

Martial 1971

Chapter 1971, Why Did You Suddenly Attack Me

Secret Technique, Exile!

Yang Kai knew that if he didn't use his best cards, he would have no chance to survive this, so he no longer had the luxury of concealing his strength and quickly displayed his Space Force.

In front of him, a black void suddenly opened, like the great maw of an ancient beast, and greedily swallowed up the weakened black flames, exiling it to the endless Void.

Fortunately, the violent and chaotic eruption of power allowed Yang Kai to partially conceal his Secret Technique, making it impossible for the others to completely see through him and instead assume that the explosive collision of their combined might have caused space to collapse momentarily.

At the very least, when Xu Qing and Yu Ruo Mei saw his Exile Secret Technique with their own eyes, they did not immediately associate it with Yang Kai and instead just trembled in shock from the violent explosion.

On the other hand, Mo Xiao Qi, who had been concentrating on preparing her own Secret Technique to activate her artifact, had her eyes light up as she directed a surprised look at Yang Kai.

Yang Kai was ignorant of all this, as he was now riding a tiger and had no attention to spare.

If he did not escape now, the Firebird would definitely attack him first, but if he dodged, Mo Xiao Qi would be in danger. This made him curse Mo Xiao Qi mercilessly in his heart while he stood fast, literally acting as a human shield for her.

The successfully combined resistance of Yang Kai, Xu Qing, and Yu Ruo Mei obviously made the Firebird aware that it had encountered a difficult opponent this time. Its red eyes flashed with anger as it spread its wings and sent out a barrage of black fireballs towards the trio obstructing it.

Xu Qing and Yu Ruo Mei both let out shouts as they quickly used their Movement Skills to dodge; unfortunately, the number of fireballs was so great that they were quickly forced to summon their own defensive artifacts in order to gain some sense of security.

Yang Kai's face also went as black as the bottom of a pot. Xu Qing and Yu Ruo Mei were free to move, but he could only stand in place, so with no other choice, he summoned his Golden Blood Threads to intercept the incoming fireballs.

Although the effect was good, Yang Kai felt a deep sense of bitterness as many of his Golden Blood Threads were damaged or destroyed in the process.

His Golden Blood Threads were all condensed from his own Pure Golden Blood, so each was extremely precious. Having suffered such a huge loss this time, Yang Kai felt like shedding tears of blood.

“Ah, my Cloud Mirror!” Xu Qing’s cried rang out suddenly. Yang Kai took a moment to glance over and saw a mirror-like artifact in Xu Qing’s hand get wrapped in black flames and begin to melt. Flustered but with no other choice, Xu Qing could do nothing but toss away his artifact, lest he be contaminated with the black flames as well.

From the aura fluctuations this mirror gave off, it was obviously an Origin King Grade Mid-Rank artifact!

It seemed Yang Kai was not the only one to suffer heavy losses! While his Golden Blood Threads were damaged, he could still use his Golden Blood to repair it or condense new ones, but Xu Qing’s Origin King Grade artifact being burned down meant it was gone for good.

Seeing this, Yang Kai’s mood suddenly improved a lot.

Not only did Xu Qing lose his Cloud Mirror, the Origin King Grade hairpin artifact Yu Ruo Mei was using was also quickly destroyed by the black flames. The two of them had lost a great deal of wealth at this moment and were feeling a little distraught. Glaring at the Firebird, thick anger and hatred filled their eyes, but frightened by the ferocity of the Firebird, neither of them dared to step forward to challenge it and could only dodge in embarrassment.

Li...

The Firebird suddenly cried out, its voice filled with a mix of rage and anger, echoing through the sky.

The moment this voice sounded; everyone’s complexion changed drastically.

Because this cry was very likely going to attract the attention of others. If all the cultivators who had entered the depths of Clear Jade Mountain were brought here, all the efforts their group of four had put in would be taken advantage of by others.

In that brief moment, when Yang Kai lost concentration, a black fireball suddenly arrived right in front of him. Yang Kai’s face sank as he was about to use Exile again, but what he did not expect was that the fireball actually exploded right in front of him, sending out a rain of tiny black fire droplets towards him.

Yang Kai’s eyes shrank suddenly and without any time to hesitate, he directly displayed another of his most powerful Secret Techniques.

Dragon Transformation!

Together with a thunderous dragon roar, a huge illusory dragon head flashed above Yang Kai’s head. At that moment, powerful Dragon Pressure filled the air, causing the Firebird on the opposite side to become dumbfounded as a trace of fear spread across its scarlet eyes.

Pieces of dragon scales emerged and wrapped up most of Yang Kai’s body. Even the True Dragon Scale appeared on Yang Kai’s chest, covering his vital organs.

Hong Hong Hong...

A series of bangs rang out as countless black fireballs hit Yang Kai’s body, causing him to spray a mouthful of blood from his mouth. The black flames peppered his physique, burning madly as it quickly began to melt through his protective dragon scales, as if they were snowflakes under the scorching sun.

Yang Kai's face became incredibly solemn as he desperately urged the power of his Golden Divine Dragon Source to prevent the black flames from spreading.

However, his appearance looked very miserable as his aura dropped noticeably.

"Sister Xiao Qi, I'm at my limit!" Yang Kai said in a fluster as he prepared to abandon his position. He had done his best, and if he remained any longer, his situation would become worrying. He had stood fast to defend Mo Xiao Qi even to the point where his life was in danger, he felt he had done enough.

"I'm ready!" Mo Xiao Qi answered back as she pushed her palms forward. In that instant, the sound of a tsunami burst out from the blue water ball in front of her, giving the illusion that one was standing before a vast ocean that was about to come crashing down on them.

The water sphere burst into innumerable pieces in the next instant, becoming a cloud of mist that rushed forward as if it had come alive.

The mist washed over Yang Kai's body, extinguishing the burning black flames that had given him so much trouble.

Immediately after, the mist arrived at the Firebird and directly wrapped it up, transforming back into a blue water sphere again.

However, this time, the water sphere was many times larger than before, and no matter how the Firebird struggled inside, it was unable to escape.

Having finished all this, Mo Xiao Qi also seemed to be quite drained, her delicate face somewhat pale as her well-rounded cheeks heaved slightly. Using this artifact put a huge strain on her.

Although the price was not small, the result was gratifying.

"Hee hee, I finally caught you, little thing. Let's see how you try to run away now," Mo Xiao Qi straightened herself up and smiled as she looked ahead.

Yang Kai's face suddenly sank as he shouted, "Watch out!"

