

King Hall 1291

Chapter 1291 Tedious Experiments! Ambitions of a Wolf!

After all, most of those with alchemical talent who come here are students in compulsory education. Mu Jinyu is reluctant to have them give up their studies and come to practice alchemy every day just to make things easier for himself.

He has no reason to sacrifice these students for the sake of achieving something for the entire nation.

Therefore, the trouble he initially wanted to offload onto the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow ended up being something he had to resolve himself.

"Forget it, let's give it a try. Fortunately, before I knew the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow had five hundred students with a Fire Spirit Root, I already had a general solution; otherwise, I'd really be having a headache now."

Mu Jinyu slightly furrowed his brows, then lifted his hand slightly, his palm shimmering with an indefinable brilliance. He used the laws of heaven and earth to transform the soil beneath him, akin to turning stone into gold, changing it from dirt into mineral, which was then forged into an alchemy furnace.

After forging it into an alchemy furnace, Mu Jinyu then attempted to inscribe processes inside it. When the spiritual medicine enters the pill furnace, it automatically refines the spiritual medicine, then proceeds with the smelting of medicinal liquid, finally solidifying into a pill, ensuring the potency...

This actually is quite challenging.

Far more difficult than utilizing formations, transforming spiritual energy through various steps into Yi Wood True Qi, descending as spiritual rain to hasten the growth of spiritual medicines in the medicine field.

First, how to ensure the purity of the medicinal liquid autonomously refined by the pill furnace.

Second, how to guarantee no mistakes occur during the medicinal liquid smelting process, preventing one liquid from prematurely merging with another, thus turning medicine into poison...

Third, ensuring how much medicinal power remains in the resulting pill...

These issues are all extremely challenging!

Of course, although very difficult, as long as Mu Jinyu is willing to spend time refining them over and over, he can always completely figure out a suitable method.

Unlike the hastening of spiritual medicines, if he didn't have a Divine Formation Disc, if there weren't a large number of cultivators with a Wood Spirit Root, if there weren't Dragon Vein Land, then the plan would fail and simply wouldn't work.

"Sigh... Step by step then..."

Mu Jinyu sighed softly, and after inscribing a formation program, he cast a spiritual medicine used for refining Essence Qi Pill into the pill furnace he had just forged.

Then he carefully observed the process of the spiritual medicine extracting medicinal liquid within, checked if there were mistakes in the process of medicinal liquid mutual smelting, then awaited the final pill solidification.

"Bang!"

Unfortunately, the process of extracting medicinal liquid via formation failed initially, following that, two kinds of medicinal liquid which needed another gentle medicinal power failed to neutralize the surge and prematurely merged, causing the pill furnace to explode.

"Ah, really monotonous..."

Mu Jinyu sighed helplessly, once again turned soil into mineral, crafted another pill furnace, summarized the experience again, re-inscribed formation operation programs, then threw in the spiritual medicine, and failed again...

...

While Mu Jinyu continued to try autonomously refining pills.

Capital City, outskirts.

Great Xia Dragon Sparrow Headquarters.

In the high-level meeting room, all the high-level figures of Great Xia Dragon Sparrow from various places had gathered, waiting for Xia Ruochen to start the meeting.

"Alright, everyone is here. Next, before we begin the meeting, I'll first show you a video..."

Xia Ruochen opened the door to the meeting room, walked in, scanned the people present, and then stood on the podium, speaking loudly.

Everyone, hearing his words, carried a sense of curiosity and doubt, but did not clamor.

After Xia Ruochen finished speaking, he pressed a button, and instantly, a video appeared on the screen behind him.

It was Mu Jinyu using the Divine Formation Disc, allowing five cultivators with a Wood Spirit Root to release Wood Attribute True Essence, then transforming via Dragon Vein Qi, turning into a spiritual rain, and when the spiritual rain fell, Mu Jinyu scattered a handful of seeds on the empty ground ahead.

Instantly, an unbelievable scene unfolded before everyone's eyes.

They saw seeds quickly take root and sprout on the empty ground, as if the video was sped up, soon growing into spiritual medicine seedlings, and after a few minutes transforming into mature spiritual medicine.

"This is... Star Pole Grass, Magnolia Ganoderma, Blue Yuan Root, all are first stage spiritual medicines..."

"How could they mature in just a few minutes? Boss, you didn't speed up the video, right?"

The people in the meeting room, seeing the changes in spiritual medicine within the video, knowing that Xia Ruochen couldn't be showing them a sped-up and edited video, still couldn't help but question skeptically.

"Keep watching."

Xia Ruochen didn't explain, saying calmly.

In his tone, however, was unconcealed excitement and agitation.

Everyone remained silent, then continued watching.

Quickly, ten minutes into the video, everyone basically confirmed that this segment wasn't an edited effect, because Xia Ruochen just stood there without any changes.

This time, someone familiar with spiritual medicine couldn't help but exclaim: "Ten minutes, these spiritual medicines already have a ten-year medicinal age. What is in this spiritual liquid...?"

"Old Lin, are you sure, less than ten minutes, these spiritual medicines already have ten years of medicinal age?"

Hearing the exclamation, a group of people in the meeting room couldn't contain their emotions, turned to look at the person, and asked excitedly.

"Certainly." Old Lin nodded proudly, said: "I have deep research in spiritual medicines, and just a minute into the video, I saw those spiritual medicines have already grown from seeds to mature ones. At that time, I too felt quite shocked, but I also thought the effect was just like that, after all, newly mature spiritual medicines aren't very useful. But I didn't expect, in just ten minutes, these spiritual medicines actually grew at a rate of gaining a year of medicinal age per minute, which is quite terrifying..."

While saying that, Old Lin looked up at Xia Ruochen standing on the podium, glanced at the video, and said: "It's already eleven years medicinal age, soon to be twelve, Boss, is this video real? Where did this spiritual liquid come from, and to what extent can it hasten the maturation of spiritual medicines?"

Old Lin asked multiple questions of great concern to people present.

Xia Ruochen said with a smile: "The video is real, and the hastening effect of the spiritual liquid is initially quite effective, but eventually, after reaching a century-old medicinal age, there's not much effect, requiring roughly 24 hours. As for the origin of the spiritual liquid, it's developed by the Dragon King of Dragon King Hall."

"Dragon King?!"

"Why is it him..."

Upon hearing Xia Ruochen's words, everyone's expression slightly changed, their eyes revealed apprehension and suspicion.

"What's Dragon King up to by developing this?"

Someone asked apprehensively.

Xia Ruochen repeated Mu Jinyu's original words.

"To perfect the martial cultivation plan for all, allowing everyone in the nation, even the old, weak, sick, unable to cultivate, to consume Essence Qi Pill to strengthen their bodies?!"

"Is he really so kind-hearted?"

When everyone heard Xia Ruo Chen's words, they all frowned and questioned.

"I feel it's because Dragon King returned and found their Dragon King Hall's status now being impacted by us Great Xia Dragon Sparrow, hence deliberately made this arrangement. He wants to regain the power of their Dragon King Hall!"

"Yes, I also feel that way, this year alone, their Dragon King Hall only eradicated ferocious beasts outside, ignoring everything else!"

"And we've been executing the martial cultivation plan for all, sweeping away ignorance in schools everywhere, letting the entire nation know how to cultivate and strengthen themselves, then establishing martial arts schools to absorb well-natured and talented students into our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow..."

"Now a year has passed, we've established the prestige of Great Xia Dragon Sparrow as Huaxia's foremost organization, in the eyes of the uninformed, their Dragon King Hall seems merely a branch of ours, just a sharp sword in our hand!"

But upon Dragon King's return, surely it's displeasing to see this, thus wanting to use this tactic to directly render us powerless!"

"Indeed, the cultivation techniques we taught the populace all came from Dragon King Hall; they must have even better cultivation methods. Now with inexhaustible elixirs to aid cultivation, coordinating with a new round of martial cultivation plan for all, if propagated, they could instantly devour the fruits of our year's labor!"

"Even the students we've absorbed earlier, upon learning about Dragon King Hall's situation, would undoubtedly also secretly join Dragon King Hall, and though by name Dragon King Hall and we are peer organizations, not adversaries, we'd be powerless against them then..."

"As time goes, Dragon King Hall would then reign supreme worldwide, while we, though nominally an official organization, would be lacking in manpower and prestige..."

Everyone was in uproar, discussing fervently.

They all believed Mu Jinyu had wolfish ambitions, with a large appetite, preparing to devour the hard-earned results of their Great Xia Dragon Sparrow's year-long efforts...

...

Chapter 1292 Xia Ruochen's Rebuke

Amidst the angry disputes of the crowd, Xia Ruochen had remained silent. Once the uproar died down, he slowly lifted his gaze to survey the scene, observing the crowd's expressions of shock and anger or deep worry before he finally spoke:

"Actually, I think the Dragon King has no such intentions, nor is he as wolfish as you claim. He genuinely wants to contribute to our country..."

"On what grounds?" one person asked, frowning tightly.

Hearing this, Xia Ruochen smiled and then took out the Divine Formation Disc that Mu Jinyu had given him from his arms.

Everyone present focused intently at the appearance of the Divine Formation Disc.

