hitting the bottom, and Fang Bai's expression turned grave as he muttered to himself, "The depth is definitely over three hundred meters, almost four or five hundred meters..."

"Damn it, are you deaf? Didn't you hear us asking you a question?"

The four Yellow Level High Rank Martial Artists, seeing Fang Bai completely ignore them as if they were thin air, were infuriated and surrounded him, cursing and swearing.

Chapter 163: Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron

Fang Bai glanced at the four men, grinned, and suddenly, like an arrow released from its bow, burst into their midst. With quick strikes of his palms before they could react, he had knocked them to the ground.

Fang Bai didn't kill them, but merely knocked them out, making sure they would sleep soundly throughout the entire day.

He tossed the unconscious men casually into the nearby bushes, then took one of their climbing tools. Using the stout vines to descend into the depths of the Heavenly Pit, Fang Bai began his careful slide down.

Although Fang Bai's eyesight was exceptionally good, it was now dark, and he could only clearly see things within fifty meters. Beyond that distance, it was all unknown territory to him.

Thus, as he descended, Fang Bai was completely focused and cautious, not daring to be careless in the slightest.

Before, Fang Bai had heard the martial artists say that at the bottom of the Heavenly Pit, there lived a Lightning Mink with the strength of a High Rank Profound Level Martial Artist. Although Fang Bai was not afraid, this was the Lightning Mink's territory, and a sudden attack from it could still cause him some trouble.

It took a full half-hour before Fang Bai's feet finally touched the ground.

The ground was uneven, full of pits and bumps, with patches of water, weeds, and chunks of collapsed stones. Without good eyesight, one would find it extremely difficult to move around here.

Fang Bai stood firm on a large rock and looked around. He noticed a huge opening on the north side of the bottom of the Heavenly Pit, and there was a faint light emanating from within the cave.

Following the light, Fang Bai entered the cave, moving slowly inward. After about a hundred or two hundred meters, the space suddenly opened up into an area nearly a kilometer in radius.

This space must have been naturally formed, and once habited by others. Years passed, and it was deeply buried underground. If not for a recent tremor, it may have never been revealed to the world again.

Embedded in the walls of the space were luminous pearls the size of chicken eggs. Fang Bai glanced at them and knew there were exactly eighty-one pearls.

The quality of these luminous pearls was exceptional, nearly all transparent and extraordinarily beautiful. Each one radiated a clear and soft light, illuminating the nearly kilometer-wide space as if it were daylight.

The most amazing thing was that each of these eighty-one luminous pearls contained a trace of weak Essence Energy, confirming they were not man-made but purely natural.

Although Fang Bai was unaware of the market price for luminous pearls in this world, he was certain that if these were auctioned off, they would fetch a very high price.

In the exact center of the space stood a person-high Great Cauldron, made from a material that emitted white, green, black, red, and yellow hues. It appeared ancient and substantial, exuding an aura of a bygone era.

And the Essence Energy that permeated the mountain range was being emitted from this Great Cauldron.

Fang Bai circled the Great Cauldron from a distance, inspecting it closely. Finally, he found five ancient seal characters inscribed on the body of the cauldron, spelling "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron".

"Five Elements... Origin Qi..."

Fang Bai murmured these words, his eyes growing brighter.

The term "Five Elements" refers to metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

Regarding "Origin Qi," in the relationship of "Five Elements producing each other," the one that produces is known as the origin qi. For example, if wood produces fire, then wood is the origin qi of fire.

In Fang Bai's view, if he could obtain the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron," it would make the process of concocting elixirs not only easier and more efficient but also enhance the quality of the elixirs by several times and significantly improve the success rate of formation.

Although the ninety-nine Luminous Pearls embedded in the surrounding rock walls were very eye-catching and valuable, they paled in comparison to the appeal of the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" for Fang Bai.

Besides the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" and the ninety-nine Luminous Pearls, what was most eye-catching were the dozens of Martial Artist corpses lying on the ground.

The corpses of those Martial Artists, some lying beside the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron," others in front of the Luminous Pearls, evidently tried to touch those items in their lifetimes and were killed as a result.

There were numerous wounds on their bodies, but what ultimately killed them was a wound on their throats.

"Could all these dozens of Profound Level Martial Artists have been killed by that Lightning Mink?"

Fang Bai's gaze swept over the dozens of Martial Artist corpses on the ground, his back feeling a chill. His eyes quickly darted around as he elevated his sensory perception to the utmost, attempting to locate the Lightning Mink.

If that Lightning Mink was indeed the guardian Spirit Beast of this place, then it would certainly be hiding somewhere in this cave, eyeing him with covetous intent.

Until he found the exact location of the Lightning Mink, Fang Bai did not dare to touch those Luminous Pearls or the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron."

Soon, Fang Bai sensed a whiff of danger emanating from within the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron."

Fang Bai raised his eyebrows, took two steps closer, and then whistled clearly and sharply.

In his previous life, Fang Bai had studied the "Beast Taming Scripture" and was proficient in the Beast Taming Art. He had even tamed immensely powerful Immortal Beasts.

If this cave's Lightning Mink was indeed as the other Martial Artists had said, only equivalent in strength to a High Rank Profound Level Martial Artist, it would be considered merely an animal with a bit of intelligence, not a true Spirit Beast.

Unless it could, like Martial Artists, advance to the Innate Realm and develop Divine Sense, it would then be considered a true Spirit Beast.

Fang Bai, currently at a low realm and without Divine Sense, was unable to tame the Lightning Mink, even though he was proficient in the "Beast Taming Scripture."

However, Fang Bai was able to use the animal language of the "Beast Taming Scripture" to communicate with those animals that had spawned intelligence.

The clear whistle fluctuated in pitch, as if conveying something, echoing endlessly in the cave.

Suddenly, a Lightning Mink the size of a palm, covered with snow-white fur, turned into a white streak and leaped out from within the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron," landing atop one of the cauldron's ears.

The Lightning Mink's pair of glossy black eyes emitted an almost human-like glint, mixed with wariness and ferocity. Its mouth issued a sharp "whistle" as if to warn Fang Bai not to come near the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron."

This Lightning Mink was originally an ordinary Little Mink in the mountains. Later, it discovered the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" and settled within it, basking daily in the Essence Energy inside the cauldron. Over time, it developed intelligence and evolved towards being a Spirit Beast.

The Martial Artists who had descended to the bottom of the Heavenly Pit earlier, upon arriving in this cave and seeing the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" and those Luminous Pearls, had rushed over impatiently to fight for possession, seeking to claim them as their own, consequently enraging the Lightning Mink.

Chapter 164: Lightning Mink

Despite its small size, the Lightning Mink possessed an incredibly powerful attack, and with its mystically fast speed, it managed to kill nearly half of the dozens of Profound Level Martial Artists, forcing the remaining ones to retreat from the battle and leave the Heavenly Pit, shocked and frightened.

Fang Bai saw that the Lightning Mink didn't immediately launch an attack on him. A glint of joy sparked in his heart, a smile spread across his face, and he began to communicate with the Lightning Mink in a "friendly" manner, his roar turning slow and peaceful.