As he shouted, he quickly flickered away from where he stood just as another figure appeared behind him and sent out a Secret Technique that shattered Yang Kai's afterimage.

The figure which just appeared frowned deeply, as if he hadn't expected Yang Kai to see through his sneak attack.

Who else could it be but Xu Qing?

At the same time, the figure of Yu Ruo Mei mysteriously appeared behind Mo Xiao Qi as a violent power burst from her slender palm. A cruel and greedy smile flashed across her coquettish face as she palmed directly towards Mo Xiao Qi's exposed back.

Mo Xiao Qi let out a horrible cry as she spat out a mouthful of blood as she was sent flying forward, her beautiful eyes flashing a look of utter shock and disbelief.

"Ahh!" Mo Xiao Qi's screams and Yu Ruo Mei's screams sounded simultaneously.

Although her sneak attack had hit its mark, Yu Ruo Mei felt like she had been hit equally hard somehow and was also sent flying backwards, her pretty face turning pale as she felt the ache from her palm. Upon landing, she lifted her hand up and cried out in surprise, "How can this be? What is this?"

A strange mark had appeared on her palm at some point. This mark looked like an extremely menacing face and contained a terrifying power that caused her to feel like she was hearing endless wailing screams in her ears.

The eyes of the strange face suddenly glowed a gloomy light, and in the next moment, Yu Ruo Mei felt like she saw a mighty existence staring down at her indifferently.

After falling silent, she shuddered before collapsing to the ground.

"Ruo Mei, what happened?" On the other side, Xu Qing, whose attack had failed, saw Yu Ruo Mei fall to the ground and could not help calling out.

Yu Ruo Mei's expression was blank as she lay on the ground sluggishly. If someone used their Divine Sense to invade her Knowledge Sea at this moment, they would see a phantom there that greatly resembled the mark on her palm madly devouring her Spiritual Energy and as her Soul was being drained, the light from her eyes also began to dim.

On the other side, Mo Xiao Qi stood up while coughing lightly. Judging from her state, although she had suffered a sneak attack, it was obviously not a big problem. Turning her head and looking at Yu Ruo Mei blankly, she asked in a completely confused and disbelieving tone, "Why did you suddenly attack me?"

The look of distress from being betrayed was so authentic it really did not seem like she was acting.

It was like she really had been attacked from behind by her most trusted of companions. If it was not for the powerful protective Artifact Armour she was wearing, she would likely be dead right now.

"You really are a stupid woman," Yang Kai looked at her like she was an idiot.

Mo Xiao Qi turned her head to look at Yang Kai, her big eyes turning watery as she asked him, "How am I stupid?"

Yang Kai could not help rubbing his forehead with his palm, really not knowing how to explain it to her.

"What did you do to her?" Xu Qing was unable to get a response from Yu Ruo Mei no matter how he called out so he could only turn to ask Mo Xiao Qi.

Mo Xiao Qi's tender body trembled as a look of fear appeared on her face, waving her hands in a flustered manner as she said, "I didn't do anything to her... The Artifact Armour I'm wearing automatically applies a Wicked Ghost Seal to anyone who attacks me, so she... she..."

Yang Kai was stunned once again!

Did this woman really just reveal the secrets behind her defences?

At this point, he was finally able to determine that this girl named Mo Xiao Qi was not some kind of old witch who was playing innocent in order to deceive them, but rather a real innocent naïve little girl!

Could she really be only as old as she looked on the surface?

Yang Kai was taken aback as this thought emerged in his heart.

If that was so, it was truly terrifying.

“Wicked Ghost Seal?” Xu Qing frowned. Obviously, he had never heard of this Secret Technique, but soon, he shook his head lightly and declared, “It matters not! Now there is one fewer person to split the spoils between. Good, this Xu can reap all the benefits for himself!”

No longer paying any attention to whether Yu Ruo Mei lived or died, he instead began to laugh wickedly.

Yang Kai sneered as he called out sarcastically, “Brother Xu, where is all your confidence coming from? Are you not able to see the situation clearly? There’s two of us but only one of you here.”

Chapter 1972, Who Are You

“Is having more people useful?” Xu Qing sneered as he looked at Yang Kai contemptuously, “How much strength can the two of you exert at this moment?”

From his point of view, Yang Kai had just stood in front of Mo Xiao Qi to resist the Firebird’s attack, which must have caused him a great deal of consumption. After that, Yang Kai had even been contaminated with those black flames, so even being alive was pure luck.

As for Mo Xiao Qi, after she used her water sphere artifact, she looked ready to collapse.

The two of them were obviously not at their peaks and should not be able to display too much strength.

On the other hand, he was in good condition, so he did not fear them.

Yang Kai just chuckled lightly and said, “If Brother Xu really thinks so, then you might as well give it a try.”

Seeing Yang Kai look so confident and composed, Xu Qing could not help frowning, wondering whether Yang Kai was just acting mysterious or was truly confident.

Nearby, Mo Xiao Qi still stood there with a despondent look on her face as she stared towards the now soulless Xu Ruo Mei and muttered, “Why did you try to attack me?”

Yang Kai turned his head to glance at her and couldn’t help snapping, “Idiot, men die for wealth like birds die for food, don’t you understand such a simple truth? Did your parents not tell you this before you ran out?”

“I didn’t,” Mo Xiao Qi shook her head vigorously, a look of panic flashing across her eyes as she waved her hands at Yang Kai. “You absolutely cannot tell my father I am here, or he’ll punch me!”

“I don’t even know your father, how am I supposed to tell him?” Yang Kai nearly coughed up blood when he heard this completely out of place response.

“That’s right!” Mo Xiao Qi suddenly showed a look of relief.

“Enough!” When Xu Qing saw the two of them continue to banter back and forth like he was not even there, he lost his calm and roared angrily and snapped, “Brother Yang, if you don’t want to die, leave now, you have no reason to fight with this Xu.”

Yang Kai chuckled as he glanced faintly towards Xu Qing and said, “We truly have no reason to be hostile with one another, but... what Brother Xu can think of, this Yang can also understand.”

Xu Qing was taken aback for a moment as he looked at Yang Kai in surprise before saying with some amazement, “Brother Yang really conceals himself deeply, but if that’s the case, why do we not work together? We can split the spoils half and half.”

“No, no,” Yang Kai shook his head before pointing to himself and saying. “If I have one shortcoming, it’s that I always like to eat alone, I don’t like sharing with others. If Brother Xu understands his limits, he should leave now before it’s too late.”

“Isn’t Brother Yang afraid he won’t be able to stomach so much by himself?”