They recognized it; the disc, resembling a Fengshui Compass, was precisely the key item shown in the video that conjured the Spiritual Rain to mature Spiritual Medicine.

But how could it...

End up in the hands of their leader?

Could it be that they had truly misunderstood Mu Jinyu?

Seeing the changeable expressions of the crowd after he revealed the Divine Formation Disc, Xia Ruochen couldn't help but smile and say: "You've just seen this formation disc, which is indeed the key item for creating the Spirit Rain that matures Spiritual Medicine. If the Dragon King really had the ambitions you mentioned, he wouldn't have handed it over to me so easily. But the fact is, after contacting me and showing me the effects of the Catalytic Spirit Liquid, he entrusted this disc to me for safekeeping."

Upon hearing Xia Ruochen's words, some couldn't help but show expressions of shame, while others furrowed their brows tightly and then spoke: "Leader, could it be a ruse by the Dragon King, using this disc to trick you and then getting you to obtain some important things for him?"

They felt that in the video they watched earlier, this Divine Formation Disc appeared to be the key item, but it was quite possibly fake—a false image deliberately created by Mu Jinyu. In fact, the creation of the Catalytic Spirit Liquid might not require this formation disc at all.

Mu Jinyu might have used this disc to gain Xia Ruochen's trust in exchange for something more beneficial to him.

Others chimed in to agree: "Yes, Leader, you must be cautious. Have you checked if this formation disc can indeed mature Spiritual Medicine?"

"Of course I have."

Xia Ruochen said calmly, clapping his hands.

Soon, a soldier in a dark green battle uniform expressionlessly strode onto the platform and stood beside Xia Ruochen.

"Please."

Xia Ruochen said to the man.

At the same time, he reached out to retrieve a piece of Dragon Bone, practicing cultivation to inject True Yuan inside, and activated the scant Dragon Qi contained within.

Meanwhile, the soldier also practiced cultivation, his whole body glowing faintly green, and then Wood Attribute True Yuan poured into the Divine Formation Disc.

As the Wood Attribute True Yuan and Dragon Qi flowed into the Divine Formation Disc, it started to operate automatically, converting them into Yi Wood True Qi, and then a pool of Spiritual Liquid spilled out.

"Drip."

Under the concentrated watch of the crowd, Xia Ruochen retrieved a Spiritual Medicine Seed and tossed it into the pool of Spiritual Liquid.

Instantly, that seed sprouted and took root at an astonishing speed visible to the naked eye.

Soon, it became a seedling of Spiritual Medicine soaking in the Spiritual Liquid.

"It's Panxin Lotus..."

"It truly can mature Spiritual Medicine!"

"The Dragon King is indeed generous!"

The crowd couldn't help but exclaim in wonderment, some who had believed Mu Jinyu had ulterior motives now showed expressions of shame.

While stopping the activation of the Dragon Bone, Xia Ruochen gestured for the soldier beside him to halt as well, then glanced at the man who had just accused Mu Jinyu of laying a trap and said:

"I've checked; this Divine Formation Disc, when in my hands, under the right conditions, does mature Spiritual Medicine. You weren't entirely wrong, the Dragon King did indeed task me with two things after giving me the Divine Formation Disc."

"What things?" the man couldn't help but ask.

Some who maintained suspicion towards Mu Jinyu, upon hearing this, showed a look of realization, as they knew things weren't that simple.

Xia Ruochen replied calmly: "To gather enough cultivators with Wood Spirit Root, and to obtain Dragon Vein Land..."

"What kind of conditions are these?"

Upon hearing Xia Ruochen's words, the crowd couldn't help but show puzzled expressions.

Soon after, someone recalled the scene they had just witnessed of Xia Ruochen personally operating the Divine Formation Disc to mature Spiritual Medicine.

It seemed...

That soldier was indeed a cultivator with Wood Spirit Root, and had just used Wood Attribute True Yuan.

And Xia Ruochen had just held a piece of Dragon Bone, also using it to activate Dragon Qi into the Divine Formation Disc?

Realizing this, their expressions changed slightly.

Noticing that these people finally reacted, Xia Ruochen smiled and said: "Indeed, these two conditions were originally prerequisites for the Catalytic Spirit Liquid. To produce it, Wood Spirit Qi and Dragon Qi

are required to convert within the formation disc into the Catalytic Spirit Liquid, so even if the Dragon King didn't mention it, we'd have to do it ourselves..."

"Moreover, the Dragon King even wants all our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow cultivators with Fire Spirit Root to go to him; he's teaching Alchemy, helping us cultivate Alchemists, so we can be self-sufficient and no longer have to rely on the Dragon King Hall!"

Hearing Xia Ruochen's last words, the expressions of everyone present changed. They couldn't help but shout in shock and joy:

"Really? Leader, is the Dragon King truly planning to help us cultivate Alchemists?"

"Will we really be able to produce Elixirs ourselves, without relying on the Dragon King Hall's charity?"

"Yes." Xia Ruochen nodded: "In fact, training Alchemists is also a step in the Dragon King's plan to perfect nationwide Martial Cultivation."

He said, taking out several bottles of Essence Qi Pills from his pocket and then distributing them, allowing each person to take one.

After everyone consumed the Essence Qi Pills under Xia Ruochen's guidance, they felt the medicinal power carefully and nodded understandingly:

"The medicinal power isn't very strong; it seems to be a first-grade low-level Elixir, quite suitable for those in the Essence Refining phase."

"Yes." Xia Ruochen nodded: "This Elixir is called the Essence Qi Pill, perfect for Martial Artists who haven't reached Energy Transformation cultivation to aid their training."

"Even those who can't cultivate, like the elderly and children, can restore Essence Qi and extend their longevity after consumption."

"The Dragon King invited me to revise the nationwide Martial Cultivation plan this time, with the intent to mass-produce this Essence Qi Pill, allowing the entire nation to access it for cultivation or improving the elderly's constitution, truly benefiting society!"

Saying this, he slowly raised his eyes, looking at the crowd in the conference room, whose faces now showed some shame, and spoke calmly: "He independently developed the Divine Formation Disc, allowing those who obtain it to create Catalytic Spirit Liquid, helping us cultivate Alchemists, enabling our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow to be self-sufficient. Once the Essence Qi Pills can be mass-produced, he plans for us to distribute them, and from start to finish, he has had no intention of seeking fame or profit..."

"And what about you?"

Xia Ruochen's tone suddenly intensified, carrying a hint of anger as he reprimanded:

"Over the past year, our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow has been using the official organization's name to incessantly compete with the Dragon King Hall for benefits and advantages. Yet, when faced with the responsibility of defending Huaxia, you all retreat, leaving the Dragon King Hall to bear the brunt!"

"The Dragon King is sincerely trying to contribute to the people of Huaxia and benefit society, yet you accuse him of hidden agendas and wolfish intentions, worried he might steal your achievements. But aren't your so-called achievements given by him?"

"If you continue to harbor hostility towards the Dragon King Hall and treat the Dragon King as an enemy, driving the Dragon King Hall away, see who among you can bear those consequences!"

"The next time there's a ferocious beast outbreak or a city massacre, who's going to resist then?!"

Hearing Xia Ruochen's reprimand, everyone turned pale, their faces showing panic and unease.

Chapter 1293 Action and Slacking Off

"No way? Is the Dragon King Hall preparing to leave?"

Everyone carefully pondered the deeper meaning behind Xia Ruochen's last few words, unable to suppress a shiver, they asked in a panicked tone.

"Haven't you noticed it yet?"

Xia Ruochen looked at the ignorant subordinates below the stage, his face somewhat unsightly, impatiently said: "Not long after the Dragon King's proposal to the Elders for the nationwide martial arts plan, he left Huaxia for Kunlun Ruins. A year later, he returned to further perfect the nationwide martial arts plan."

"During this period, the incidents of ferocious beasts rampaging have always been handled by the Dragon King Hall. We have been comprehensively implementing the nationwide martial arts scheme behind the scenes, expanding our influence and prestige. You could say we've always been enjoying the benefits while they, the Dragon King Hall, have been bearing the responsibilities."

"And when the Dragon King returned from Kunlun Ruins and discovered some shortcomings in our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow, such as the inability to self-sustain with elixirs and flaws in the nationwide martial arts, he was conducting improvements. However, he did not plan to implement it himself, instead handing it over to us again for execution..."

"They've always been uncompetitive, quietly shouldering their responsibilities, yet allowing us the benefits. Are they really foolish?"

"No!" Xia Ruochen's voice suddenly rose a few degrees, "They are not foolish. Instead, they have thoroughly prepared to gradually transfer the Dragon King Hall's power and responsibilities to us, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow. Once we can stand on our own, he intends to lead the Dragon King Hall away from Huaxia to Kunlun Ruins!"

After listening to Xia Ruochen's words, everyone thought carefully, and their faces immediately turned even paler.

"So, since we can't retain the Dragon King Hall, we shouldn't continue to confront them with hostility. Instead, we should foster good relations, gain more benefits from them, and lessen the pressure when they leave."

"Otherwise, if right now we irritate the Dragon King Hall enough to make them walk away, can we, the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow, truly bear the heavy burden of defending Huaxia?"