Human beings have their language, and beasts have theirs; Fang Bai's roar was the equivalent of the language of beasts.

The Lightning Mink had guarded this cave in the Heavenly Pit for many years and was both surprised and excited to finally encounter a different species that could communicate with it. It responded to Fang Bai's roars in kind.

The exchange of sounds between man and beast was at times intense and at other times gentle. Eventually, the wary and ferocious light in the Lightning Mink's eyes began to fade, replaced by a fiery warmth and affection.

The reason for the Lightning Mink's drastic change in attitude toward Fang Bai was that Fang Bai had painted a beautiful future for it and promised to help it achieve that future.

"Although you have awakened your intelligence, you can only be considered a Pseudo-Spirit Beast. If you don't reach the Innate Realm to become a genuine Spirit Beast within a hundred years, you will still age and die like other animals..."

"Do you want to become a real Spirit Beast? Do you want to evolve from a Spirit Beast into an Immortal Beast? Do you want to become an eternal Divine Beast? If you believe in me, follow me, and I can help you..."

"I will take you to search for Spiritual Medicines, Essence Stones, and other treasures, teach you Cultivation Techniques to absorb the Heaven and Earth Origin Energy, and you will become more and more powerful. One day, you'll have the power to destroy both heaven and earth, and become the King of Beasts, the Divine Beast..."

This was how Fang Bai continuously threw out one bait after another to the Lightning Mink.

Both humans and beasts with awakened intelligence have a great fear of death and aspire to transcend the cycle of life and death, to be immortal.

Therefore, the Lightning Mink simply could not resist the baits thrown out by Fang Bai.

Moreover, from Fang Bai, the Lightning Mink sensed a unique and powerful aura, and with Fang Bai's ability to communicate with the beasts through the "Beast Taming Scripture," it recognized Fang Bai as an extraordinary human, believing he could bring it greater strength and a longer life.

As Fang Bai spoke at length, the Lightning Mink's gaze grew brighter and hotter.

It jumped from the ear of the cauldron to the ground, then slowly moved closer to Fang Bai's feet, and finally leaped onto Fang Bai's shoulder, its fluffy body rubbing affectionately against Fang Bai's face, exhibiting a sycophantic and flattering demeanor.

In his past life, Fang Bai had dealt with various Spirit Beasts and Immortal Beasts, understanding their nature well. He knew this small Lightning Mink would find it difficult to resist the bait he had offered, and seeing it indeed "surrender," he laughed heartily and stroked its body.

The Lightning Mink lingered affectionately on Fang Bai for a while, and then suddenly let out a low roar, transforming into a streak of white light and darting back into the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron."

Fang Bai knew the Lightning Mink wanted to give him a "welcoming gift," so he stood smiling without moving, curious to see what treasure the Lightning Mink would bring out of the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" for him.

Soon enough, the Lightning Mink popped its head out and leaped back onto Fang Bai's shoulder, its front paws holding a tiny ring.

The ring was pitch-black with specks of gold glimmering within; it seemed unremarkable at a glance, and there were some odd patterns etched on it.

"This is... a Spatial Ring?"

Fang Bai took the black ring from the Lightning Mink's front paws and examined it closely, his eyes suddenly bulging out wide, his face betraying a wildly ecstatic expression.

He had not expected that in this world not only did such Spiritual Artifacts as the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" exist, but so did Spatial Rings.

It seems that this world is not as simple as it appears on the surface, and perhaps there are many hidden secrets yet to be discovered.

A Space Ring is one type of storage spirit device, which is usually forged by fusing Space Stones with Fine Gold and supplemented by a spatial formation, with none of the three being dispensable.

The Space Ring in Fang Bai's hand is thoroughly black because it contains a large proportion of Space Stone.

The specks of golden light within it are due to the integration of a portion of Fine Gold.

The strange lines on the ring are actually a set of spatial formations engraved on it.

Only those who are well-versed in the spatial formations inscribed upon the ring can freely access items stored within the Space Ring.

Since Fang Bai has not yet cultivated his Divine Sense, to inspect what exactly is inside this Space Ring, he could only resort to the most primitive, simplest, and crudest method—forcibly erasing the spatial formation engraved on the ring.

The spatial formation inscribed on this ring was not complicated; Fang Bai took only a few minutes to successfully break the formation, then poured out all the items inside.

The ring's space, though not large, was also not small—it was about twenty square units in area, approximately the size of a normal living room.

Yet in this modest space, there turned out to be an impressive number of treasures. When Fang Bai poured everything out, his eyes nearly popped out of their sockets.

One bottle of Marrow Cleansing Pills, one bottle of Youth Retaining Pills, one bottle of Creation Pills; more than a hundred strands of rare medicinal herbs; hundreds of Red and Orange Essence Stones...

Although the Elixirs were low-grade, the herbs only a few hundred years old, and the Essence Stones not of high quality, these Cultivation Resources were precisely what Fang Bai currently needed and suited him best.

With these Cultivation Resources, Fang Bai would not have to worry about them for a short while.

"Since you've decided to go with me, let's take all these things as well; we can't let others benefit from them!"

As he spoke, Fang Bai picked up the treasures from the ground and packed them back into the Spatial Ring, along with the "Five Elements Origin Qi Cauldron" and the eighty-one Luminous Pearls on the walls, storing them all in the ring.

After making sure there were no other items of value left in the cave, Fang Bai, together with the Lightning Marten, made his way back following the same path and left the Heavenly Pit.

Fang Bai knew that the Martial Artists would likely return, and thinking it unwise to stay longer, he made his way back to the courtyard he rented under the light of the stars and moon.

By the time he returned to the courtyard, the night was deep. Fang Bai did not disturb Jiang Yuzhi and her daughter Baili Mingyue; he simply leapt over the courtyard wall and went inside.

Upon entering his room, Fang Bai found a paper box, laid some soft bedding inside, and then stuffed a few Essence Stones into it, making it a resting place for the Lightning Marten from now on.

Thinking there was still some space left in the Space Ring, Fang Bai also placed the "Gathering Yuan Pills" and Red Essence Stones, as well as the Five Elements Acupuncture Set that he had obtained from Fuhu Mountain, inside it.

The original spatial formation on this Space Ring had been decrypted by Fang Bai at the bottom of the Heavenly Pit, and now he had inscribed a new set of even more intricate and subtle formations on it.

This way, even if someone else were to acquire Fang Bai's Space Ring, it would be very difficult for them to break the formation and access the items inside.

As for Fang Bai himself, he could easily take out whatever he needed from the ring, as simply as reaching into a bag to retrieve an item.

Chapter 165: Accumulating Essence Realm Perfection

After sitting cross-legged in his room and adjusting his breath throughout the night, Fang Bai took the Lightning Marten with him to cultivate in the mountains the next day before dawn, when the sky was still dark.

On their way to the mountain area, the Lightning Marten stood on Fang Bai's shoulder, bracing against the wind, no matter how intensely Fang Bai ran, it stood firm and steady.