“I have a good appetite!”

Mo Xiao Qi looked at the two of them blankly as she interjected, “What are you going to eat? I have some spirit fruits here; would you like them?”

Saying so, she really took out two tender looking spirit fruits from her Space Ring. The moment these fruits appeared, a rich fragrance filled the air, and judging from the energy fluctuations coming from them, they were obviously not ordinary fruits but instead rare treasures.

“Even if you don’t speak, no one will think you’re a mute!” Yang Kai glared at her angrily.

Mo Xiao Qi instantly felt wronged.

“Hmph, since Brother Yang has said so, is there no room for discussion?” Xu Qing gulped as his eyes became slightly red. Everything Mo Xiao Qi took out from her Space Ring stimulated his greed further and he became even more convinced that there were countless treasures hidden she was still hiding.

He was certain that if he could grab this Space Ring, he would not have to worry about cultivation resources for the rest of his lifetime, so how could Xu Qing endure?

“From the moment Brother Xu attacked me, we had nothing to discuss,” Yang Kai sneered.

“Good! Then let this Xu test whether Brother Yang is capable of backing up his words or not!” As soon as Xu Qing’s voice fell, his power suddenly surged and his physique began to rapidly inflate.

The clothes on his body began to rip and were soon torn to shreds while at the same time, countless golden hairs began to sprout from Xu Qing’s bare skin.

After just three breaths, Xu Qing’s entire image had undergone tremendous changes.

Now, he was more than five meters tall and had a slightly hunched figure with unusually long arms, rippling muscles, and bloodshot eyes. From his throat, a bestial roar rang out and together with the thick golden hair that covered his entire body, he looked exactly like a giant golden ape.

Yang Kai was quite shocked.

It was the first time that he had seen this kind of Secret Technique, at least, there were no Secret Techniques that would allow one to assume the form of a Monster Beast in his native Star Field. This only went to show how full of mysteries and wonders the Star Boundary really was.

However, what surprised Yang Kai more was that even in the dangerous situation they were in earlier, Xu Qing had actually held back such a card, yet was now not hesitating to use it to deal with him.

“Beast Soul Symbiosis? Golden Hair Giant Ape?” Mo Xiao Qi exclaimed from the side, her beautiful eyes trembling slightly before she made a move that Yang Kai found difficult to believe.

She actually lifted both her hands and covered her eyes, not daring to look at Xu Qing who was now practically naked, most of his ‘vitals’ exposed to the air.

[This silly girl!] Yang Kai had nothing to say as he completely gave up any idea of relying on her help in the coming battle.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing, who had displayed his trump card Secret Technique, roared before he transformed into a streak of golden light that rushed directly towards Yang Kai.

A fist bigger than a carriage smashed down at the same time, with a force that seemed capable of crushing mountains and splitting seas.

[Quite fast!]

Yang Kai instantly realized how difficult an opponent Xu Qing would be, and after taking a deep breath, he stabilized his stance to meet the approaching fist with one of his own.

A look of mockery appeared in Xu Qing’s eyes as he sneered, “Want to stop my punch? Don’t be so presumptuous!”

The huge fist fell even faster as Xu Qing added more strength to it.

Hong...

There was a loud bang and Yang Kai snorted as half his body was beaten into the ground while Xu Qing’s five-meter-tall body also staggered backwards, almost flying out directly.

His golden-haired face filled with astonishment as he never expected Yang Kai’s physical power to be so immense, but he still quickly stabilized his figure and raised his other fist up high before slamming it down with the force of a falling meteor, causing an ear-splitting roar of wind as it cut through the air.

Yang Kai was half-buried at the moment so he could not move freely and had no way to avoid this blow.

With no other choice, he could only raise his arms to guard himself.

With another loud bang, Yang Kai was smashed into the ground completely, leaving only his head half-exposed.

Xu Qing did not even spare Yang Kai a second glance, not caring whether he was alive or dead, instead just charging over towards Mo Xiao Qi with all haste.

In his opinion, it was meaningless to engage in a life or death battle with Yang Kai. As long as he snatched Mo Xiao Qi's Space Ring, his goal would be achieved.

Mo Xiao Qi still stood there, covering her eyes, ignorant of the approaching danger, her face was beet-red all the way to the tip of her ears. For Mo Xiao Qi, who was as pure as a piece of white paper, even just the bare upper body of the beast-like Xu Qing was more than she could bear, much less what had been exposed down below.

In her heart, she was truly panicking.

[I saw it, I saw it! I won't go blind right? Right?]

Aunty Feng's teaching of 'never look at the ugly body of a man or it will blind your eyes!' still rang loudly in her ears.

Mo Xiao Qi still remembered that when Aunty Feng had told her this, she wore a completely serious expression and spoke in a serious tone, so she firmly believed her.

Xu Qing was extremely fast and arrived beside Mo Xiao Qi in an instant. Looking down at this naïve girl who was completely unguarded against him, and the glittering Space Ring on her hand, Xu Qing could not help grinning.

Reaching out swiftly, he grabbed towards Mo Xiao Qi's Space Ring.

Having learned his lesson from Yu Ruo Mei's pitiful example, he did not dare attack Mo Xiao Qi; after all, who knows what kind of power the Artifact Armour she was wearing still had? If he followed in Yu Ruo Mei's footsteps after reaching this point, it would be a really bad joke.

His goal from beginning to end was Mo Xiao Qi's ring.

However, just when his huge hand was just a meter away from Mo Xiao Qi, the two earrings she was wearing suddenly released a faint ring as they transformed into two dazzling rays of light which shot towards Xu Qing like arrows from the string.

This unexpected counterattack caused Xu Qing's eyes to shrink and all the golden hairs on his body stood on end.

His complexion changed drastically, and he no longer dared to approach Mo Xiao Qi, instead forcing himself to retreat rapidly.

The two dazzling lights did not relent, however, and pierced towards Xu Qing from left and right.

At this moment of crisis, Xu Qing released a desperate roar as golden light radiated from his body, making him seem even larger than before.

Two puffs rang out as the golden light halo around Xu Qing's body was instantly pierced through and he staggered backwards a few steps with a great snort.

The two rays of light then swiftly returned to Mo Xiao Qi's delicate earlobes.

Now, there was a big hole in Xu Qing's abdomen out of which blood poured like a fountain. In a panic, Xu Qing circulated his Qi in order to staunch this outflow.

Looking over at Mo Xiao Qi incredulously, he couldn't believe that this seemingly defenceless girl in front of him was able to cause him such heavy losses without lifting a finger or even intending to fight back.

