

M. Slaying 33

Chapter 33: The Three Problems of Mount Shu

In the Mount Shu Sect, a well-known saying revolves around the Three Problems of Mount Shu. These three problems represent the shared desires of the community: mahjong, hotpot, and Di Nufeng[1].

In the southwestern lands, mahjong was a renowned pastime, and the Mount Shu Sect was no exception to this tradition.

In the past, the Mount Shu Sect was infamous among the sects in the Divine Nine and the Terrestrial Ten for their love for mahjong. During the peak of the Mount Shu Sect's influence, when they were at the forefront of the other sects in the immortal realm, there were even those who questioned whether mahjong could somehow enhance one's cultivation—a notion that was rather absurd.

As the Mount Shu Sect's influence waned, the sect's leaders began imposing restrictions on leisure activities that often led to the neglect of cultivation. Despite these restrictions, people continued to indulge in mahjong.

Even now, mahjong continued to be one of the most beloved pastimes within the Mount Shu Sect, kept in check to ensure it didn't become excessive.

During the Mount Shu Summit, which took place every decade, in addition to formal events like various peak competitions, there were also entertainment activities such as the Mount Shu Mahjong Tournament, the Flying-Sword Race, the Spirit-Pet Combat Tournament, and more. Among these, the mahjong tournament consistently stood out as the most intense in terms of entertainment.

As for hotpot, it enjoyed popularity in the southwestern lands, and the Mount Shu Sect was no exception to this culinary trend.

But why has hotpot become a problem?

This problem stemmed from the all-encompassing nature of hotpot dining, encapsulated by the saying within the Mount Shu Sect that anything could be cooked in a hotpot.

Over time, the hotpot at Mount Shu had developed two distinct characteristics: The spicier, the better and the more exotic, the better.

The disciples of the Mount Shu Sect embraced an anything-goes mentality when it came to hotpot ingredients. Birds, beasts, demons, and monsters—all had found their way into the hotpot.

There was a time when Mount Shu disciples competed fiercely, trying to catch rare demonic creatures to spice up their hotpot experience.

It became a case of "Today, dragon liver; tomorrow, phoenix marrow," and things got out of hand. With each escalation, more demonic creatures ended up in the hotpot.

In those days, there was a saying that disciples of the Mount Shu Sect would consume anything.

While disciples of other sects contemplated whether to sell or slay demonic creatures when they encountered them, disciples of Mount Shu pondered whether to prepare them in spicy oil or a clear broth.

Ultimately, the sect leader intervened and issued a decree to stop this unethical behavior, putting an end to the practice.

The first two issues had persisted for a considerable period, but the third problem, Di Nufeng, was a relatively recent addition.

When Di Nufeng was young, she had been a tyrant at Mount Shu, displaying arrogance and frequently bullying others. Regrettably, she also happened to be an exceptional fighter. Consequently, many of the disciples in her cohort fell victim to her bullying.

When she vied for the position of peak master later on, she had garnered no support from her peers. Nevertheless, they were powerless against her, given that she had attained the cultivation level of the Dao Attainment Realm.

Most of the thirty-six peak masters in the Mount Shu Sect were at the sixth realm of cultivation, known as the Transcendence Realm. Only around ten disciples had attained the level of Dao Attainment Realm. In terms of combat strength alone, Di Nufeng would rank among the top three rather than the top ten.

In fact, not a single one of the peak masters had ever dared to claim that they could defeat Di Nufeng.

Fortunately, since Di Nufeng assumed the role of peak master, she had exhibited greater restraint. In recent years, reports of Di Nufeng causing disturbances had become infrequent, to the extent that some younger disciples were unaware of why she was regarded as one of the three problems in the Mount Shu Sect.

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On this particular day, a few young disciples of the Mount Shu Sect were engaged in a game of mahjong, relishing hotpot, and engaging in conversation about Di Nufeng.

"Boss, are you seriously considering a direct confrontation with him? You mustn't do that!" exclaimed Lackey A.

Within a wooden cabin on Cloud Horizon Peak, a pot of simmering spicy oil filled the air with a tantalizing aroma as slices of meat and fishballs floated in it, bobbing up and down.

Lackey B deftly scooped a spoonful of beef tripe, skillfully maneuvered the meat with his chopsticks, and then transferred it into his bowl.

Shang Ziliang sat upright, a deep frown etched across his face, and his expression radiated sadness and worry as he inquired, "Why can't I do that? Haven't you investigated already? Chu Liang is merely a low-level cultivator at the beginning stage of the Spiritual Awareness Realm. I have already reached the pinnacle of the Spiritual Awareness Realm, and I am currently in the process of forming my Golden Core. I'm on the verge of a breakthrough. If I were to confront him directly, I would surely emerge victorious, wouldn't I?"