Along the way, they encountered some ordinary early morning exercise enthusiasts who were quite intrigued when they saw the Lightning Marten perched on Fang Bai's shoulder, inevitably pointing and commenting.

Before setting out, Fang Bai had already warned the Lightning Marten not to hurt anyone without his permission.

The Lightning Marten was very obedient, standing honestly on Fang Bai's shoulder, appearing docile and well-behaved.

To avoid encountering the martial artists from yesterday in the mountains, Fang Bai did not venture deep into the mountain interior but instead climbed to the top of a steep peak on the edge of the mountainous area to practice his cultivation.

Before starting his cultivation, Fang Bai saw the Lightning Marten come up to his feet, looking to please him, so he used the "Beast Taming Scripture" to communicate with it and passed on a Heaven and Earth Origin Energy Breathing Technique suitable for spirit beasts.

As for how much the Lightning Marten could comprehend, that would depend on its own bloodline quality and its fate and fortune.

Fang Bai had promised the Lightning Marten that he would make it stronger and extend its life, but if the Lightning Marten's bloodline was not good and its wuxing was not high, its ultimate achievements might not be too great.

By that time, Fang Bai could only wait until his own strength increased before finding ways to help the Lightning Marten enhance its power.

The Lightning Marten learned the Heaven and Earth Origin Energy Breathing Technique from Fang Bai and had swallowed a Marrow Cleansing Pill and a Creation Pill he gave it, so it no longer bothered Fang Bai.

It closed its eyes and lay quietly on a rock, facing the sunrise, and began to cultivate as well.

Fang Bai himself also swallowed a Marrow Cleansing Pill and a Creation Pill. Additionally, to increase the effectiveness of his cultivation, he placed a pile of Essence Stones around himself and casually put a few next to the Lightning Marten as well.

The man and beast, having ingested elixirs, sat amidst the Essence Stones, a few meters apart, facing the sunrise, and began to cultivate with eyes closed.

The sunlight cast a faint golden glow upon them.

The Marrow Cleansing Pill could be used to cleanse the marrow and strengthen the meridians, improving one's physique.

The Creation Pill could cause True Yuan to surge in a short period of time, increasing the chances of advancing to the next level.

Both of these elixirs had wondrous effects for both martial artists and spirit beasts.

An hour later, the Essence Stones piled around Fang Bai turned to flying ashes and scattered with the wind, clearly indicating that the Essence Energy they contained had been completely absorbed by Fang Bai.

At the same time, due to the ingestion of the Marrow Cleansing Pill and Creation Pill, significant changes were taking place inside Fang Bai's body.

If Fang Bai had been able to look inward, he would have seen the meridians and blood vessels in his body becoming wider and more robust under the influence of the two elixirs' potency.

Wider and more robust meridians and blood vessels could accommodate more True Yuan and blood circulation, making the power that burst forth even greater.

Fang Bai felt the gratifying changes in himself and deliberately guided the surging True Yuan to assault the final barrier of the second layer of the Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique, the Accumulating Essence Realm.

Should he break through this barrier, Fang Bai's Accumulating Essence Realm would reach perfection.

But whether it was advancing to a greater or lesser realm, advancing through the Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique was never easy. It required not only persevering in diligent cultivation but also a certain degree of fate and fortune.

The so-called "opportunity" here could be an epiphany in the martial dao, guidance from a master, or assistance from some kind of treasure...

If Fang Bai were to reach "perfection" in the Accumulating Essence Realm, his strength would undoubtedly increase tremendously, allowing him to disdain all high-rank Profound Level martial artists in this world.

Even among the martial artists who have reached Profound Level Perfection, he could stand proud above the rest.

The most significant change when a martial artist successfully advances is the change in the size of the True Yuan within the Qi Sea.

For example, when Fang Bai first advanced to the second layer of the Accumulating Essence Realm with his "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique," his True Yuan was only the size of a grain of rice. After consecutive breakthroughs to mid-rank and high-rank, that single "grain of rice" turned into two, three grains.

If he reached "perfection," the True Yuan in Fang Bai's Qi Sea would be equivalent to the size of four grains of rice fused together.

Fang Bai tried to break through several times but always fell short by just a little bit. Finally, after taking another Creation Pill, he managed to break through the barrier with the help of the medicine's power and successfully advanced to "perfection" in the Accumulating Essence Realm.

Fang Bai gathered all the True Yuan in his body into the Qi Sea and opened his eyes, feeling his strength increased several folds, he couldn't help releasing a long howl towards the sky.

As he howled, the Lightning Mink by his side also opened its slick black eyes, leapt onto his shoulder, and joined its howl with his.

Man and beast howled in unison, their cries shaking the wilderness and echoing through the mountains.

"Haha, Little Mink, I never expected you to level up too. Both of us advancing at the same time, this calls for a celebration! Once we're back, I'll treat you to... um, what do you like to eat? Meat? Alright, I'll buy you meat when we return!"

When Fang Bai heard the howl of the Lightning Mink, he looked at it and realized that the aura of this palm-sized pseudo-Spirit Beast had also surged several times, still remaining in the same realm as himself.

It seemed that the Lightning Mink had an exceptional bloodline and high Wuxing. It must have understood a lot of the cultivation techniques for absorbing Heaven and Earth Origin Energy that he taught, otherwise, it wouldn't have advanced so quickly.

Fang Bai felt that his venture into the Heavenly Pit the previous night had brought him an abundance of treasures.

However, the Essence Stones consumed by the advancement of both him and the beast were substantial; hundreds of Essence Stones were depleted by a tenth in an instant.

And the difficulty of advancing in the future would certainly increase, with the consumption of Essence Stones expected to multiply, Fang Bai was unsure how long these hundreds of Essence Stones would last for himself and the Lightning Mink.

Fang Bai checked the number of Essence Stones in the Spatial Ring, sighed, and thought that in the future, he would have to continue to search for cultivation resources. Otherwise, a lack of cultivation resources would affect the progress of both his and the Lightning Mink's cultivation.

This was something Fang Bai did not wish to see.

Seeing that it was getting late, the duo descended the mountain together.

Squeak—

Just as they reached the foot of the mountain, the Lightning Mink on Fang Bai's shoulder emitted a sharp warning cry before transforming into a streak of white light, darting towards a patch of grass about half a person's height on the west side.

"What did the Lightning Mink discover?"

Fang Bai knew the Lightning Mink's senses were far sharper than his own. Often, things he couldn't see or noises he couldn't hear, the mink could detect and give a warning.

For Fang Bai, this was like having wings added to a tiger, a powerful addition. If someone wanted to deal with Fang Bai, they would have to face two Profound Level Perfection powerhouses at the same time.

Chapter 166: The Ghost Hand Reappears

The Lightning Marten scurried close to the half-man-tall grass, shrieking sharply towards the front, no longer advancing, seemingly waiting for Fang Bai to come over.

Fang Bai proceeded cautiously, peering through the gaps in the grass, he could vaguely make out a figure. The person's clothes were tattered, their breathing faint, as if they were in a state of unconsciousness.