Yu Ruo Mei dying was not unjust!

"Who are you?" Xu Qing growled.

At this time, if he could not guess that Mo Xiao Qi's background was enormous, he would not have been an Origin King Realm cultivator. He was now secretly regretting being blinded by Mo Xiao Qi's wealth.

She was no doubt the descendant of some great Sir.

When dealing with such a person, if he could wash his hands cleanly after the fact, it was fine, but the slightest mistake or leak of information would only result in a relentless pursuit!

If he fell into the hands of her elders, a swift death would be the best outcome he could hope for.

However, now that he had already acted, there was no turning back. Since regrets were of no use, he could only steel himself and go all out to silence all the witnesses to the crime.

Just as he was lost in thought, a rich murderous intent suddenly erupted behind him. Xu Qing was startled and hurriedly turned his head to find Yang Kai furiously falling towards him, his body covered in a blinding five-coloured glow, his face filled with anger. The violent power which surged from Yang Kai's fists made him seem like an enraged beast, causing Xu Qing to slightly shudder.

Chapter 1973, Infant Divine Spirit

Yang Kai underestimated the power of the animal-like Xu Qing mainly because he did not know anything about the Golden Hair Giant Ape.

If he knew that this Golden Hair Giant Ape, even in ancient times, was a species famous for its physical strength, he would not have acted so carelessly and been smashed into the ground as a result.

In ancient times, the Golden Hair Giant Ape could easily lift mountains...

Fortunately, Yang Kai's skin was thick and his flesh was tough, so although he was a little embarrassed, he was not injured.

However, Xu Qing's attack completely enraged him.

Using his Third-Order Origin King Domain infused with his comprehension of the Dao of Space, Yang Kai thoroughly suppressed Xu Qing and engulfed him in an ocean of tiny Void Cracks.

Yang Kai smiled grimly as he waved his hand and shot out a series of Moon Blades towards his target.

Xu Qing's complexion changed drastically as although he could not determine what kind of power Yang Kai's Moon Blades were composed of, just the solidification strength of his Domain was enough to threaten his life.

Disregarding the injury to his lower abdomen, Xu Qing roared to the Heavens as his golden hair stood on end, transforming into steel needle-like existences that pierced Yang Kai's Domain and allowed him to break free of its pressure.

The sound of the air being cut rang out as Yang Kai's Moon Blade's slashed forward, erasing everything in their path but failing to hit their mark.

Yang Kai swiftly turned around and locked onto Xu Qing's position where he saw that at some point a giant axe had appeared in his opponent's arms and was now being chopped down towards him.

Yang Kai roared in anger as the five-coloured glow from his body shone even brighter. Using his Dragon Transformation Secret Technique, his right arm was covered in a layer of dragon scales as he punched out towards the approaching axe.

The two forces impacted each other like two colliding mountains, causing the surrounding world to tremble.

"What!?"

Xu Qing's complexion changed once more as he watched his artifact axe fly out while Yang Kai remained unharmed, his body only reeling back slightly before he once again charged forward.

Xu Qing's blow just now, even if used against a fully prepared Third-Order Origin King, should have at least caused serious damage if it did not kill them directly, but Yang Kai clearly looked unscathed.

[Just how strong is his physical defence?]

Xu Qing's anger was also stimulated by this sight, and instead of shrinking back, he charged towards Yang Kai as well.

The two quickly became entangled in a fierce battle, but from the very beginning, it was Xu Qing who was at a clear disadvantage. Yang Kai only became more and more ferocious during the fight, using various Secret Techniques that caused Xu Qing to complain constantly in his heart.

[How can this be? I've used my Golden Hair Giant Ape's Beast Soul Symbiosis that allows me to surpass any Origin King cultivator. No one can compete with me... could it be his Source Qi...]

Xu Qing was both shocked and suspicious, and as such thoughts crossed his mind, fear or worry began to creep into his heart, keeping him from maintaining his composure.

Xu Qing was being comprehensively suppressed by Yang Kai in all respects, and new wounds were being added constantly to the ones he already suffered.

After just half a cup of tea's time, Xu Qing found his defences on the verge of collapse and realized that he would die sooner or later if he continued to fight Yang Kai.

Realizing this, he began thinking of how to withdraw.

It was at that moment that the sound of something breaking through the air rang out from the horizon while at the same time a burst of loud laughter sounded, "The Heavens have blessed me today, I actually get to pick up a bargain here, hahahaha!"

As soon as his words fell, a flying ship suddenly blocked the sun overhead. On the deck of this flying ship was a lineup of eight cultivators, each with a heavy aura about them. Leading this group was an old man that was now transfixed by the Firebird imprisoned in the blue water sphere.

Yang Kai and Xu Qing both hurriedly withdrew from their battle when this third party suddenly appeared.

The next moment, Yang Kai arrived by Mo Xiao Qi's side and frowned, raised his head to the sky while at the same time he spread out his Divine Sense to check the surrounding region.

The next moment, Yang Kai's face turned ugly.

His brief scan had discovered countless cultivators hurriedly approaching here, obviously drawn by the loud cry the Firebird had let out earlier.

Worse, on the flying ship that arrived first, the old man leading them was clearly a Dao Source Realm master.

As soon as the old man's voice fell, however, another figure flew over in a flash of light. When the light faded, a middle-aged man dressed in scholarly robes appeared and sneered, "Old Jiu, you're quite fast."

The old man heard this voice and turned a look of disgust towards the middle-aged man while saying coldly, "Chen Shi Qi, did you come here to join the fun too?"

The middle-aged man named Chen Shi Qi smiled when he heard these words and replied, "If Old Jiu can come here, why can this Chen not?"

"En, my Raging Fire Temple is also interested in joining the fun, I hope Old Jiu won't refuse," Another voice sounded as a tiger-shaped chariot appeared from a different direction, a burly man riding atop it.

This man was as big as a bear and his body gave off an obvious Fire Attribute aura. Even his hair and beard were a dark crimson coloured.

"Hmph!" Seeing this person from Raging Fire Temple arrive, Old Jiu and Chen Shi Qi could not help snorting, unpleasant looks filling both their faces as they showed extreme wariness towards this brawny man.

"Three Dao Source Realms!" Yang Kai frowned. Although he couldn't tell exactly, he could vaguely estimate the strength of these three people. The man called Old Jiu and Chen Shi Qi who arrived first were probably First-Order Dao Source Realm cultivators while the brawny man was a Second-Order.