Everyone was silent, no one dared to speak.

Yet in their hearts, they all thought, if the Dragon King Hall were to leave Huaxia now, many rebellious ferocious beasts still occupy its famous mountains. If they go berserk, Great Xia Dragon Sparrow at the Divinity Transformation Realm without the Fanxu Realm might not be able to withstand it.

At that time, all the good reputation currently enjoyed by the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow would provoke a more violent backlash, pointed at by thousands, leaving a notorious legacy.

Xia Ruochen looked at his subordinates with pale faces, not daring to speak anymore, and his expression slightly softened.

"Alright, enough of these bothersome matters. For now, our task is to cooperate with the Dragon King to perfect the nationwide martial arts plan, build good relations with them, and seize more benefits from it. I have just instructed all of our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow's talents with Fire Spirit Root to go to Yinlong Mountain to learn alchemy from the Dragon King!"

"Old Dong, what you need to do now is..."

Speaking, Xia Ruochen turned to a middle-aged man who appeared to be in his late forties or fifties, directing: "To supply the Essence Qi Pill for the entire nation, the Dragon King says we need at least a thousand cultivators with Wood Spirit Root, but so far our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow has recruited only over 700 such cultivators. It's insufficient; you need to find another 300 with Wood Spirit Root..."

Pausing for a moment, he added, "Of course, we can lower the moral character requirements slightly, but absolutely no one unqualified!"

"Also, we are now preparing for battle, heading to Qinling to capture this Dragon Vein Land as our Great Xia Dragon Sparrow stronghold, completing the task given by the Dragon King Hall!"

"..."

"Alright!"

"Understood, I'll get right on it!"

Listening to Xia Ruochen's instructions, everyone stood up with a mix of tension and excitement, starting to take action separately.

...

Yinlong Mountain.

At this moment, Mu Jinyu was unaware of Xia Ruochen's meeting with the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow and also perceived the preparation for their Dragon King Hall's departure.

Even if he knew, he wouldn't care much.

After all, he never intended to keep it a secret from them.

After over a day of attempts.

Mu Jinyu finally succeeded in crafting a pill furnace capable of independently refining Essence Qi Pills.

"Whoosh, whoosh!"

Mu Jinyu tossed a dozen spiritual medicines into the pill furnace, then closely observed the furnace's condition again.

Soon, the spiritual medicines entered the pill furnace, the lid closed, and the furnace began to draw the earth vein fire and started refining the medicinal liquid independently, with little loss of medicinal efficacy during the process.

Then, the medicinal liquid began to fuse together perfectly in sequence, without any premature combining of substances that could cause incidents.

Finally, the medicinal liquid solidified into a mass, further fused by the furnace's heat.

"Bang!!"

The pill furnace ceased absorbing the earth vein fire, halting the alchemy process, then the lid opened, revealing five Essence Qi Pills inside.

"Hmm... not bad... five pills formed, all of fair quality, adequate for use."

Mu Jinyu examined the five Essence Qi Pills within the furnace, noting each had only two Danwen, marking them as fair-quality elixirs, and nodded slightly, fairly satisfied with the result.

After all, these elixirs weren't crafted by human hands but were independently refined by the pill furnace using restrictions and formations, making the quality understandably a bit lacking, yet still acceptable.

Moreover, past elixirs, even those in Kunlun Ruins, mostly bore one or two Danwen, and people used them adequately. Now, although he had raised the quality, for something serving nationwide, there was little room for criticism.

After a day of work finally producing this pill furnace, Mu Jinyu stood and stretched lazily, taking no more rest but directly pulled countless mineral materials out of his storage bag and began crafting more pill furnaces and engraving restrictions.

"Bang!"

"Boom!"

"Boom boom!"

Minutes later, Mu Jinyu produced another pill furnace.

He became increasingly proficient, speeding up the creation process to about one pill furnace per minute.

A day later.

Mu Jinyu completed more than 1,500 pill furnaces.

"Hoo... exhausted, is a thousand pill furnaces enough now?!"

Mu Jinyu stopped crafting pill furnaces, stood up, stretched his back, and exhaled lightly.

Subsequently, he began calculating the productive yield of these furnaces within a day.

"Essence Qi Pills are relatively simple first-grade elixirs. Since the process is fully automated by the pill furnace, one batch takes about ten minutes, yielding roughly five pills per batch, that's five pills every ten minutes, thirty per hour, seven hundred twenty per day..."

"With a total of one and a half thousand furnaces running at full load, about one million and eighty thousand Essence Qi Pills can be produced per day..."

"A daily output of one million Essence Qi Pills might be a drop in the ocean for billions of people..."

Mu Jinyu said, frowning slightly, feeling he might need several more days of crafting pill furnaces truly to meet the demand. Yet, he felt too fatigued, muttering :

"But then, not all people need to consume Essence Qi Pills every day. Plus, once Great Xia Dragon Sparrow's alchemists are adequately trained, there will be mass production of Essence Qi Pills..."

After contemplating, Mu Jinyu ultimately admitted, with a sigh: "Alright, honestly, I'm just tired, wanting a break..."

"Well, since we haven't gathered enough Wood Spirit Root cultivators, and the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow has yet to capture Qinling, let's take a few days off before returning to work..."

Mu Jinyu stretched lazily and slipped out of the Inner Valley.

Chapter 1294 Rong City's Welfare Institute

Mu Jinyu walked out of the Inner Valley and arrived in front of the office buildings of the Dragon King Hall.

As his Divine Sense swept out, he noticed that on a certain floor, Zhou Yi was giving a morning lecture on alchemy knowledge to those students.

Mu Jinyu retracted his Divine Sense, not intending to disturb them, nor did he plan to replace Zhou Yi in teaching alchemy to those people.

He originally came out to slack off, so why would he go seek trouble?

Afterward, he went straight to the office and saw Mu Hongchen and Gu Xiyan handling affairs.

"Jinyu, you're out? Are you done with your work?"

Gu Xiyan noticed someone entering, looked up to see Mu Jinyu, and paused with her work a bit, curiously asking.

"Almost done, still a bit left. I'll rest a bit first; I'll get started once the preliminary work is ready," Mu Jinyu scratched his nose as he casually explained.

"Oh, are you hungry? If you are, let Mom or Xiaorou prepare something for you."

Gu Xiyao noticed Mu Jinyu seemed a bit hesitant but did not press further, then expressed her concern.

After all, Mu Jinyu had stayed in the Inner Valley all day yesterday, busy with artifact refining without coming out for meals, and he had instructed them not to disturb him. Though cultivators can practice fasting, they've always been used to eating, so she asked.

"Alright, I'll go and check."

Mu Jinyu nodded, then left the office, heading toward the kitchen, and didn't bother looking for Wen Rou and Su Zijin.

Upon reaching the kitchen, Mu Jinyu found some leftover pastries from their breakfast and ate a bit casually before going out to find Wen Rou and Mei Yinxue.

He saw everyone was busy handling the current nationwide martial cultivation plan, having no time for leisure with him, leaving sulkily.

"Sigh, everyone's busy, and refining the artifacts has me almost puking, I don't want to do it anymore, so where should I go?"

Mu Jinyu sighed softly, suddenly feeling slightly regretful about his plan to mass-produce Essence Qi Pills to benefit society, causing everyone to be too occupied to even take a break.

Of course, it was just a passing thought.

If he really regretted it and didn't want to continue, he could halt the plan any time.

He was merely complaining aloud.

Compared to letting everyone be busy for a while but later benefiting the people, he was still happy to do it.

However, because he wanted to slack off and rest temporarily, and felt guilty involving everyone else in his laze, he felt a bit bored.

"Right, when I returned from the River City Welfare Institute on Children's Day, I thought about visiting the welfare institute I used to stay in, but I've been too busy and nearly forgot about it."

Mu Jinyu suddenly remembered, back at River City Welfare Institute, he had let go of his past conflicts and was ready to revisit the welfare institute he stayed at long ago with Xiang Mantang. Later, words from Ning Yue and the old director had him whimsically lay out a comprehensive martial cultivation plan for societal benefit, staying busy since and almost forgetting this matter.

"Alright, since that's the case, I should first visit Rong City's Welfare Institute, and once done, Xia Ruochen should have resolved matters with Qinling and the Wood Spirit Root cultivators, then I ought to continue with the Pill Furnace..."

Deciding, Mu Jinyu went to find Wen Rou and Gu Xiyan, asking if they wanted to join him for a little break at the welfare institute he used to stay in.

Unexpectedly, he thought they'd be interested to revisit their old welfare institute and would drop everything to join him in a little leisure.

In the end, despite showing interest, they hesitated and shook their heads, saying they'd go later since there was still too much to handle and couldn't leave tasks pending.

"Alright then..."

Mu Jinyu left the office feeling a bit embarrassed, thinking he shouldn't be slacking like this and should focus on the necessary alchemy furnace instead.

But after returning to the Inner Valley and crafting several hundred Pill Furnaces, he could no longer endure it.

"Wow, I can't stand this, too dull and unbearable..."

Mu Jinyu put away the last crafted Pill Furnace into his Storage Bag with a gloomy face, muttering to himself, "Better go out for a bit, clear my mind, before continuing with the Pill Furnace..."