Once Fang Bai was sure that the person posed no threat to him, he swept over to the individual's side.

The person was sprawled in the grass, with several deep cuts and sword wounds that seemed quite serious.

Fortunately, it appeared that the person knew some medical skills. They had chewed up some freshly picked herbs and applied them to their wounds, otherwise they would have died from excessive blood loss by now.

Fang Bai extended his toe and gently nudged the person, flipping their body over to face upwards.

"Hm, how come it's him?"

As Fang Bai's gaze swept over the person's face, his eyebrows furrowed.

The man was slightly older than Fang Bai, with features that could still be considered handsome. However, there seemed to be a sword cut on the left cheek, creating an inch-long wound with blood that was not yet dry, making his appearance somewhat fierce.

In an instant, Fang Bai recognized the young man as Ghost Hand, a disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley.

At the Fuhu Mountain fight over the Heaven Level Martial Artist's legacy, Ghost Hand and Fang Bai had met once. At that time, Fang Bai had even given Ghost Hand a sharp dagger and two Heaven Level Techniques.

During yesterday's treasure hunt in the Heavenly Pit, many from the Semi-Hidden Sect had appeared, but there was no sign of any Myriad Medicine Valley disciples. Fang Bai had thought that after receiving the two Heaven Level Techniques, Ghost Hand had offered them to his sect and that all disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley were immersing themselves in dedicated cultivation. Yet, unexpectedly, he found Ghost Hand here.

As to why Ghost Hand was here or how he had sustained such serious injuries, Fang Bai was not sure.

Ghost Hand was a disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley, a force within the Semi-Hidden Sect that could not be taken lightly. Whoever had injured Ghost Hand to this extent must be a very powerful opponent, or perhaps even an entire faction.

Fang Bai had a good impression of Ghost Hand, and since they had a past acquaintance, he did not leave him to die. He knelt down to examine Ghost Hand's injuries.

The several critical wounds on Ghost Hand's body, though not fatal, meant that if he continued to lie there unconscious, he would eventually meet his end in the Underworld.

Fang Bai took out a several-hundred-year-old ginseng from his Spatial Ring, broke off a piece the size of his fingernail, and stuffed it into Ghost Hand's mouth to hang on to life. Then, using the water and wood needles from the Five Elements Acupuncture Set, he began to treat Ghost Hand.

Half an hour later, Ghost Hand's throat moved slowly, and his eyelids fluttered a few times, finally waking from his unconscious state.

"Ah... Am I... already dead?"

Ghost Hand's eyes moved around, looking up at the blue sky and white clouds, murmuring to himself in a low voice.

"Nonsense, if you were dead, what you'd be seeing would be the gloomy expanse of the Underworld, not blue skies and sunshine," Fang Bai said, and lightly patted Ghost Hand on the head.

Ghost Hand felt a surge of True Yuan enter his body, refreshing his spirit, and giving him a bit of strength as he struggled to sit up.

"You... you are..."

Back at Fuhu Mountain during the scramble for the Heaven Level Martial Artist's legacy, Fang Bai had been wearing a fierce ghost mask, so Ghost Hand did not recognize him.

"I saved your life, aren't you going to thank me promptly?"

Fang Bai said with a smile.

Upon hearing Fang Bai's voice, Ghost Hand's eyes suddenly brightened, and he exclaimed, "It's you!"

"You recognize me?"

"Back on Fuhu Mountain..."

"That's right, the man wearing the mask was me."

Seeing that Ghost Hand had recognized him just by his voice, Fang Bai couldn't help but silently admire his amazing memory.

Ghost Hand was severely injured, but most of his wounds were external, and though they looked shocking, they weren't life-threatening.

After Fang Bai's meticulous treatment, he was no longer in critical condition, and with some rest, he would be able to recover fully.

Ghost Hand was grateful for Fang Bai's life-saving grace and also felt deep admiration and respect for Fang Bai's superb medical skills.

He knew his own injuries well; under normal treatment, he would have to lie in bed honestly for at least ten days or half a month, unable to sit up and talk as he could now. Yet Fang Bai had enabled him to do so in just a short moment.

This kind of medical skill was beyond belief and filled him with awe.

During the struggle for the Heaven Level martial artist's relic on Fuhu Mountain, Ghost Hand had witnessed Fang Bai's formidable power, but he had not expected Fang Bai's medical skills to be so exquisite as well.

Being a disciple of Myriad Medicine Valley, Ghost Hand himself knew medical skills, but he understood that if Fang Bai were the one injured and he were to treat him, Fang Bai would still be unconscious for half a day before waking up. Without three to five days, Fang Bai would not be able to sit up at all.

From this, it could be inferred that when it came to medical skills, Ghost Hand's were far inferior to Fang Bai's.

"Tell me, how did you get so badly hurt? And how did you end up here?"

Fang Bai sat down on a clean rock next to Ghost Hand and asked casually.

Ghost Hand glanced at the Lightning Mink perched on Fang Bai's shoulder, thinking the fluffy little creature was just Fang Bai's pet and didn't pay it any mind. He sighed and said, "This matter has to start with that incident at Fuhu Mountain when we fought for the Heaven Level treasure... Alas..."

A look of furious sorrow crossed his face, followed by a deep sigh, "After the battle at Mount Youhu, I and a few surviving fellow disciples returned to Myriad Medicine Valley. We handed over a dagger and two Cultivation Techniques, a total of three Heaven Level martial artist relics, to the Valley Master and received his praise and rewards."

"After that, the Valley Master and the senior members of Myriad Medicine Valley began to seclude themselves to comprehend the two Heaven Level Techniques. My surviving fellow disciples and I, due to our meritorious services, were also given special permission by the Valley Master to study the Techniques together."

"At that time, the entire Myriad Medicine Valley was immersed in extreme excitement, with nearly all disciples believing that as long as someone could understand the Heaven Level Techniques, they could lead Myriad Medicine Valley to rise powerfully to become the foremost among the Semi-Hidden Sects, even competing with the true Hidden Sects."

"Having obtained the Heaven Level martial artist's relics, we inevitably became somewhat arrogant, and due to this, the entire valley let its guard down. But no one expected that a conspiracy against Myriad Medicine Valley would suddenly descend upon us..."

"That night, when most disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley had already gone to rest, suddenly, hundreds of mysterious martial artists with wrapped heads and masked faces, wielding swords, burst in from all directions into Myriad Medicine Valley, catching us off guard."

"Although the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley fought back with all their might, the enemy was stronger and outnumbered us by double; we were no match for them. Within just one short hour, more than half of the disciples of Myriad Medicine Valley were either injured or killed, with the more alert ones hiding early on."

"In the end, those mysterious martial artists broke into the Valley Master Hall. At that time, I, the Valley Master, and a dozen senior members of Myriad Medicine Valley were inside the hall, studying the Heaven Level Techniques. Seeing the enemy approaching, we had to abandon our Cultivation Method and confront them head-on, but ultimately we were overwhelmed by their sheer numbers, suffering heavy casualties..."