So as soon as the brawny man appeared, Old Jiu and Chen Shi Qi stopped arguing and after a quick glance, moved slightly closer together, seemingly forming an alliance.

"Temple Master Luo appearing here in person is unexpected. Doesn't Temple Master Luo need to assume command back in Raging Fire Temple? I heard that your Temple recently hasn't been very peaceful," Old Jiu said coldly.

The big man surnamed Luo chuckled lightly and said, "Old Jiu need not worry, those small disputes inside the Temple were easily resolved by this Luo."

Hearing this, Old Jiu's face sank as he knew that this 'easy resolution' probably involved the death of many people.

One should not be fooled by the carefree and light-hearted attitude Temple Master Luo gave off; in truth, he was a cruel man whom many within the vicinity of Maplewood City feared.

As these three masters talked, more and more cultivators gathered around, most in groups while those like Chen Shi Qi who were all alone were extremely rare.

This situation made the three Dao Source Realm experts quite dissatisfied, and they even considered expelling all these mixed fish, but none of them took the lead to do so because they were worried about stirring up public anger.

Yang Kai frowned slightly as he felt this matter was about to become a bit difficult.

While he was hesitating though, Temple Master Luo suddenly asked, "Old Jiu, you're well learned. Do you recognize this Monster Beast?"

He had been staring at the Firebird wrapped in a water sphere but was unable to recognize its species, so he decided to ask.

Old Jiu frowned and said, "If this old master is not mistaken, this little thing seems to belong to the Phoenix bloodline."

"Phoenix?"

"An Ancient Divine Spirit?"

Many cultivators heard this and revealed looks of surprise while also taking a few steps back in shock.

The title of Ancient Divine Spirit was too shocking. Even a common cultivator would feel terrified when they heard it. Even the ten Great Emperors would feel somewhat hesitant when facing an Ancient Divine Spirit; after all, such Monster Beasts were rulers descended from ancient times. A True Ancient Divine Spirit was powerful enough to destroy a world!

Yang Kai's eyes also flashed when he heard these words. If that was the case, it would also explain why he felt a faint coercion from this Firebird.

While dragons had Dragon Pressure, phoenixes had Phoenix Pressure. If this Firebird really belonged to the Phoenix lineage, it would naturally give off an innate pressure that could deter any living creature.

Chen Shi Qi nodded to the side, "This Chen also agrees with Old Jiu's view, but this Chen cannot see which family it specifically belongs to."

Temple Master Luo chuckled, "I heard that there was a Divine Spirit called the Luan Feng in ancient times, one that had both Phoenix and Azure Luan bloodlines. This Luo is not talented, but he had seen some ancient records before regarding this creature and this little one has some similarities, but I am not certain."

"Luan Feng?" Old Jiu frowned before he suddenly shouted at Xu Qing who was standing to the side, "Brat, answer me, what kind of power has this thing used?"

Xu Qing had already lifted his Beast Soul Symbiosis state and restored his original appearance, but his face was a little pale. Obviously, he had experienced a great deal of consumption in the previous battle. Hearing Old Jiu's question at this moment, he did not dare conceal anything and quickly began narrating what had transpired before.

As they listened, everyone, including the three Dao Source Realm masters grew visibly more excited.

Because according to Xu Qing's description, this Firebird may really be a Luan Feng.

That was a genuine Ancient Divine Spirit!

In other words, this little Firebird was an infant Divine Spirit!

If they could capture it and bring it back to their respective power, once it grew up, they would have a Divine Spirit as a helper, a privilege only the top ten Emperors might be able to enjoy.

Thinking so, many people's breathing became short as this was an opportunity to reach the Heavens in a single bound.

Old Jiu, Chen Shi Qi, and Temple Master Luo looked at this little Firebird with undisguised greed.

"We need to leave!" Yang Kai saw how the situation was developing and realized that this was not a place he could remain any longer, so he hurriedly and quietly warned Mo Xiao Qi.

"Can I take my hands off now?" Mo Xiao Qi asked timidly.

"You're still covering your eyes!?" Yang Kai was stunned and quickly moved her hands away from her eyes.

Regaining her sight, Mo Xiao Qi looked around for a moment and called out in shock, "So many people?"

"En, if we don't leave now, we won't be able to!" Yang Kai ground his teeth.

"But... my little Luan Feng!" Mo Xiao Qi bit her red lips and looked at the Firebird that was imprisoned by her artifact. Even though she was naïve, she knew that in front of everyone's eyes it would be impossible to carry off this Firebird.

"You knew it was a Luan Feng?" Yang Kai looked at Mo Xiao Qi in amazement.

"En, I knew the first time I saw it," Mo Xiao Qi spoke as if it was obvious.

Yang Kai was stunned for a moment before he began cursing viciously to himself.

If he had known that it was a juvenile Luan Feng in Clear Jade Mountain, even if Mo Xiao Qi had given him ten times the benefits, he would never have come here.

Chapter 1974, Competition

An ordinary man is innocent, but treasures make him guilty. If one really managed to obtain this infant Luan Feng, it would be nothing but trouble. If it was a baby Divine Spirit, then it must have parents. Yang Kai did not want to be chased down and killed by a mature Luan Feng.

This little Luan Feng was a beautiful flower indeed, but one covered in the sharpest of thorns. It was simply ridiculous that so many people here were blinded by the beauty of some imagined future and wanted to take it for themselves.

But facing this naïve, bordering on stupid girl, what was Yang Kai supposed to say?

Trying to reason with her would likely leave Yang Kai coughing up blood from frustration.

While the two were communicating secretly, Old Jiu asked again, "What artifact is this? It seems capable of restraining this juvenile Divine Spirit."

He was staring at the blue water sphere with scorching eyes, a look of greed covering his face.

The same was true for Chen Shi Qi and Temple Master Luo.

Even though the Luan Feng in front of them was a baby, it had the blood of a Divine Spirit coursing through its veins so no simple artifact could restrain it. This blue water sphere did not seem too eye-catching at first, but if one were even slightly perceptive, they would understand it was a shocking treasure itself.

Even the three Dao Source Realms were unable to identify its exact grade.

"This thing... was brought by that girl." Xu Qing's thoughts turned quickly after he heard Old Jiu's question and he pointed to Mo Xiao Qi with a wicked smile as he spoke.

Yang Kai's face suddenly became gloomy as he began cursing Xu Qing's eighteen generations of ancestors.

Xu Qing obviously wanted to murder them with a borrowed knife. He had already offended Mo Xiao Qi and was afraid of being chased down by the power behind her, but was also powerless to deal with her, so he could only take advantage of Old Jiu and the other Dao Source cultivators.