"Sister Mei with Cherishing Beauty and the others are too busy to entertain me, and slacking off would affect progress, so they can't join me, but my crafting Pill Furnaces doesn't affect the progress, no need to make myself sick over it, right?"

Mu Jinyu convinced himself, sending a message to the girls saying he was going out for some air. He then soared into the sky, flying towards Rongcheng in Fujian Province!

Half an hour later.

Mu Jinyu arrived in Rong City.

Walking on the streets after arriving, Mu Jinyu suddenly thought of a concern.

"Right, I vaguely remember the precise location of the welfare institute, but I'm not sure if it's still in operation. I should've checked before coming."

Considering this, being close to his old home, Mu Jinyu felt afraid of making a wasted trip and not meeting those he wished to see, making him hesitant to head over.

In the end, Mu Jinyu shook off his apprehension, strolling toward the welfare institute in his memory.

About ten minutes later.

Mu Jinyu arrived at the entrance of the Rong City Welfare Institute.

More than a decade had passed, and though the welfare institute had been renovated, it differed little from his memories, but many surrounding buildings had been rebuilt, nearly making him unrecognizable.

Taking a deep breath, Mu Jinyu stepped into the welfare institute.

"Hello, is there anything we can help you with?"

A welfare institute staff member saw Mu Jinyu enter, sensing his extraordinary aura despite his simple clothing, politely inquiring.

"Hello..." Mu Jinyu nodded toward them and then inquired about the old director's situation.

"You mean the old director? He passed away four years ago..."

The staff paused upon hearing Mu Jinyu's question, then recalled it was the old director's name, responding sadly.

"Passed away?"

Receiving this answer, Mu Jinyu, though prepared for this outcome, still felt a wave of sorrow.

In his mind, scenes of the once aged and kind face surfaced.

The old director had never treated him exceptionally well but never wronged him either. And aside... if it weren't for the old director who took him in, he probably wouldn't have met Xiang Mantang or Mu Shao'ai, might have long perished on the streets, and never learned the skills from his master to gain today's status.

Thus, finding out the old man had been gone for some years, Mu Jinyu felt a deep sigh and sorrow.

"Hey, you..."

Just then, a female staff member passing by overheard their conversation, turned to look at Mu Jinyu, found him somewhat familiar, furrowed her brow, and after a few more glances, hesitantly asked, "Sir, have you been at our welfare institute before..."

She didn't directly ask if Mu Jinyu grew up in the welfare institute, lest it turned into an awkward misunderstanding, but believed Mu Jinyu could understand.

"Yes, I used to live here at Rong City's Welfare Institute for some time, and now I'm back for a visit..."

Mu Jinyu turned to the staff member, feeling she seemed familiar but couldn't recall who she was, smiled and answered.

Chapter 1295 The Big Sister Who Once Took Care of Me! All These Years and Our Separate Paths!

"Really? No wonder you look familiar to me. What's your name?"

The woman, upon hearing Mu Jinyu's words, showed a hint of joy in her eyes before smiling and asking.

Over the years, many children who were adopted have come back to visit the orphanage, so she doesn't doubt Mu Jinyu's words.

"My name is Mu Jinyu. You probably haven't heard of me." Mu Jinyu also showed a slight smile, answering softly.

He stayed at this orphanage for about six months, while Xiang Mantang stayed a bit longer. Afterward, they were adopted and taken to Yinlong Mountain by Mu Shao'ai, so he didn't think many people would know him.

"Mu Jinyu?!"

Upon hearing Mu Jinyu's name, the woman showed a fleeting look of confusion, then frowned deeply in thought. Clearly, the name alone was not enough to immediately retrieve a corresponding image from her memory.

With this, Mu Jinyu chuckled softly and said, "I stayed here for over half a year and was then adopted and moved to Jiangnan. It's normal you don't remember me."

This female staff member, appearing to be about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, relatively young, wasn't among the batch of staff who took care of the children back then, so technically she shouldn't have seen him before, let alone remember him.

But Mu Jinyu said so because he noticed that this woman probably grew up in the orphanage herself and now comes back to volunteer when she's free.

And there's not much age difference between the two; perhaps they really met before.

"Half a year?!"

Upon hearing Mu Jinyu's words, the woman frowned even more tightly, constantly pondering which children were adopted around half a year back then.

Then, her eyes suddenly focused on Mu Jinyu, with a mix of surprise and incredulity, saying, "You're Mu Jinyu, that somewhat solitary and stubborn little boy from back then?"

Her tone grew a bit more emotional; she hadn't thought the long-gone Mu Jinyu would suddenly return now.

As she spoke, the woman frowned again in thought, "Hey, I remember at the time there was also an older boy adopted with you. What's his name?"

"Xiang Mantang." Mu Jinyu hadn't expected her to genuinely remember him and Xiang Mantang, so he smiled and reminded her.

"Yes, yes, Xiang Mantang..."

Upon hearing Mu Jinyu's reminder, the woman showed a realization in her gaze, nodding repeatedly.

After finishing, she quickly introduced herself, "I'm Cai Zhengyan. Do you remember me?"

Mu Jinyu listened, falling into deep thought, trying to recall who Cai Zhengyan was.

At the moment, he indeed couldn't remember her, but felt that she seemed increasingly familiar.

Cai Zhengyan, seeing Mu Jinyu's expression, knew he didn't have much impression of her. She wasn't upset at all, smiling, and reminded softly, "Did you really forget Sister Cai? You were a bit antisocial back then, often bullied by Little Guo and Little He. I remember I helped you a few times..."

"Also... I remember there was a day you somehow didn't eat enough or something, and your stomach was rumbling. You stubbornly refused to speak to everyone, and I remember it was over an hour until lunch. I used my pocket money to buy you a few buns..."

As she spoke, Cai Zhengyan's gaze showed a look of reminiscence, with the present image and appearance of Mu Jinyu gradually overlapping with the poor little boy hidden deep in her memories.

Listening to Cai Zhengyan's monologue, Mu Jinyu's mind flashed with understanding, finally recalling some past events, gaining a clear impression of her.

Back then, he was bullied, his breakfast was secretly poured into the slop bucket, and then those few bullied him further. How did they bully him? It seemed like making him eat food from the slop bucket? He forgot that part, but he didn't obey and just sat aside with an empty stomach. Then it seemed like an hour before lunch when an older girl bought him a few buns.

However, he remembered Cai Zhengyan got along better with the boys who bullied him. Feeling resentful, he didn't eat those buns in the end.

"I remember you refused to eat the buns I gave you, making me almost skip lunch..."

Cai Zhengyan's tone was slightly wistful yet happy in recalling.

Mu Jinyu chuckled, quietly saying, "I was young and ignorant back then, stubbornly refusing, but it ended up just making me hungry, haha..."

Recalling the past, those little conflicts among children were nothing, and Mu Jinyu naturally let everything go, holding no grudge against the boys who bullied him, nor any resentment towards the big sister who intended to care for him.

Cai Zhengyan, upon hearing this, got a bit of a hearty laugh, then asked, "Right, did you come back alone? How about Little Xiang? Isn't he coming?"

She remembered Xiang Mantang was adopted with Mu Jinyu, unsure if they separated afterward or still had contact.

Mu Jinyu and Cai Zhengyan exchanged curious glances, and after withdrawing his gaze, he gently replied, "He's pretty busy, currently out of town, and can't come back these days. When he has free time, I'll return with him to visit everyone..."

"Oh, I see... Right, how have you and Little Xiang been these years?"

Cai Zhengyan asked while leading Mu Jinyu around the orphanage, showing him the renovations while inquiring.

Mu Jinyu picked and chose, sharing what he could with Cai Zhengyan and ignoring what he couldn't explain or she might not comprehend.

"You found your mother? Congrats..."

At this point, upon hearing Mu Jinyu talk about recognizing his mother Su Zijin a year ago, Cai Zhengyan's face blossomed with joy and envy.

A child living in the orphanage who gets adopted by a good family is already lucky, and finding biological parents after that is even luckier.

Knowing Mu Jinyu had a good life after leaving the orphanage and recently reunited with his mother, Cai Zhengyan was genuinely happy for Mu Jinyu, while naturally feeling some envy in her heart.

"Thank you..."

Mu Jinyu accepted Cai Zhengyan's congratulations with a smile, then followed her into the courtyard, where some kids were playing on the seesaw and slide. As he and Cai Zhengyan entered, some children ran over excitedly, while others lingered shyly, possibly because of him.

"Come, there's enough for everyone... No pushing..."

Mu Jinyu took out handfuls of snacks from his storage bag, bent down, and distributed them to each child. The initially shy children rushed over too, and he continued sharing with them. After the children scattered, he stood up and asked Cai Zhengyan:

"Right, how have you guys been these years?"

He realized he'd been sharing his own status without learning about those who were his peers back then.

"We're doing okay..."

Cai Zhengyan showed a nostalgic gaze, softly mentioning a few names and explaining, "After you and Little Xiang were adopted, some of them also got adopted in the following years..."

"Oh, you might not remember them. They were only one or two years old and probably arrived at the orphanage after you... They never came back to visit our orphanage. It's normal; they probably don't remember living here at all..."