As he spoke, Ghost Hand became emotionally agitated, his fists clenched tightly, and a furious light blazed in his eyes.

Chapter 167: Innocent Peasant, Sin of Possessing Jade

"Although the enemy was powerful, there were also strong warriors in 'Myriad Medicine Valley'. During the fight, the headscarves used by many enemies to cover their faces were torn off, revealing their true identities. They were actually disciples from 'Shaolin Temple', 'Qingcheng Temple', and 'Misty Rain Tower', the three major sects."

"It was only when the disciples of the three sects said they had come to snatch the inheritance of a Heaven Level Martial Artist that we realized there was a traitor in 'Myriad Medicine Valley', someone had leaked the information, leading to a joint attack by the three sects."

"The forces sent by the three sects were their most powerful lineups. Even Abbot Jueren of Shaolin, Temple Master Qingling of Qingcheng, and Tower Master Wen Xiangxin of Misty Rain Tower took action personally. It was clear that they intended to not only rob us of the Heaven Level Martial Artist's inheritance but also to annihilate 'Myriad Medicine Valley' to eliminate future troubles."

"Later, when our Valley Master realized there was no hope of turning the situation around, he and several high-ranking 'Myriad Medicine Valley' members fought desperately to protect me and a few young disciples as we escaped. I was injured all over, fleeing without stopping, and passed out here. If you hadn't rescued me, I would certainly be dead. As for my fellow disciples... I'm afraid their chances of survival are slim..."

"Before the Valley Master protected us and let us escape, he told us not to forget this grudge and hatred, and to one day avenge the dead disciples of 'Myriad Medicine Valley'!"

As Ghost Hand spoke, his eyes reddened, his body trembled, and his face showed a color of pain.

Fang Bai furrowed his brows and said with a wry smile, "The catastrophe that befell 'Myriad Medicine Valley' is kinda related to me after all!"

Ghost Hand was stunned for a moment and said, "How... How could it be related to you?"

Fang Bai sighed, "The guilt of a common man is bearing the jewel. If I hadn't given you those three Heaven Level Martial Artist relics, maybe this wouldn't have happened..."

Ghost Hand shook his head, "You can't be blamed for this, the one to blame is our own greed for accepting your gifts... In fact, the ones most to blame are the traitors in 'Myriad Medicine Valley', and the three sects: Shaolin Temple, Qingcheng Temple, and Misty Rain Tower!"

Although Ghost Hand said this, Fang Bai still felt somewhat guilty.

"What do you plan to do next?"

Fang Bai asked, looking at Ghost Hand.

Ghost Hand shook his head blankly and said, "Right now, the disciples of the three factions are definitely out to kill me, the one who escaped. If I want to live, I can only keep running for my life."

Fang Bai said, "Your injuries are serious, you can't fight with anyone for the next three to five days. If those disciples find you within these few days, it will be a dead end for you."

Ghost Hand gave a wretched smile and said, "Then let it be death. I'm an orphan who grew up in 'Myriad Medicine Valley'. Now that 'Myriad Medicine Valley' is gone, there's no point in living."

Fang Bai said, "You don't want to avenge your fallen fellow disciples?"

"I do!"

Ghost Hand tugged at his hair forcefully and said, "But is there any hope? I'm just a mid-level Yellow Level Martial Artist, facing the formidable sects that are full of strong masters..."

"If your aptitude is good and your talent is high, you can continuously improve your strength. Don't move..."

As Fang Bai spoke, he prodded Ghost Hand's body, his eyes gradually growing bright, and a satisfied expression appeared on his face.

"Come with me."

Fang Bai stood up, dusted the weeds off his clothes, and walked leisurely forward, speaking as he walked, "If you're willing, follow me. I can teach you cultivation techniques so that one day you can avenge the great wrong; if you're not willing, then continue your fugitive life."

"The disciples from the three sects are trying to kill me, aren't you afraid I'll drag you down?"

Ghost Hand asked loudly, looking at Fang Bai's retreating back.

"What is the highest realm among the strongest warriors of the three sects?"

"High Rank Profound Level!"

"I am now at the perfection of the Profound Rank, do you think I would fear them?"

Hope flickered in Ghost Hand's eyes as he continued to ask, "Why do you want to help me?"

"No reason, I just feel like you and I have a connection, that's all!"

The figure of Fang Bai grew distant, about to turn around the bend ahead.

"I'll come with you!"

Ghost Hand clenched his teeth, stood up, and staggered after Fang Bai.

.....

Baili Mingyue returned from her afternoon remedial lessons and found two uninvited guests in Fang Bai's room.

One was a cute little animal covered in long white fur, looking very much like a little white mouse; the other was a young man resting in bed, nursing his injuries.

The young man stayed in the room next to Fang Bai's, and the bed and bedding were bought by Fang Bai from a nearby department store.

"Let me introduce you, this is the Lightning Mink."

Fang Bai pointed to the Lightning Mink on his shoulder and smiled as he introduced it to Baili Mingyue.

"Wow, what a beautiful little mink! Fang Bai, did you buy this as a pet?"

Stars appeared in Baili Mingyue's eyes as she looked at the Lightning Mink; she rubbed her hands together, clearly eager to touch the Lightning Mink.

Fang Bai seriously warned Baili Mingyue, "Don't be fooled by its seemingly docile and adorable appearance; in fact, it's very formidable. If you want to touch it, you'd better ask for its consent, otherwise, the consequences can be very serious."

"Could it bite?"

Baili Mingyue, a bit wary from Fang Bai's caution, withdrew her extended hand.

"A cornered rabbit will bite, but if it gets cornered... it will kill!"

Fang Bai emphasized his point, and seeing Baili Mingyue's disbelieving expression, he turned to the Lightning Mink and said, "This girl doesn't believe you're formidable; show her your strength!"

He then let out a few soft whistles, communicating with the Lightning Mink.

The Lightning Mink rolled its eyes in a very human-like manner, cast a disdainful glance at Baili Mingyue, and then transformed into a streak of white light, darting from Fang Bai's shoulder toward the room's sturdy wooden door, and in the blink of an eye, it returned to his shoulder.

The mink's swift movement was like a fleeting glimpse, and Baili Mingyue could hardly see it move, only feeling a blur before her eyes.

"Look at that door; that's the handiwork of this seemingly docile and adorable little mink!"

Fang Bai pointed to the wooden door of the room, speaking to Baili Mingyue.

Baili Mingyue followed where Fang Bai pointed, and her face showed a dumbfounded expression.

On that wooden door, there now was a bowl-sized round hole, with edges smooth and even, as if cut by a machine.

"This... Did it do that?"

Baili Mingyue looked back and forth from the Lightning Mink on Fang Bai's shoulder to the round hole in the wood, completely incredulous.

"Don't believe it? Then watch again... and make sure you see clearly this time!"

As Fang Bai spoke, he let out another soft whistle, and the Lightning Mink darted out again.

This time, upon Fang Bai's instruction, the Lightning Mink deliberately slowed down a lot.

Baili Mingyue opened her eyes wide and finally clearly saw the Lightning Mink's movements.