Shang Ziliang had previously observed Xu Ziqing and Chu Liang appearing unusually close in the Hall of Weapons. A peculiar scent seemed to linger on both of them, further fueling his suspicions.

Following some thorough investigation, he uncovered that the two had recently embarked on a mission together, forming a strong bond during their journey. Shang Ziliang felt so agitated that he contemplated paying Chu Liang a visit to warn him to stay away from Xu Ziqing.

"Boss..." Lackey A advised, "The only detail you're aware of is Chu Liang's status as a cultivator at the Spiritual Awareness Realm, but you should also know that his teacher is Di Nufeng!"

As for Lackey B, he was busy scooping up a generous portion of fatty beef, expertly dipping it into sesame sauce, and relishing the flavors.

Shang Ziliang retorted, "And so what if his teacher is Di Nufeng? My father is a peak master. Do you think my father will be intimidated by her?"

Lackey A fell silent for a moment. However, the look in his eyes left no room for doubt... Shang Ziliang's father might indeed be fearful of Di Nufeng.

Among the various peak masters, Shang Ziliang's father, Shang Shuwen, didn't stand out for his cultivation prowess. He was known for his scholarly and gentle nature, a stark contrast to Di Nufeng, who was almost his complete opposite...

"If it were any other peak master, they might show some respect for your father and spare you from any trouble. But Di Nufeng... has never shown anyone respect. If you provoke her, who knows what might happen?" advised Lackey A, who was genuinely concerned.

As for Lackey B, he was busy scooping up a few pieces of tofu and yellow croaker.

"Then what do you suggest we do?" Shang Ziliang inquired.

"Boss, the fear of his teacher is not the only reason we are avoiding a confrontation. If you visit him without a valid cause, order him to stay away from Junior Sister Ziqing, and if things escalate to a physical altercation... In any light, our actions wouldn't be justified," Lackey A said, analyzing in a composed manner. Then he advised, "In my opinion, it's safer to handle this discreetly."

Lackey B had just scooped up a large piece of vegetable from the pot.

"Act discreetly? But I still want to warn him. How can we achieve this discreetly?" Shang Ziliang frowned as he contemplated.

Lackey A suggested, "By employing a bit of schemes, we can make him suffer. Then, we'll send him a warning message, stating that if he ever approaches Junior Sister Ziqing again, he will suffer

even more... This way, our identities will stay concealed. Even if his teacher decides to advocate for him, she won't be able to find us. What are your thoughts on this?"

Lackey B rose from his seat and scooped up some remaining meat from the bottom of the pot.

Shang Ziliang chuckled and asked, "That works. How do you propose we make him suffer?"

Lackey A smiled and replied, "I thought about this already, Boss. Do you remember Baize?"

Observing the sly expression on Lackey A's countenance, Shang Ziliang momentarily froze. Then, a knowing smile adorned his face as he complimented, "You are exceptionally smart."

In a few brief exchanges, the two devised their plan. Shang Ziliang's mood improved, and his appetite returned. He reached for his chopsticks, preparing to serve himself some food...

But to his surprise, the pot was empty.

"Eh? Where did the food go?" he asked.

"Yeah! Where did the food go?" Lackey A also hadn't noticed.

"I have no idea," Lackey B, appearing puzzled, shook his head and remarked, "I feel like the food vanished even before we started eating."

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Chu Liang returned to his cabin and engaged in meditation and energy circulation for a while. Even with the Large-Headed Doll in his possession, he persisted in his cultivation whenever he had spare moments. After all, real and diligent cultivation was of utmost importance.

Approximately four hours later, he retrieved the Soul Subjugator Token to check for any new messages.

It seemed that when the person known as Fiend remained silent, the interdimensional soul domain would become exceedingly quiet.

It made sense, considering that these ruthless diabolical cultivators typically operated in the shadows and focused on life-or-death matters. They shouldn't have much time for leisure or casual interactions.

Chu Liang then noticed a letter on the stone table outside, presumably delivered while he was cultivating.

He reached out to retrieve the letter. Upon opening it, he found only two lines of small text.

Senior Brother Chu, I will be waiting for you at the Treasure Pagoda Peak...

Xu Ziqing.

"Eh?" When Chu Liang saw this letter, he was confused.

Did Xu Ziqing write this letter? He thought to himself.

If Junior Sister Xu really wrote this letter, then... Chu Liang pondered and continued, She has really ugly handwriting.