"For people like us, we're older, so naturally, no one's keen to adopt us. After graduating from nursing school, I work as a nurse at a nearby hospital and volunteer at the orphanage when I have time..."

Speaking gently, Cai Zhengyan's tone carried no sadness or inferiority, instead brimming with vitality and happiness.

She knows not everyone can have the kind of luck Mu Jinyu and Xiang Mantang had, getting adopted at a relatively old age. Even though she's had a tough time these years, the thought of the orphanage children always brings her joy.

As she spoke, her eyes suddenly brightened, "By the way, although not many people return to the orphanage in recent years, I contacted Little He, Little Guo, and Little Yang during Children's Day a few days ago to celebrate with the kids. I'm not sure if they're still in Rong City, but let me reach out and see if we can all gather..."

Chapter 1296 A Smile Dispels Past Grievances

Cai Zhengyan spoke, and without waiting for Mu Jinyu's response, she hurriedly took out her phone and made calls to a few people.

Mu Jinyu saw this and felt a bit helpless, but it was too late to try and stop her.

Then he thought, oh well, meeting up with them won't hurt.

Although, he wasn't really keen on meeting these people...

After all, judging by what Cai Zhengyan just said, these people were probably the same boys who bullied him as a child.

"Never mind, it's been so long. There's no need to hold grudges. Meeting them won't hurt."

Mu Jinyu told himself and didn't interrupt Cai Zhengyan after she finished contacting each person.

Soon, Cai Zhengyan had finished making several calls. She put down her phone and said somewhat regretfully, "Oh, what a pity, Little Zhao just left Rong City for Li City yesterday..."

After sighing, she smiled and said, "But Little Guo, Little He, and Little Yang are still in Rong City. I've contacted them, and we'll meet up for lunch together, my treat!"

She declared the last sentence with pride, slapping her chest with an air of boldness.

But Mu Jinyu noticed a barely detectable twinge of pain in her eyes as she spoke.

Then Mu Jinyu remembered that Cai Zhengyan mentioned she graduated from a nursing school and is now working at a nearby hospital. Her salary must not be high.

He assumed she rarely dined out.

Let alone treating several people to a meal.

Especially since it was Children's Day a few days ago, given her personality, she would have bought a lot of gifts and toys for the children at the welfare institute.

Right now, she must be even more strapped for cash.

If that's the case, why is she so insistent on gathering him and those people together?

Mu Jinyu thought for a moment and guessed that Cai Zhengyan was probably afraid he might still hold a grudge. That's why she wanted to bring together those who once bullied him. Now that they've all grown up and were raised in the welfare institute, they should turn hostility into friendship and support each other in the future...

Her efforts are truly commendable!

Mu Jinyu sighed softly to himself and quickly smiled, saying, "How can I let Sister Cai bear the expense? I should be treating, to atone for my past ignorance that nearly made you overeat!"

"Oh, saying that is just pointless. Those few buns were nothing!"

When Cai Zhengyan heard Mu Jinyu's words, warmth flashed in her eyes. Then she gave him a sidelong glance, displeased, "Little Mu, you've only returned after more than ten years, while I've always been at the welfare institute. You're a guest now, and I'm the host. Of course, the big sister should fulfill the host's duties."

Mu Jinyu wanted to say more, but Cai Zhengyan glared and said, "Don't you dare say you're treating, or I'll assume you look down on me."

Seeing this, Mu Jinyu didn't press further.

He knew Cai Zhengyan had her pride. Although she knew he was now relatively well off, she didn't want him to pay for a gathering she initiated.

If they'd kept in touch all these years, or if they were closer, it wouldn't have been like this.

He could have straightforwardly told Cai Zhengyan that they both knew each other's situations, and there was no need for her to act tough. He could pay, and she should save her money for the children. Besides, it's she who is going to help him resolve the old minor conflicts with them, so it's even more wrong for her to spend money...

But reuniting after more than ten years, when they're not that familiar, saying this to Cai Zhengyan would be inappropriate and could embarrass her.

After some thought, Mu Jinyu decided against suggesting they split the bill, nor did he think it necessary to sneakily pay it after they've eaten.

That would also be hurtful.

He could find a way to help Cai Zhengyan secure a better-paying job with more flexible hours afterward.

"Alright, I won't compete with you over this, Sister Cai." Mu Jinyu smiled shyly and said no more.

After that, he spent the rest of the time at the welfare institute, playing with the children, while Cai Zhengyan, not having as much free time, chatted with him briefly and then got busy with other things.

By eleven-thirty in the afternoon.

After making sure the children in the institute had finished lunch, Cai Zhengyan instructed other staff to watch over them for a bit, changed out of her work clothes, and said to Mu Jinyu, "Come on, let's go eat."

"Alright." Mu Jinyu nodded, waved goodbye to the children, and left the welfare institute with Cai Zhengyan.

After leaving the welfare institute, Cai Zhengyan brought a small scooter over and slightly tilted her head, signaling for Mu Jinyu to hop on.

Mu Jinyu didn't know where she was taking them for lunch, so he obediently got on.

"Hold on, we're setting off."

After Mu Jinyu was settled, Cai Zhengyan immediately started the scooter.

Half an hour later.

They stopped in front of a restaurant.

Seeing Cai Zhengyan stop the scooter, Mu Jinyu jumped off and looked up at the restaurant's sign.

Fragrant Pavilion.

Cai Zhengyan parked the scooter, took off her helmet, and smiled, "What do you think, the name sounds a lot like Little Xiang, right? We're eating here. The food is delicious and authentic, and Little He and the others are already here."

"Mm." Mu Jinyu murmured, nodding lightly.

Then the two of them entered the restaurant together.

"Hey, big sister, you're finally here. It's almost noon, and we're starving."

As they reached the entrance, two men dressed like migrant workers who had been squatting by the door jumped up and waved at Cai Zhengyan cheerfully, their expressions not matching their words of complaint.

"If you're so hungry, why didn't you go in and eat? What are you doing squatting out here..."

Cai Zhengyan chuckled at them then turned to introduce them to Mu Jinyu, "The one with all the gray hair is Yang Chao, and the scruffy one is He Jingting..."

She then introduced Mu Jinyu to them, "This is Mu Jinyu, the boy you bullied so badly as a child and who's back now to settle the score with you."

"Hehehe..."

"Sorry, brother, we were young and foolish back then, please forgive us..."

Yang Chao and He Jingting had already heard about Mu Jinyu from Cai Zhengyan and recalled their past encounters. Hearing Cai Zhengyan bring it up again made them smile awkwardly, sheepishly greeting Mu Jinyu.

They're now 24 or 25, have been working various jobs early on, and have been harshly shaped by society, losing that arrogant edge.

Mu Jinyu gazed at their weathered faces, sighed inwardly, and smiled, saying softly, "It's alright. Who didn't brawl and squabble as kids? Those days are behind us..."

He paused then smiled again, "Of course, if it bothers you, how about three self-imposed drinks later, and we'll forget past squabbles."

"Alright." Upon hearing this, Yang Chao and He Jingting exchanged a glance and breathed a sigh of relief, their smiles more sincere, nodding happily.

They're not without perception. Since Mu Jinyu got off and walked over with Cai Zhengyan, they've been observing him.

Mu Jinyu was impeccably clean, and while his clothes didn't have a recognizable brand, their material didn't look cheap, likely tailored.

In stark contrast to their cement-stained, dirty attire.

Their self-consciousness made them fear Mu Jinyu might seek revenge, fearing more hardships.

Seeing Mu Jinyu brush off past affairs, they felt relief and a sense of gratitude toward him.

"That's right, we're all from the welfare institute and practically family. Past minor conflicts don't count for anything. Come on, let's eat inside."

Cai Zhengyan, listening to their conversation, also smiled gently and invited them in.

"Hold on, let me finish this last puff."

Yang Chao said, taking a deep drag from his cigarette, nearly burnt to the butt, exhaling deeply before tossing the stub away with satisfaction etched on his weathered features.

After stomping the cigarette out with a few quick steps, Yang Chao turned to Mu Jinyu, "Let's go inside."

Chapter 1297 Eating and Toasting!

"By the way, big sister, why isn't Brother Guo here yet?"

As Yang Chao caught up with the others, he suddenly remembered something and asked curiously.

Cai Zhengyan, leading Mu Jinyu, headed straight to the private room she reserved, and said without turning back, "I just called Little Guo. He said he has something to do, so he might be late. Let's start eating first."

After all, this dinner gathering is mainly to welcome Mu Jinyu and help resolve past minor grievances. It's okay for Guo Songlin to be a bit late. We can order more later; we can't keep Mu Jinyu and the others starving.

Soon, the group arrived at the private room they booked. Cai Zhengyan took the initiative and ordered several dishes at once.

They were: braised red sturgeon with local noodles, pan-fried pig liver, poached mantis shrimp, steamed Estuary grouper, lychee pork, stir-fried crunchy duo...

"Let's get these first, and three bottles of beer, one bottle of Sprite. We'll order more if needed later."

Cai Zhengyan handed the menu to the waiter standing by.

"Okay."

The waiter took the menu and left.