The Lightning Mink leapt from Fang Bai's shoulder, stretched out in the air like a swallow skimming through the sky, swift and light.

It darted to the wooden door, where its front paws quickly circled, then its hind legs kicked off the door, propelling it back along the same path to Fang Bai's shoulder.

The entire process took no more than the blink of an eye.

Chapter 168: Buddha's Fury Golden Staff Technique

The wooden door to the room, where the Lightning Mink had scratched with its front paws, now displayed a bowl-sized round hole once again.

"My God, this little mink is incredible!"

Stars sparkled in Baili Mingyue's eyes once more, and there were even more than before.

"Fang Bai, this little mink listens to you, right? Can you talk to it and let me touch it? Just once..."

Baili Mingyue blinked pleadingly at Fang Bai.

It was obvious she was incredibly fond of the Lightning Mink, but she was also afraid its front paws might leave a swipe on her, like on the door. She thought her body wasn't as sturdy as that wooden door, and if she, too, were scratched, ending up with a bowl-sized bloody hole, that would be the end of her.

"I'll have a word with it. If it's willing, you can touch it a few times, no problem. But if it isn't, don't even think about touching it!"

Fang Bai turned his head and began communicating with the Lightning Mink resting on his shoulder.

The Lightning Mink's pair of shiny black eyes stared at Baili Mingyue, seemingly sizing her up.

Baili Mingyue straightened her body and tried to smile warmly, attempting to appear friendlier and more approachable.

Whoosh—

A white flash, and the Lightning Mink appeared on Baili Mingyue's shoulder.

Baili Mingyue thought it was going to attack her. Her face turned pale, and she was so scared she didn't dare move a muscle.

"If it were attacking you, you'd already be a corpse by now."

Fang Bai laughed and said, "Congratulations, the little mink really likes you and wants to be friends."

"Really... really?"

Baili Mingyue's nervous voice trembled slightly, and then she felt the Lightning Mink gently rubbing against her face.

This affectionate gesture confirmed Fang Bai's words.

Baili Mingyue was overjoyed, her complexion quickly returned to normal, and she cautiously raised a hand to pet the Lightning Mink.

Seeing that the Lightning Mink didn't reject her, Baili Mingyue grew bolder and simply held it in her arms, not wanting to let go as she hugged it and caressed its face.

Fang Bai and Ghost Hand, who was lying in bed, exchanged glances at the scene.

"Master, why is this so?"

Ghost Hand wore a bitter smile and sighed, "Why doesn't the little mink let me touch it but is so affectionate with this young lady?"

On the way back, Ghost Hand had taken Fang Bai as his master, and earlier, when Fang Bai was feeling his bones, he found him to be a good cultivation prospect and thus accepted him as a disciple.

After hearing from Fang Bai about the Lightning Mink's prowess, Ghost Hand tried everything to please it, hoping to hold and pet it, only to be ruthlessly rejected by the Lightning Mink.

Looking at how affectionate the Lightning Mink was with Baili Mingyue, Ghost Hand was filled with gloom.

"Maybe this little one has a thing for beauties?"

Fang Bai said with a smile.

The Lightning Mink lay in the youthful embrace of Baili Mingyue, comfortably closing its eyes while its little head kept rubbing against her full bosom, as if it was taking advantage of the situation to get a little cozy with Baili Mingyue.

Baili Mingyue was tickled by its rubbing and couldn't help giggling softly.

"This is Ghost Hand, my disciple. He's going to live with me from now on."

Fang Bai then introduced Ghost Hand to Baili Mingyue.

"Ghost Hand? Is that your nickname?"

Still holding the Lightning Mink, Baili Mingyue looked at Ghost Hand, who was lying on the bed, and asked curiously.

"My name is Ghost Hand."

"That's such a strange name... Why do you call yourself Ghost Hand?"

"I was originally an orphan with no name, and later I followed my master and learned ancient martial arts, especially fond of using hidden weapons. My fellow disciples said that the hidden weapons I launched were unpredictable, with many techniques, so they called me 'Ghost Hand,' and that became my name."

"Is your hidden weapons skill as good as Fang Bai's?"

Baili Mingyue asked casually.

"No."

Ghost Hand honestly admitted.

His martial arts realm was far inferior to Fang Bai's. No matter how skilled his hidden weapons technique was, it was of no significance in front of Fang Bai.

It was like a three-year-old child who could beat everyone in kindergarten, but once facing a university student, all their abilities were useless.

"Not as good as Fang Bai, and you still have the nerve to call yourself Ghost Hand? You might as well give that name to Fang Bai."

Baili Mingyue said without any reservation.

Ghost Hand chuckled, "Heh, my master is a divine hand, a celestial hand. Calling him 'Ghost Hand' would be devaluing him, so I'm better off keeping the name!"

"Bootlicker!"

Baili Mingyue thought Ghost Hand was flattering Fang Bai and couldn't help but roll her eyes.

"Mingyue, go outside and stay for a while. I need to treat Ghost Hand's injuries, and it's inconvenient for you to stay here."

Fang Bai waved his hand and sent Baili Mingyue out.

"Fine, I'll go out. But you have to lend me Little Mink to play with."

"Sure, whatever."

So Baili Mingyue, carrying Little Mink contentedly, left and went to her mother's room to show off.

Since Fang Bai had taken Ghost Hand as a disciple, he planned to cultivate him well and make him a capable assistant.

Originally, Ghost Hand's injuries would have taken at least ten days to fully recover, but now Fang Bai had Marrow Cleansing Pills. These elixirs could not only cleanse the marrow and improve physique, but also had miraculous effects in treating internal and external injuries.

However, such elixirs could only be used by martial artists; ordinary people could not withstand their potency.

Ghost Hand had a Metal Spirit Root and was suitable for cultivating Golden System Techniques. Fang Bai transmitted to him the Buddha's Fury Golden Staff Technique and also had him take a Marrow Cleansing Pill, letting him heal and cultivate in his room on his own.

To Fang Bai's amusement, that afternoon when Baili Mingyue went out to attend her tutoring classes, she took Little Mink with her, even stowing it away in her backpack, and the Little Mink didn't object.

Fang Bai didn't say anything about it because when Baili Zhan went out, he had entrusted Baili Mingyue's care to Fang Bai. With Little Mink accompanying Baili Mingyue, even if she encountered martial artists, as long as their cultivation levels didn't exceed the Profound Level, Little Mink could handle them.

After taking a Marrow Cleansing Pill, Ghost Hand stayed in his room and rested, not even coming out for lunch, until the evening when Fang Bai came back from Yanjing Hospital. Only then did he finish his cultivation and come out to meet Fang Bai.

With the help of the Marrow Cleansing Pill, several of the serious cuts Ghost Hand had suffered had already healed and scabbed over in half a day's time.

His combat strength could not be recovered momentarily, but moving around like an ordinary person posed no problem.

Since Ghost Hand currently had no ability to defend himself, it was not suitable for him to appear in public, lest he be discovered by disciples of Qingcheng Temple and other major factions. So after Fang Bai had dinner outside, he brought a portion back for him to eat in his room.