Sure enough, Old Jiu and the others heard this and could not help staring towards Mo Xiao Qi brightly.

Temple Master Luo grinned meaningfully and said, "Little Girl, you're quite good. Do you want to join my Raging Fire Temple? This Luo can provide you with the best cultivation resources if you agree."

He directly opened his mouth to recruit Mo Xiao Qi, thinking that as long as he could win her over, the Luan Feng that was imprisoned by Mo Xiao Qi's artifact would also belong to him.

If it was any normal cultivator, even if they refused, they wouldn't speak directly, but Mo Xiao Qi obviously had no such qualms and simply shook her head decisively before saying, "Aunty Feng said that forces outside are like weeds, none of them worth mentioning, so I won't join your Raging Fire Temple."

On Temple Master Luo's forehead, blue veins bulged as his eyes suddenly became cold while on the other hand, Old Jiu and Chen Shi Qi laughed out loud, clearly taking pleasure in his misfortune.

Yang Kai's face went black as he forced the corners of his mouth upwards slightly and cupped his fists, "Temple Master Luo, please don't mind. This girl has some problems with her head!"

"What did I say wrong?" Mo Xiao Qi looked at Yang Kai blankly.

"You shut up!" Yang Kai snapped.

"Oh."

"Hmph, you dare to insult my Raging Fire Temple? Little Girl, your courage isn't small! If you comply with this Luo's demands today, this Luo will spare your life, but if you refuse..." Why would Temple Master Luo bother with Yang Kai? Mo Xiao Qi's answer had caused him to lose face, so murderous intent instantly flared from his body. If he had not wanted to use Mo Xiao Qi's artifact to subdue the Luan Feng, he would already have taken action.

"Temple Master Luo, you must not rush to attack her. This girl is wearing a lot of powerful artifacts, some of which can act independently to protect her! One of my companions simply touched her accidentally and had her Soul destroyed as a result. Even this Junior was almost implicated by her," Xu Qing yelled in a loud voice, as if he was afraid there would be some here who didn't hear him.

"An artifact that can independently protect her?" Temple Master Luo heard this and could not help gasping, "Is it an artifact with an Artifact Spirit?"

Artifacts were just dead objects, so in order to act independently to protect their wearer, they needed to have formed an Artifact Spirit. Such artifacts were definitely not low-grade and were extremely valuable.

"Interesting," Old Jiu also looked at Mo Xiao Qi with bright eyes. Using his Divine Sense, he began scanning her earrings, hairpin, necklace, and bracelets, quickly discerning that almost every piece of jewellery worn by Mo Xiao Qi was of high-grade artifact, just as Xu Qing said!

Chen Shi Qi's expression flickered as a greedy light flashed across his eyes.

"Xu Qing, you'll die like a dog for this!" Yang Kai yelled and grabbed Mo Xiao Qi as he shouted, "Run!"

As soon as his voice fell though, Yang Kai shoved Mo Xiao Qi away as he felt a shocking pain run up his arm the moment he touched her.

"Sorry, on my hand there's..."

"Stop talking, just focus on surviving for now!" Yang Kai was disinclined to listen to her explanation and simply wrapped her up in his Qi before dashing off.

"My Weak Water Bead, my little Luan Feng!" Mo Xiao Qi exclaimed tenderly as she formed a seal with her hands, seemingly wanting to take back the Weak Water Bead and the imprisoned Luan Feng.

But how could the three Dao Source Realms present just watch this happen? Temple Master Luo and the others all waved their hands abruptly to suppress the Weak Water Bead and Luan Feng in place.

"Take back your Weak Water Bead now!" Yang Kai said hurriedly.

Mo Xiao Qi nodded obediently and did not bother with the Luan Feng anymore, instead just focusing on retrieving her Weak Water Bead.

Without the imprisonment of the Weak Water Bead, the infant Luan Feng immediately regained its freedom, spread out its wings, and sent out a barrage of black fireballs in all directions, causing the surrounding cultivators to hurriedly dodge. At the same time, the baby Luan Feng shot up into the sky, attempting to escape.

“Where are you going!?” The three Dao Source Realms all acted together to seal off the retreat of the Luan Feng but none of them dared to get too close; after all, the black flames gave even them an extremely dangerous feeling. Once contaminated with it, it would no doubt be extremely difficult to extinguish.

After stopping the infant Luan Feng, Temple Master Luo turned his attention to Yang Kai and Mo Xiao Qi, sending a palm out towards them.

“You want to just leave? Naive!” Temple Master Luo coldly snorted.

Even a casual blow from a Second-Order Dao Source Realm master could affect the World Principles around it, causing Yang Kai to feel a deep sense of crisis. Without hesitation, he displayed his Nihilism Secret Technique, causing his figure to disappear.

The power of the palm flew over and passed through Yang Kai’s body, hitting empty space before impacting an oval-shaped light shield around Mo Xiao Qi’s body which completely dispersed it, leaving her with no injuries at all.

When Yang Kai’s figure reappeared, he immediately stared at Mo Xiao Qi like she was some kind of monster.

He was able to avoid the attack of Temple Master Luo because of his Space Secret Technique, but Mo Xiao Qi had not even needed to do anything as the artifacts she wore were enough to perfectly protect her.

This girl’s background and heritage were clearly even greater than he imagined.

The speed of the two was extremely fast and in the blink of an eye they had disappeared.

Behind them, Temple Master Luo and the others had fallen into a chaotic battle for the Luan Feng. The light from Secret Techniques and artifact attacks filled the sky as powerful energy fluctuations exploded everywhere. Cultivators fell from the sky one after another, with none of the living having any spare energy to deal with Yang Kai and Mo Xiao Qi now.

After escaping a couple dozen kilometres, Yang Kai suddenly stopped.

Mo Xiao Qi also stopped and looked at Yang Kai suspiciously, “Why did you stop?”

Yang Kai looked at her coldly and grinned meaningfully.

Mo Xiao Qi’s beautiful face suddenly went pale as she hurried back a few steps before trying to act tough and shouting, “What do you want to do? I’m warning you, I’m quite fierce!”

Yang Kai couldn't help rolling his eyes, "What do you think I want to do? I just want to observe from here."

Mo Xiao Qi frowned, thought for a moment, then suddenly said joyfully, "The mantis catches the cicada, while unaware the oriole is behind?"

She looked extremely excited, as if she had found something fun.

"I just want to lie in wait to see if that Xu Qing escapes. Anyone who plots against me won't have a good end," Yang Kai declared coldly.