Although Cai Zhengyan and Mu Jinyu sat facing each other, Mu Jinyu couldn't see the menu when Cai Zhengyan was ordering, but Mu Jinyu possessed a divine sense, so he knew exactly what dishes Cai Zhengyan ordered and how much it cost in total.

Almost five hundred bucks.

If these dishes were from a regular small shop, of course, they wouldn't cost so much, but Fragrant Pavilion's location is good, so naturally, it's pricier.

"Wow, big sister has been generous today!"

Yang Chao, sitting beside Cai Zhengyan, clearly saw what she ordered. After the waiter left, he exclaimed in an exaggerated tone.

"Of course, it's rare for us to gather like this today, so big sister has to be generous."

He Jingting also said with a smile.

"Hehe..." Cai Zhengyan said with a smile, "I'm generous because I'm the host today, and you two are footing the bill, so why wouldn't I be generous?"

"Huh?!"

"Big sister, what did you say?"

The two were dumbfounded, asking incredulously yet with a heavy heart after hearing Cai Zhengyan's words.

Cai Zhengyan chuckled, saying, "How many meals do you owe me over the years? You haven't treated me even once from a few years ago until now. Perfect opportunity today, finally caught you. Today, I'll bleed you guys dry to cool Little Mu's temper!"

Mu Jinyu was a bit stunned hearing this, thinking that maybe Cai Zhengyan was indeed planning to bleed them dry?

Yang Chao's expression changed. He suddenly clutched his stomach, wailing, "Oh, I can't take it anymore, my stomach hurts. Maybe I ate something bad. I'll head to the restroom first, you guys eat first..."

With that, he hurriedly stood up, hunching over to leave the private room.

"Hey, Old Yang, are you okay? Don't get into trouble. I'll come with you to check it out."

He Jingting quickly stood up as well, his face full of urgency as he spoke.

Saying this, he prepared to support Yang Chao to head out.

Cai Zhengyan, seeing this, rolled her eyes, saying, "Alright, alright, just kidding. Would I really bleed you dry? Who doesn't know you owe a huge debt. Just sit down and get ready to eat."

"Wow, big sister, as soon as you said that, my stomach doesn't seem to hurt anymore..."

As soon as Cai Zhengyan finished speaking, Yang Chao, who was hunched over in pain, immediately stood up straight, moved his hand away from his stomach, and scratched his head, with a face full of innocence and confusion.

"Ah? It's good if you're fine, sit down, sit down, let's get ready to eat... haha..."

He Jingting, seemingly unaffected, sat back down with a hearty laugh.

Mu Jinyu looked at their dramatic change of expressions with surprise, and suddenly felt a bit envious of their bond.

"Aren't you afraid Little Mu will laugh at you guys."

After they settled, Cai Zhengyan rolled her eyes again, saying with mock annoyance.

"Hahaha, this is nothing, it shows our siblingly good relationship, right?"

Yang Chao and He Jingting said with smirks.

Soon, the dishes were gradually served.

"Tss."

Three bottles of beer were also brought. Yang Chao promptly used his chopsticks to poke open a bottle, then poured himself a glass.

"Little Mu, come, brother will toast to you for what happened back then..."

Yang Chao gestured with his glass towards Mu Jinyu, saying a few words, then motioned to his stomach and chugged down the beer.

Seeing this, Mu Jinyu also picked up a beer bottle, filled his glass, then raised it to Yang Chao and downed it in one go.

He Jingting, noticing Mu Jinyu's quite good drinking capacity, his eyes lit up and he also raised a toast to Mu Jinyu.

"Come on, are you guys trying to get Little Mu drunk? Let's eat first, drink later..."

Cai Zhengyan saw them intending to continue drinking and exhaled lightly, saying with displeasure.

"Mmm, okay, let's fill our stomachs first, then drink after..."

Hearing this, Yang Chao shrank his neck a little, seemingly afraid of Cai Zhengyan getting mad, reluctantly put down the glass, and realizing he was indeed hungry, picked up his chopsticks to peel and eat a poached shrimp.

He Jingting did the same, putting down the glass, picking up his chopsticks, and digging into braised local noodles, devouring hungrily.

Cai Zhengyan, looking helplessly at their starving ghosts reborn eating style, subsequently took the communal chopsticks and spoon, serving Mu Jinyu some dishes and braised local noodles.

"Thanks, sis..."

"I can help myself..."

Seeing this, Mu Jinyu stood up, holding his bowl to receive the shrimp and noodles handed over by Cai Zhengyan, saying somewhat embarrassedly.

Cai Zhengyan giggled, "No need to be polite. These are Rong City's specialty dishes. When we were kids, we were too poor to afford this. Now... we're still poor, but we can occasionally indulge. Not sure if you came back to Rong City to eat any of these after you left, try the flavors..."

Watching his porcelain bowl being filled with food by Cai Zhengyan, Mu Jinyu softly replied, "Um... if you mean coming back, I visited a town in Rong City last year, but I had business and didn't stay long..."

"As for the food... I've had these dishes in Jiangnan and Capital City. I'm not sure if they're authentic, but I quite liked them, they suited my taste..."

"Alright, that's enough, sis, it's spilling over..."

Near the end, Mu Jinyu noticed his small bowl nearly overflowing with braised red sturgeon noodles, quickly reminded her.

Cai Zhengyan finally stopped, then served herself some noodles, saying, "Come, try it out. The braised red sturgeon noodles here at Fragrant Pavilion are absolutely authentic. See if they're any different from those in the Capital City?"

"Okay, sure."

Mu Jinyu responded, picking up a section of local noodles with his chopsticks, and started eating slowly.

Local noodles made from sweet potato starch appeared crystal clear, very appetizing, coated with seafood sauce. One bite and they were fresh and smooth, wonderfully bouncy, with the red sturgeon's flavor thoroughly absorbed by the noodles, quickly igniting his taste buds.

"Mm, delicious..."

Mu Jinyu's eyes lit up, taking big bites of the braised noodles, while finding time to compliment Cai Zhengyan.

"Hehe, eat more if you like it..." Cai Zhengyan grinned with satisfaction, also starting to pick up dishes for herself with her chopsticks.

"Come, a toast!"

A few minutes later, feeling rather full, Yang Chao picked up his glass again, filled it with beer, and called out to Mu Jinyu.

"Alright." Mu Jinyu was picking up a piece of silky smooth pig liver, and upon hearing Yang Chao's words, unhurriedly tossed the liver into his mouth, swallowed it, then filled his glass and clinked glasses with Yang Chao.

"Hold on, let's toast together..."

Seeing this, He Jingting quickly put down his bowl, motioning for them to wait, filled his glass, and joined them to clink glasses.

Chapter 1298 Guo Songlin! Lackey!

After rounds of drinks and various dishes.

When the meal was almost over, Yang Chao and He Jingting had downed several bottles of beer and were slightly tipsy.

"Knock knock."

At this moment, there was a knock on the door.

"It must be Little Guo coming."

Cai Zhengyan, who looked a bit helpless watching Yang Chao and others trying to outdrink Mu Jinyu, heard the knock and her eyes brightened. She quickly got up to open the door.

"Why are you only here now? We're almost done eating. If you don't hurry, we'll be ready to settle the bill and leave."

Cai Zhengyan opened the door and saw a man standing outside about 1.75 meters tall, with a decent appearance and slightly tan skin, speaking in a tone with some complaint.

The man was none other than Little Guo, Guo Songlin.

Guo Songlin's brow carried a hint of pride and fatigue, but upon hearing Cai Zhengyan's complaint, he collected that pride and fatigue, and explained with a bitter smile: "Sister, it's not that I want to procrastinate. I haven't even had breakfast yet and I'm still hungry now. There's really too much going on in the department lately, can't help it..."

"You haven't even had breakfast yet? Come on in, quickly order some food first."

When Cai Zhengyan heard Guo Songlin's words, she couldn't help but show some pity in her eyes, and then stepped aside to let Guo Songlin quickly enter.

Guo Songlin stepped into the private room, glanced at the three people sitting inside, nodded slightly towards Yang Chao and He Jingting, and said softly: "Everyone's here..."

Compared to Cai Zhengyan, his tone was a bit colder.

Yang Chao and He Jingting stood up and greeted with a smile: "Brother Guo is here? Quickly sit down, let's order some more dishes..."

They were also self-aware, knowing they dropped out of middle school to become migrant workers, while Guo Songlin graduated from a prestigious university and became a civil servant. The gap between the two sides was huge, and there wasn't much to talk about. They naturally didn't try to forcibly connect with Guo Songlin, nor did they call out annoyingly about latecomers being fined three drinks as soon as he arrived...

"Hmm..." Guo Songlin nodded, but didn't hurry to sit down and order food. Instead, he looked at Mu Jinyu.

Upon seeing Mu Jinyu's clean and neat appearance and handsome demeanor, which was worlds apart from the sloppy Yang Chao and He Jingting beside him, his brow slightly furrowed inadvertently.

"Are you Mu Jinyu?"

Guo Songlin asked, his tone carrying a hint of arrogance and skepticism.

He still had a vague impression of the little boy they used to bully as children, but couldn't reconcile the current Mu Jinyu in front of him with that frail boy from the past.