Although Little Mink was affectionate with Baili Mingyue, when it came to resting at night, it still preferred to stay in Fang Bai's room.

Fang Bai was now cultivating without needing to be concerned about Baili Zhan's family; he could also cultivate at night. Moreover, he would consume elixirs and take out Essence Stones to assist his cultivation, and Little Mink wanted to take the opportunity to get some benefits while staying close to him.

Three days later, Ghost Hand's injuries and combat strength had fully recovered.

In the following two days, with the help of a Creation Pill Fang Bai gave him, his strength and realm successfully advanced from the middle stage of the Yellow Level to the high rank of the Yellow Level.

Chapter 169: Are You Done Touching?

It was Saturday, and Fang Bai returned from Yanjing Hospital at noon, only to find Baili Mingyue sitting alone under the grape arbor on the west side of the courtyard, nattering to the Lightning Mink in her arms as if she were serenading a cow.

Her brows were furrowed, and her mouth was puckered up, a clear sign of her being in a sulk.

Baili Mingyue was characteristically cheerful and extroverted, especially since becoming "friends" with the Lightning Mink; she was always all smiles. She had never looked as downhearted as she did today.

"What's wrong, Mingyue? Did someone bully you? Tell me who it was, and I'll beat them up for you!"

Fang Bai walked up to Baili Mingyue with a beaming smile and said.

Baili Mingyue shook her head listlessly and said, "Fang Bai, today is my birthday..."

"Your birthday? Shouldn't that make you happy?"

"I would be very happy if Dad were home because he would take me everywhere and buy me all sorts of delicious food. But now with Dad not around, and having to stay at home to look after Mom, I can't go anywhere... My eighteenth birthday is so boring!"

Seeing her dispirited face, Fang Bai sighed softly and spoke in a gentle voice, "Before your dad left, he entrusted you to me. I can't bear to see you so unhappy... Come on, let's go out."

Upon hearing this, Baili Mingyue's eyes suddenly sparkled, then dimmed again as she said wistfully, "But my mom..."

"Let Ghost Hand take care of her. He's not going out anyway."

Pointing at the Lightning Mink in Baili Mingyue's arms, Fang Bai continued, "Let the Lightning Mink stay as well. If any bad people come to cause trouble, it can help Ghost Hand protect your mom."

"Fang Bai, thank you! You're so kind!"

Excited, Baili Mingyue stood up, set down the Lightning Mink, and trotted into her mother's room to whisper something to her.

A short while later, she returned to the courtyard, full of excitement, and bubbled to Fang Bai, "My mom agreed to let us go out. She says she's at ease with you accompanying me."

The summer weather was scorching, with the midday sun fiery enough to make it hard to breathe.

Yet Baili Mingyue's enthusiasm for shopping outshone even the day's heat.

"Today is your birthday; we'll do whatever makes you happy! Whatever you want to do to have fun!"

Before they left the house, Fang Bai said this to Baili Mingyue.

So the entire afternoon, under the fierce sun, Baili Mingyue, accompanied by Fang Bai, indulged in all the places she had wanted to visit and all the foods she had longed to taste.

Perhaps because Baili Mingyue was accustomed to a frugal lifestyle, the places she took Fang Bai were free attractions, and the snacks they ate were tasty but inexpensive, costing hardly anything at all.

Around five in the afternoon, they arrived at a park. Fang Bai sat in a small pavilion to catch the breeze, while Baili Mingyue took selfies among the flowers and plants outside on her own.

"Hey girl, you've been standing under the sun for ages, aren't you afraid of getting tanned?"

Watching Baili Mingyue pouting and continuously taking selfies among a cluster of flowers, Fang Bai couldn't help asking.

"I was born with beauty that even the sun can't mar,"

Baili Mingyue pinched her fair and dewy skin and said with a giggle.

Glancing at her face, Fang Bai thought that despite her daily exposure to the harsh sun when going to her tutoring classes, without sunscreen or a parasol, her skin hadn't tanned at all. This hardly seemed due to natural beauty; it was very likely that her constitution was different from ordinary people.

With that idea, Fang Bai beckoned to her and called out, "Mingyue, come here."

Baili Mingyue struck a peace sign pose, taking a few more selfies before bouncing over to the pavilion and standing pertly in front of Fang Bai, she asked, "What's up?"

Fang Bai glanced around and, seeing that there was virtually no one else near the pavilion but them, patted the spot next to him and said, "Come, sit here..."

"What's with all the secrecy..."

Though she muttered to herself, Baili Mingyue still sat down next to Fang Bai.

Fang Bai cleared his throat and asked seriously, "Do you like martial arts?"

"Of course, I do!"

On hearing this, Baili Mingyue's eyes lit up instantly, and she said excitedly, "My dad already promised me before he left that he would teach me martial arts when he returned. My mom also said that once the poison in her body is fully purged, she can teach me, too."

Fang Bai said, "If I could teach you a more powerful martial arts, much more powerful than what your parents could teach, would you like to learn it?"

Baili Mingyue's eyes shone as she grabbed one of Fang Bai's arms excitedly and said, "Are you willing to teach me? My dad really admires you, saying you're much stronger than he is. Actually, I've wanted to learn from you, but I was afraid you'd say no..."

"If you have a Spiritual Root, I'll teach you. If not, then there's nothing I can do."

"What's a Spiritual Root?"

"It's a constitution that's very suitable for cultivation."

"How do you know if I am a spiritual body or not?"

"You can feel the root bone."

Fang Bai said seriously, "If I feel your root bone, I can determine whether you have a Spiritual Root and whether you are a spiritual body."

"Feel the root bone?"

Baili Mingyue's eyes widened, "You mean, you are going to touch me all over with your hands?"

Fang Bai nodded, "More or less... Of course, if you think I'm trying to take advantage of you, then forget it."

"Then... Which areas do you have to touch?"

Baili Mingyue was a bit nervous.

"Just both arms will do."

Whew—

Baili Mingyue breathed a sigh of relief and said, "Arms are ok, I thought you were going to touch my whole body!"

"If you ever meet some master who offers to teach you martial arts but wants to touch the root bone of your whole body, you'd better stay far away from them because they're definitely trying to take advantage of you!"

"I'll remember that! Now, go ahead and touch!"

Baili Mingyue extended her fair, slender arms in front of Fang Bai as she spoke.

Fang Bai didn't stand on ceremony, picked up her arms, and carefully felt them.

"... To actually be a Water Spirit Root... Water overcomes fire, no wonder you're not afraid of the scorching summer sun... Mm, not bad..."

Fang Bai, with his eyes half-open half-closed, murmured to himself as his hands kneaded Baili Mingyue's soft, boneless, snow-white arms gently yet firmly.

Baili Mingyue, ticklish as she was, giggled non-stop as Fang Bai's hands alternately touched and squeezed her arms lightly and firmly, especially when Fang Bai's palms approached the upper part of her arm near her armpit, she couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"Have you finished feeling? Ah... I'm so ticklish!"

Baili Mingyue squirmed and giggled as she asked.