"I'll help you! He really didn't seem like a good person," Mo Xiao Qi volunteered.

[Shouldn't you have noticed he was not a good person before all of this?] Yang Kai was completely speechless.

And so, the two of them went into hiding, concealing their auras as they waited.

However, Mo Xiao Qi was currently far away from Yang Kai. It was not that Mo Xiao Qi was wary of him, or afraid Yang Kai would try to take advantage of her somehow, but rather that Yang Kai was afraid of her!

This girl was covered with sharp thorns, and just touching her now had drawn blood from Yang Kai's hand, so who knew what kind of misfortune would befall him if he were to accidentally touch her again.

As such, under Yang Kai's strong request, Mo Xiao Qi lay in ambush a thousand metres away from him.

At this moment, she seemed to be pursing her lips and muttering something with an uncomfortable look on her face.

Although the battle was occurring nearly thirty kilometres away from where he currently was, with Yang Kai's powerful Divine Sense, the situation on the other side was easy to observe.

More and more cultivators were rushing over and getting drawn into the battle, some of whom were Dao Source Realm masters.

These cultivators were either in groups ranging from three to eight members in total, causing the battle to become even more heated.

From time to time, someone would fall from the sky, but the flow of blood and cries before death did nothing to calm the situation, instead only further fueling the flames of battle. Almost everyone now had bloodshot eyes as they attacked everyone else mercilessly.

The Dao Source Realm masters were undoubtedly much calmer, and while fighting amongst themselves, they were also blocking the Luan Feng's escape routes, making it impossible for it to flee.

Yang Kai soon found Xu Qing amongst the crowd. This guy had once again displayed his Beast Soul Symbiosis Secret Technique to assume his Golden Hair Giant Ape form and was trailing behind Old Jiu, killing the stragglers left behind by the old man.

Soon, of the hundreds of cultivators who entered Clear Jade Mountain, at least eighty percent had become involved in the battle, creating rivers of blood and mountains of corpses after just two short hours.

As time passed, even the Dao Source Realm masters began to get hurt. Now, everyone was going all out, not just to snatch the Luan Feng, but also to seek revenge for their grievances.

Almost all of the cultivators present were either from Maplewood City or the surrounding area, so there were many grudges between them and now was as good a time as any to settle them.

More and more cultivators fell as the battle raged on.

The Dao Source Realm masters finally realized that the situation was getting out of hand at some point, and with some unknown party making the proposal, the battle rapidly subsided, but by this point, only half of the cultivators which had gotten involved in this debacle were still alive.

The infant Luan Feng was still surrounded by cultivators and had lost its previous ferocity. Instead, it was collapsed on the ground weakly, its beautiful feathers somewhat bloodied as the once brilliantly burning flames which covered its body had gone dim, like they were on the verge of being extinguished.

This battle seemed to have damaged its very source.

Chapter 1975, Burn Everything To Ashes

The infant Luan Feng had no way to escape under the watchful gazes of so many cultivators, the only question now was who would be able to subdue it.

However, it was clear from everyone's posture that none of them had any intention to back down, so a quick resolution to this situation was highly unlikely.

Sure enough, the remaining cultivators wrangled and quarrelled on the spot for more than an hour but were still unable to come up with a good solution. The situation was still deadlocked and the atmosphere was gradually becoming tenser, as if a second battle was about to break out.

During the whole process, the infant Luan Feng had been lying on the ground while crying out softly.

Yang Kai, who was still hiding in wait, frowned as he began to grow a bit anxious.

Once these people finished negotiating ownership of the Luan Feng, their next target would most likely be Mo Xiao Qi; after all, she seemed to be worth no less than this infant Luan Feng.

Just as Yang Kai was debating whether to leave, his skin suddenly cramped as a terrifying sense of crisis washed over him.

This made him frown as he did not know what had happened to cause him to feel this way.

Turning his head and looking to the other side, Mo Xiao Qi also seemed to be aware of something and was looking around frantically even now.

Suddenly, the sky darkened, as if a giant cloud had obscured the sun above, casting a massive shadow onto the ground. At the same time, the temperature of the air rose rapidly, causing the lush and green trees of Clear Jade Mountain to begin to wither and burn.

Li...

A high-pitched and sharp cry rang out from high above.

Yang Kai was shocked to hear this cry and instinctively looked up, the next going completely stiff.

Up in the sky, an existence almost identical in appearance to the infant Luan Feng was flapping its wings lightly as it approached.

However, this creature was countless times larger than the infant Luan Feng, like a massively enlarged version of it.

As it flew by, even the surrounding sky seemed to be burned as space warped and distorted. It exuded an unimaginable pressure that seemed capable of crushing mountains and caused Yang Kai's bones to creak despite how far away it still was.

"Luan Feng! A real Ancient Divine Spirit!" Yang Kai exclaimed in shock.

This was a real, mature Luan Feng, a powerful existence that only appeared in legends, a peerless overlord that was on par with true Dragons!

Yang Kai could not help cursing in his heart, as although he had guessed that there must be a mature Luan Feng somewhere since an infant Luan Feng had appeared, he hadn't thought he would see this mature Luan Feng with his own eyes so quickly!

The deterrence brought by its huge figure alone almost made Yang Kai unable to move, not to mention the burning black flames it exuded which seemed capable of burning all creation to ashes.

Yang Kai's eyes shrank violently as he tried to run, but to his shock, he found he was unable to even move his fingers, and could only watch as the Luan Feng flew over his head.

Li...

Thirty kilometres away, the baby Luan Feng let out an urgent cry filled with sorrow as it did its best to lift up its weak body, like a lost child that had finally seen its parent and was calling out for help.

Temple Master Luo, Old Jiu, Chen Shi Qi, and all the others were frozen solid in place. When the giant shadow that obscured all light descended on their heads, everyone knew that catastrophe was imminent, and huge beads of sweat fell from their foreheads. Everyone was desperately circulating their strength, wanting only to flee from here quickly.

But under the coercion of an Ancient Divine Spirit, they were no better than children, completely incapable of resisting.

This was true even for the Dao Source Realm masters present. As for the Origin Kings and Origin Returning Realm cultivators, they were even more miserable.

There were even a few weaker Origin Returning Realm cultivators who coughed up blood and died on the spot from the pressure.

The Luan Feng hovering in the air looked down and seeing its child's tragic situation, its eyes became red as a violent hostility exploded from its body and swept out toward the horizon.