Because Mu Jinyu now seemed to be in better condition than him, which made him somewhat uncomfortable.

"Hmm." Mu Jinyu heard the arrogance and coldness in Guo Songlin's tone, gently nodded, replied briefly, and didn't say much.

He came to Rong City's Welfare Institute simply to see how his former companions were doing now.

No matter their attitude towards him, he didn't care much.

If their attitude was very cold, he planned to chat a bit and leave. But since Cai Zhengyan and Yang Chao had expressed great kindness and enthusiasm, he stayed.

Thus, he wouldn't leave directly due to Guo Songlin's coldness, just ignore him.

"Sister, you don't think he's deceiving you, right? It doesn't seem right to me, I have no impression at all..."

Guo Songlin saw Mu Jinyu's indifferent attitude, furrowed his brow again, and then turned to Cai Zhengyan with questioning doubt.

"It's really him, Little Mu from the past. I talked to him a lot this morning. If he was a liar, how would he know about those things from our past?"

Cai Zhengyan rolled her eyes at him upon hearing his doubt, then patiently explained.

"Exactly, he's truly the boy from back then. We were just discussing quite a bit about the past, and he answered effortlessly." Yang Chao chimed in.

He Jingting then self-deprecatingly chuckled, shaking his head: "What would he gain by deceiving us? Fraud or seduction? We are all broke, in debt up to our necks, where would he find money to trick us?"

"As for seduction, Sister, although you look decent, he's even younger and more handsome, if he really intends on seducing Sister, wouldn't he suffer a loss!"

Upon hearing He Jingting's words, Cai Zhengyan glared at him, dissatisfied: "What do you mean by I look decent? I've got plenty of suitors..."

In her mind, she thought if Mu Jinyu was indeed trying to deceive her, it might not be a loss for her.

But she was merely thinking in jest, not sincerely considering pursuit of Mu Jinyu. She acknowledged that he likely wouldn't be interested in her.

Seeing the three stand by Mu Jinyu and speak for him, Guo Songlin felt even more discomfort, but refrained from saying much else, slightly nodded: "As long as it's clear..."

Then, he pulled out a chair to sit beside Mu Jinyu, without speaking to him, and picked up the menu to start ordering food again.

"We're all pretty much done eating, no need to order so much. If you can't finish, it'll all be wasted."

Cai Zhengyan sat opposite, unable to see what Guo Songlin ordered, but sitting beside Mu Jinyu gave him a clear view without using Divine Sense—what Guo Songlin ordered: steamed bass, lobster, Buddha Jumps Over the Wall...

This simple selection already exceeded two thousand, prompting Mu Jinyu to advise.

"No worries, go ahead and order, it won't waste much." Cai Zhengyan, unaware of the eighteen hundred Buddha Jumps Over the Wall that Guo Songlin ordered, waved generously.

Guo Songlin continued flipping through the menu, ordering, responding coldly to Mu Jinyu, "Won't waste much; I'll cover the bill later."

"Hey now, I said I'd treat, why are you snatching the bill..."

Upon hearing Guo Songlin's words, Cai Zhengyan slightly raised her brows, annoyed.

At this moment, Guo Songlin handed her the menu: "Sister, see if you want to add anything else."

Cai Zhengyan accepting it, planned to see what else to order while persuading Guo Songlin to abandon paying, but upon seeing the eighteen-hundred-eighty-eight Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, her words to persuade him immediately swallowed back.

Cai Zhengyan abruptly looked up at Guo Songlin, eyes helplessly watching him, irritably uttered: "Did you intentionally order something so expensive?"

Her monthly salary was only over three thousand, and this meal of more than two thousand dollars, close to three thousand, how could she afford it?

Guo Songlin was clearly aware of her situation, yet intentionally ordered this much, evidently planning for him to pay, leaving them no opportunity.

This made her feel quite helpless as though she deliberately contacted Guo Songlin for a get-together, only to have him pay.

Guo Songlin chuckled, saying: "Sister, I mean nothing else, but I now dine out like this. We're all family, there's no need for clear separation over who pays for what, right? Today, it's my treat, next time, when you get your paycheck, treat me then."

"Given you've done this, what can I do?" Cai Zhengyan shook her head, helpless.

Yang Chao and He Jingting learned Guo Songlin ordered Buddha Jumps Over the Wall, couldn't help but give him a thumbs up, praising: "Big Brother, awesome!"

Guo Songlin listened to their praises quite contentedly, as though returning to the days at the Welfare Institute when they played errand boys for him.

After the waiter took the menu and left, Guo Songlin then turned to the calmly-faced Mu Jinyu and asked, "Little Mu, right?"

"What's up?" Mu Jinyu turned to look at him.

Guo Songlin asked: "What are you up to now, still in school?"

Chapter 1299: I Have 6 Girlfriends! Mu Jinyu, King of Mooching!

"Going to school?"

Mu Jinyu heard Guo Songlin's words, shook his head slightly and said, "After being adopted by my master, I've been living in the mountains. I only came down last year and never went to school."

Indeed, he never went to school as a child. He rather envied the kids who did attend school and understood some of his own shortcomings. That's why he got so angry when Xia Ruochen also sent those elementary students with Fire Spirit Root up for alchemy lessons.

"Never went to school? Living in the mountains? Seems like you had quite a good life."

Guo Songlin, hearing Mu Jinyu's answer, couldn't help but show a hint of disdain in his eyes before laughing.

"Yeah, it's okay," Mu Jinyu nodded.

"So do you have a job? What do you do?" Guo Songlin asked again.

Mu Jinyu shook his head and said, "I've never had a job. I opened a company last year, but it closed down. Then, I had some business to attend to abroad for a year. I just came back recently and am resting at home."

"Oh." Guo Songlin nodded upon hearing that, then asked curiously, "Hey, you haven't really worked. What do you eat? Your clothes seem nice too, where do you get the money?"

Mu Jinyu explained, "The company I opened last year, although it closed down later, it wasn't because of bankruptcy. It still made some money, enough for me to live on. As for what I eat, my mom and my wives cook for me. What's strange about that?"

"Oh, that's how it is..."

When Guo Songlin heard Mu Jinyu's explanation, he thought to himself, what kind of company closes and still makes enough money for him to live on? Probably lost a ton of money but just doesn't want to lose face by saying so.

As for lazing around without a job and still having money to live on, probably his mom's family has some assets, right?

Damn, this lucky guy, and he can even find relatives like that.

Meanwhile, Yang Chao and He Jingting noticed Mu Jinyu mentioning the word "wives..."

They exclaimed, "Hey, you're not even twenty yet, right? You're married?"

They felt a real pang of envy, as they were both twenty-five and had been single since birth while Mu Jinyu seemed to be between eighteen and twenty. Without a job, and already married.

But thinking about Mu Jinyu's handsome face, they could understand.

Mu Jinyu looked at Yang Chao and them, nodded, and said, "Yeah, I'm almost nineteen. Actually, I'm not married yet, but it's pretty much the same. We're planning to have a wedding ceremony when we have time."

"Them?" Cai Zhengyan keenly noticed this point, raised an eyebrow, and asked curiously.

Actually, she had noticed just now that Mu Jinyu said, "My mom and my wives cook for me," but thought she heard wrong. Now hearing "them," she was sure she hadn't misheard.

Does Mu Jinyu have more than one girlfriend?

Mu Jinyu looked at Cai Zhengyan and nodded, "Yeah, I have six wives."

"What? Seriously?"

"You have six wives? You're two-timing six people? Do they know about each other?"

At this point, Yang Chao and He Jingting also realized that when Mu Jinyu talked about girlfriends, he used the plural, which clearly wasn't just one girlfriend, and they exclaimed in amazement.

After that, they looked at Mu Jinyu with both disapproval of a playboy and envy full of jealousy.

Mu Jinyu chuckled and said, "Of course it's true. They also know about each other, and we all live together."

"Oh my god, this is outrageous, young man, you don't follow the path of martial arts. Haven't you heard of the six rules for finding a girlfriend? You're just messing around!"

Yang Chao cried out as if utterly disappointed.

"What are the six rules?" Mu Jinyu asked curiously.

He Jingting sighed and explained, "The six rules for finding a girlfriend are as follows..."

"First, find a girl who can make you laugh.

"Second, find a girl who has a stable job.

"Third, find a girl who likes to do housework.

"Fourth, find an honest girl.

"Fifth, find a girl who understands romance and passion.

"Sixth, try not to let them all meet at once..."

Yang Chao nodded and sighed, "Yeah, and you let them meet and still survive. You really are something!"

Listening to them, Mu Jinyu nodded slightly, thinking that girls who can make him laugh like Gu Xiyan might be one.

Find a girl with a stable job, Gu Xiyan, Mei Yinxue, Xu Qingya, Yu Linglong would all count, right?

Find a girl who likes housework, well, Wen Rou and Lin Qiaoxia both do.

Find an honest girl, that's also Wen Rou and Lin Qiaoxia.

Find a girl who understands passion and romance going wild, that must be Mei Yinxue.

The only thing he failed to do was let them meet and know about each other's existence...

However, now they are all living together, and nothing seems to be wrong. Looks like he did even better.

"Bravo, bravo..."