Fang Bai released his hands and looked at Baili Mingyue with a smile, "Mingyue, congratulations, your physique is very suitable for cultivation."

"Really?"

Baili Mingyue's spirits lifted, and she asked with her laughter halted, "Then when can you teach me martial arts?"

"We'll talk about it when your father comes back. I'll discuss it with him first," Fang Bai said seriously.

Chapter 170: Ye Wumei

Baili Mingyue said, "Why do we still need to discuss it with my dad? You're so amazing. If you teach me martial arts, my dad will definitely be a hundred times willing!"

"Because the martial arts I teach you are very special. Once you learn mine, you won't be able to learn others, so you must be careful! Don't rush, the study of martial arts isn't something that can be achieved in just a day or two."

"Oh... okay then!"

Baili Mingyue felt a little dejected, but after seeing two butterflies flitting out of the pavilion, she cheerfully chased after them.

At dusk, the two of them visited a nearby cake shop, where the staff made a small birthday cake on the spot and inserted eighteen birthday candles.

Under Baili Mingyue's "coercion," Fang Bai sang the birthday song off-tune. As he sang, Baili Mingyue blew out the candles, silently made a wish, then cut the cake and started eating it with Fang Bai.

"Mingyue, what wish did you make?"

Fang Bai asked casually while eating the cake.

"I made three wishes altogether. Guess what they are..."

"Hoping your mom gets better soon?"

"You guessed it, that's the first one."

"Hoping that every birthday from now on, you'll be just as happy as today with your mom and dad by your side?"

"Wow, you've guessed another one right, you're so clever! Yes, that's the second one. The third one?"

"Hoping your academic performance keeps improving?"

"Wrong!"

"Hoping you get into a famous university in the future?"

"Wrong again!"

"Hoping you become more and more beautiful?"

"Wrong!"

"Then I'm out of guesses. Tell me, what's the wish? Maybe I can help you make it come true."

"I'm not telling you! I'd die before I say!"

The cake shop's lighting cast a glow on Baili Mingyue's delicate little face, making it extraordinarily radiant. It was hard to tell if it was because of the lighting or if her cheeks were a bit red.

"This crazy weather, why is it getting hotter and hotter!"

Baili Mingyue put down the cake she was holding and covered her hot cheeks with both hands, loudly complaining.

A dozen minutes later, the two of them walked out of the cake shop, each holding an ice cream, strolling down the street in the evening breeze.

As they passed by Yanjing Sports Stadium, they found the area packed with tens of thousands of people, gathered in groups, animatedly discussing something.

"Ye Wumei! It's Ye Wumei!"

After seeing a huge poster of a celebrity hanging at the entrance to the stadium, Baili Mingyue suddenly got excited, tightly grabbed Fang Bai's arm, and said, "I remember now, tonight at seven o'clock, Ye Wumei's concert is being held here!"

"Who's Ye Wumei?"

Seeing Baili Mingyue's excitement, Fang Bai felt utterly bewildered.

"You don't know who Ye Wumei is?"

Baili Mingyue looked at Fang Bai as if he were an idiot.

"Why should I know? Is she famous?"

"Just famous? She's incredibly, incredibly, incredibly famous! She's the 'National Sweetheart'! In the whole Chinese world, from eighty-year-olds to eight-year-olds, there are hardly a few who don't know her! You really don't know? Sigh, you've defeated me!"

Baili Mingyue, holding Fang Bai's hand, walked up to the enormous poster and pointed at the dazzling, mesmerizing female star, loudly exclaiming, "See? She's Ye Wumei, a triple-threat star in film, TV, and music! Pretty, isn't she? She's my idol!"

Fang Bai looked carefully at the female star on the poster and nodded, "Yeah, she really is pretty, but you're just as beautiful as she is!"

"Really?"

Baili Mingyue's eyes twinkled and she looked radiant from Fang Bai's compliment.

"Really."

"Ye Wumei is a big star, not just beautiful, but she can sing, dance, and act. How can I compare to her? Fang Bai... I... I want to see the concert!"

"Then go buy tickets!"

"But they're so expensive! Look at the poster, even the worst seats are three hundred yuan, and the best seats are three thousand!"

"I promised to give you a day of fun... Come on, let's go buy the tickets!"

When Fang Bai and an excited Baili Mingyue arrived at the ticket booth, they were informed by the ticket clerk that tickets were sold out.

"Don't worry, we'll think of something."

Fang Bai saw the look of utter disappointment on Baili Mingyue's face and felt compassion, pulling her toward where a crowd had gathered.

"Beauty, handsome guy, are you selling your tickets? I'll offer double the price!"

Approaching a couple, Fang Bai asked with a smile.

"Not selling."

The couple shook their heads and walked away.

Fang Bai continued to ask around with Baili Mingyue and, when he offered twenty thousand yuan, they finally managed to obtain two tickets from an older couple.

Although the seats weren't the best, for Baili Mingyue, it was more than enough; however, she felt a bit embarrassed that Fang Bai had spent so much money.

Yet, twenty thousand yuan was a drop in the bucket for Fang Bai.

Ever since he had found the Spatial Ring at the bottom of the Heavenly Pit, Fang Bai had been gradually withdrawing millions of yuan from his bank cards and stashing them in the ring, just in case he needed to spend them later.

Besides several million in cash, the Spatial Ring also contained eighty-one Luminous Pearls, another massive fortune. If Fang Bai wished, he could exchange these pearls for cash at any moment.

But Fang Bai wasn't short of money, so there was no need to exchange them.

The concert was to begin at seven o'clock. Before entering the stadium, Baili Mingyue bought two glow sticks and a poster of Ye Wumei, hoping for a chance to have Ye Wumei sign it so she could hang it above her bed at home.

After entering the stadium, Fang Bai saw that the eighty-thousand-seat arena was packed, with almost everyone holding a Ye Wumei poster in their left hand and a glow stick in their right. Even before Ye Wumei appeared, people were already loudly chanting her name.

At 7:30 pm, the concert officially started and all the lights focused on the dazzling, glorious central stage of the stadium.

Amidst the fans' deafening screams, Ye Wumei, dressed in ancient white garments, descended slowly onto the stage, like a fairy descending from the heavens to the mortal world.

Simultaneously, the prelude to a misty, Ancient-style musical piece began.

As the music started, the surrounding screams gradually ceased, and the fans perked up their ears, preparing to listen to their idol's voice, which was as exquisite as the sounds from heaven.

Dressed in a white robe, Ye Wumei suddenly produced a Green Peak Sword in her hand, and with the gentle and slow rhythm of the music, her sword moved swiftly like a dragon and gracefully as a startled swan. Along with her slender, swallow-like figure, she performed a stunningly beautiful sword dance on the stage.

"Ye Wumei is also a Martial Artist,"

Fang Bai whispered to Baili Mingyue beside him.

"No wonder her sword dance is so beautiful."

Baili Mingyue gently waved her glow stick, her gaze fixed on Ye Wumei at the center of the stage, wearing an utterly enchanted and intoxicated expression.