Cai Zhengyan was stunned upon hearing Mu Jinyu admit he has six girlfriends, and then listening to his conversation with Yang Chao and the others, she was left even more bewildered.

After coming to her senses, she gave Mu Jinyu a thumbs up and praised, "Impressive, Little Mu, managing six relationships without sinking. You're truly remarkable!"

Guo Songlin watched them cease their compliments about his generous invitation and instead praise Mu Jinyu, and his face slightly soured.

He listened to their conversation and felt like Mu Jinyu was boasting.

Not educated, unemployed, and still managing not to sink with six relationships? Impossible!

But then he closely examined Mu Jinyu's handsome face and thought maybe there was a possibility. In past eras, living off charm was quite appealing.

'This guy probably lived off his looks before, humph...' Guo Songlin said sourly to himself.

Then he snorted coldly in his mind, sourly saying: 'But now the times have changed. Relying solely on looks isn't going to cut it. It's gonna be the era where martial prowess is king...'

This past year in college and at work, he witnessed quite a few people with ordinary or even ugly looks, standing only about 1.6 or 1.7 meters tall, who, before the Spiritual Energy Revival, had the same conditions where finding a girlfriend was difficult in a face-and-money-dominant era.

But just because they have some Martial Arts talent, after the Spiritual Energy Revival, even if they didn't reach the Master Energy Transformation stage, just reaching the Dark Energy level meant despite looking very unattractive, they could snatch the girlfriends of the tall, rich, and handsome, enjoying a harem. Furthermore, many pretty girls preferred sharing them for more safety in life than pairing one-on-one with a handsome but unreliable guy.

After all, could handsomeness fill one's stomach? Could handsomeness ensure survival against a ferocious beast attack? Could handsomeness protect a girl?

Thinking about it, Guo Songlin figured, what does it matter if Mu Jinyu is handsome? Even if he wasn't lying and really has six girlfriends now, without education, without a job, he's unlikely to get into martial arts cultivation. Once his girlfriends come into contact with cultivators, they'd eventually leave him.

With this thought, Guo Songlin felt much better and then coldly advised, "Living off others without shame, you're really something! But now the times are different. Without skills, no matter how handsome or rich you are, you can't protect your women in danger. The prettier your wife, the easier for her to be taken by someone else. Watch yourself."

Mu Jinyu turned his head to Guo Songlin, nodded gently, and smiled, saying, "It's okay, if I can't protect them, they can protect me."

Chapter 1300: Bragging Out of Control! Envyng Scholars!

Hearing Mu Jinyu's words, Guo Songlin was left dumbfounded.

My god, this guy is shameless.

Relying on his face, he used to deceive women for free meals and drinks, now the times have changed, and he wants women to protect him?

Is it possible for a man to be so shameless?

"Damn!"

"Awesome! Bro, do you know you've gone too far with these words?"

Yang Chao and He Jingting raised their thumbs at Mu Jinyu, full of admiration.

Then, they curiously asked, "Hey, you're saying you want the girls to protect you, does that mean there's a cultivator among them?"

"Not just one, all of them are." Mu Jinyu nodded.

"Seriously?" They looked at Mu Jinyu, startled and stammering.

They thought the girls who would let Mu Jinyu have his way were just normal girls, having just one cultivator would be extremely unusual, but Mu Jinyu said they were all cultivators?!

That seems pretty impossible, right?

It made them start to doubt the truth of Mu Jinyu's words.

"It's true, why would I lie to you?" Mu Jinyu laughed.

"Then what are their powers? Dark energy or Mingjin?" they asked curiously.

Cai Zhengyan also looked at Mu Jinyu full of curiosity, waiting for his response.

They thought, if a cultivator could accept multiple women for one man, their strength must not be very high, right? Otherwise, how could they agree to Mu Jinyu's ways instead of them having multiple husbands!

So... maybe their power is just Mingjin? Or Dark energy?

If it's any higher, the possibility is very low...

Mu Jinyu shook his head and said, "No, it's the Fanxu Realm."

"Fanxu Realm? What kind of realm is that, never heard of it..."

When Yang Chao and the others heard Mu Jinyu's words, they were all confused, having never heard of this realm.

"Isn't it said that the cultivation realms are only Mingjin, Dark energy, Energy Transformation, and then higher to God Realm? What is the Fanxu Realm?"

They looked at Mu Jinyu with suspicion, their doubtful glances intensified.

Mu Jinyu explained, "The full name of the God Realm is Divinity Transformation Realm, a more complete name is Qi Refining and Spirit Transforming, and the Fanxu Realm is the realm above the Divinity Transformation Realm, also fully named Refining Spirit Returning to Void..."

"The realm above the God Realm?"

"All six of your girlfriends are in the Fanxu Realm above the God Realm?"

"Hahaha, come on, you almost had us convinced, damn, damn!"

After hearing Mu Jinyu's explanation, Yang Chao and He Jingting were silent for a moment before they realized that Mu Jinyu was just joking and boasting to them, then burst into laughter.

They no longer believed Mu Jinyu's claim about having girlfriends in such high realms, nor did they believe his previous claim about having six girlfriends.

They thought all those words were just Mu Jinyu teasing them.

Cai Zhengyan rolled her eyes at Mu Jinyu, speechless, and said, "With your face and slick tongue, I don't doubt you can walk multiple paths at once even in these times."

"But..." she paused and then reminded, "Times have changed, and before, when you were caught two-timing, the danger was low, but now, even if your girlfriend is an ordinary person, there's no guarantee her brother or cousin isn't a cultivator, so I advise you not to play Sea King, because being a Sea King now could really be life-threatening..."

She was a nurse, working in a hospital, and had seen many Sea Kings who were caught and suffered consequences. They thought the girls weren't cultivators and easy to deceive, but without doing proper research, found out their cousin or brother were cultivators and ended up in a mess, nearly losing their lives...

That's why she advised Mu Jinyu to be a good person.

Guo Songlin relaxed at this moment, feeling less sour inside, and only thought Mu Jinyu was joking with them. He found this guy quite interesting and laughed, "You say your girlfriends are in the Fanxu Realm above God Realm, then are you also at the Fanxu Realm?"

Mu Jinyu seriously said, "Of course not, my strength is in the Unity Realm Stage above the Fanxu Realm."

"Pfft... hahaha..."

"You are something else, talking about the Unity Realm above the Fanxu Realm? If that's true, then you're the number one on Earth now, aren't you?"

"Wow, I never realized you were this amusing before?"

"Yeah, he's changed a lot. He was so introverted and inferior back then, but now he can calmly blow smoke with us without blushing, impressive, impressive..."

After Mu Jinyu spoke, everyone, including Cai Zhengyan, Yang Chao, He Jingting, and Guo Songlin, couldn't help but laugh out loud.

Even the waiter who came in with dishes happened to hear and tightly pursed their lips, smilingly quickly placed dishes on the table, then left.

The waiter was afraid of laughing out loud and causing trouble later.

"I'm not joking with you, if you don't believe it, that's fine."

Mu Jinyu actually knew well in advance that when he would speak the truth, they still wouldn't believe it, but he didn't care. He was just preparing them mentally, so when he reveals his identity in the future, it won't be so shocking.

Soon, this lunch ended in a very pleasant atmosphere.

During the meal, Guo Songlin, who initially had a rather cold attitude towards Mu Jinyu, gradually became friendlier towards him.

After the meal, Guo Songlin went to pay the bill, which totaled over three thousand yuan.

However, Guo Songlin kept his expression unchanged and directly swiped his card, showing the charm of a successful person.

Yang Chao and others stood by the counter, waiting for Guo Songlin to finish paying before they all left together. Casually, they said to Mu Jinyu, "Brother Guo is indeed successful now. It's said that he's achieved Minor Great Achievement in Dark Energy as a Martial Artist and is close to Major Great Achievement, receiving a lot of appreciation from his leaders. Even if the times hadn't changed, he could have become a civil servant with ease, of course, his martial arts talent is even better, making these times more advantageous for him..."

"Yes, after all, his academic performance was excellent back in school. After passing the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow assessment, he received substantial nurturing. We working-class folks can't compare; they think we're old hands, hard to manage, and even with talent, they wouldn't want to recruit us..."

He Jingting also said with emotion and envy.

After the spiritual energy revival on Earth, Huaxia's official departments like the Great Xia Dragon Sparrow were formed, promoting a nationwide martial cultivation plan, but it was just for appearances.

In reality, it's impossible for everyone to cultivate.

The key group for the nationwide martial cultivation plan is still students, as they're like blank slates, easier to nurture.

Unlike people already in society, who come from all walks of life, no matter how talented, there's a possibility of losing control, so generally, Great Xia Dragon Sparrow is unwilling to accept cultivators who aren't students.

Just like companies prefer fresh graduates because they have no work experience and are newcomers, they can integrate into a company's culture more easily.

The same logic applies.

This is also why, knowing that Mu Jinyu didn't attend school, when he boasted about his great strength, they couldn't bring themselves to believe it.

Because a year ago, without a formal education, you couldn't be a civil servant, and now without a degree, you can't be a martial artist or cultivator with a government post either.

At most, you have to secretly join a small sect and become a loose cultivator.