As it hovered mid-air, it opened its giant beak, and its abdomen began to bulge. A moment later, a jet black, World Extinguishing Black Flames swept down like a giant tidal wave.

"No!" Temple Master Luo could only desperately cry out once before he was vaporized by the torrent of black flames.

Wherever the black flame passed, everything ceased to exist. Among the more than two hundred cultivators who were at the scene, none escaped this calamity. All of them were burned to death, body and Soul.

The black flames filled the air and spread out rapidly, to the extent that they could still be seen clearly hundreds of kilometres away. These flames seemed to burn down even Heaven and Earth.

A ten-kilometre wide region was instantly turned into a burning wasteland where nothing grew, and this dead zone was rapidly expanding as the wall of black flames continued to spread.

Thirty kilometres away, Yang Kai was absolutely horrified, and seeing the black flames crashing towards him like a tsunami, he did not dare to hesitate, pushing his Golden Divine Dragon Source power madly to resist the coercion of the Luan Feng and restore a bit of his freedom.

The next instant, he summoned his Sealed World Bead directly and hid inside of it.

The moment Yang Kai disappeared; the black flames washed over his hiding place. If he had been even an instant slower, he would have followed in the footsteps of Temple Master Luo and the others.

"Oh no!" Just after he hid inside the Sealed World Bead, Yang Kai suddenly remembered Mo Xiao Qi.

Although Mo Xiao Qi possessed many powerful artifacts, in front of the World Extinguishing Black Flames of an Ancient Divine Spirit, those artifacts were undoubtedly useless. Yang Kai had acted purely on instinct just now and did not have any time to think about Mo Xiao Qi.

Thinking back now, even if he had tried to rescue her, Yang Kai knew he would have been too late.

Yang Kai could not help but feel a little depressed.

Although he did not have any real friendship with Mo Xiao Qi, this simple and silly girl did not deserve to be burnt to ashes by those black flames, causing Yang Kai to feel a little guilty.

[Hopefully, the Heavens show mercy and allow her to survive!]

Yang Kai thought to himself, despite knowing the possibility was remote.

Clear Jade Mountain burned as black flames covered a hundred-kilometre radius where not a single plant and animal remained.

Only after her flames ceased to spread did the Luan Feng, who was still floating in the sky, flicker and suddenly assume the form of a young woman with a noble temperament, her hair tied up in a neat bun, and luxurious robes adorning her exquisite figure.

Her beautiful eyes did not carry the slightest emotion as only icy murderous intent filled them.

Only when her gaze landed on the baby Luan Feng on the ground did her expression reveal a hint of tenderness.

Then the infant Luan Feng also transformed at this moment, turning into a young child that looked no older than four.

The young woman lifted her hand and an invisible force gently wrapped up the child and lifted her up.

The young woman glared at the child fiercely, seemingly blaming her for causing trouble, but the young child only grinned happily and snuck into the young woman's arms, assuming a comfortable position before closing her eyes and falling asleep.

The young woman sighed helplessly as she embraced her child with one hand before flying off at an incredible speed. Before she left though, she cast her sharp eyes towards the spot where Yang Kai had previously been standing for a moment, her delicate brow furrowing as a trace of confusion flashed across her face.

.....

Ten days later, Yang Kai quietly left the Sealed World Bead.

As soon as he appeared, he felt an unbearable heat all around him, one that seemed so invasive it even burned his Soul.

Yang Kai was shocked and quickly flew up.

Looking down from above, he was both terrified and awed by what he saw.

At this moment, with the battlefield of Clear Jade Mountain as its centre, black flames spread in all directions for several hundred kilometres. Although ten days had passed, there was still no sign of these flames being extinguished, especially the ten-kilometre region at the centre where it seemed nothing existed except for the raging World Extinguishing Black Flames. Likely, it would be hundreds, if not thousands of years before anything could grow here again.

There were naturally no corpses on the ground as the black flames had not even left behind any ashes from their bodies.

Glancing over at the place where Mo Xiao Qi had been hiding before, Yang Kai's face turned gloomy.

The black flames were present there too, burning fiercely with no sign of Mo Xiao Qi at all.

[That girl... likely suffered disaster,] Yang Kai thought to himself.

At that time, if there was a chance, he definitely wouldn't have just left her to die, but because he wasn't anywhere close to Mo Xiao Qi, and a single moment of hesitation was the difference between life or death, he was simply unable to do anything.

[Was this fate?] If he had not been so concerned about touching Mo Xiao Qi and being attacked by her defensive artifacts, Yang Kai wouldn't have separated from her so far. If she was by his side at that time, Yang Kai could have taken her into the Sealed World Bead with him.

Shaking his head, Yang Kai turned to leave.

However, at that moment, he suddenly noticed something and turned his gaze in a certain direction.

There seemed to be something left over there.

In front of the Luan Feng's World Extinguishing Black Flames, anything that could survive was bound to be a rare treasure. Smiling happily, Yang Kai flew over in a hurry.

After getting close, Yang Kai was able to see the true nature of this object.

It was actually a feather, a meter long glowing red feather that was just lying quietly on the ground.

[A Luan Feng feather?] Yang Kai raised his brows and hurriedly stepped forward.

He did not dare to stretch out his hand to take it rashly, but instead used one of his Golden Blood Threads to wrap around it.

Unexpectedly, this Luan Feng feather was not hot at all. Through his Golden Blood Thread, Yang Kai could feel that this feather did not pose any threat to him on its own, as if it was just an ordinary decorative item, but if one carefully examined it, they would be able to tell that a terrifying power was contained within it.

[What an amazing treasure!]

If this Divine Spirit feather was handed over to an excellent Artifact Refiner, they would definitely be able to produce an extremely powerful artifact, even refining an Emperor Artifact was possible! After all, this was clearly a peak level Artifact Refining material.

Yang Kai examined it for a while before happily storing it away.

This trip to Clear Jade Mountain was not without gains. He had obtained the Ice Attribute dual swords from Mo Xiao Qi and picked up a Luan Feng's feather. Compared with the amount of time and effort he had to exert, this was already an extremely rich harvest.

It was just a pity about Mo Xiao Qi...

Yang Kai sighed lightly before adjusting his mood and flying off.

His destination was Maplewood City!

When he first came to the Star Boundary, he was caught by Kou Wu and forced to join Blue Feather Sect, not having any time to appreciate the many wonderful sights and scenes of the Star Boundary, so Yang Kai was very much looking forward to arriving at the nearby Maplewood City.

He was just a Third-Order Origin King, and the power in his body had yet to be completely transformed into Source Qi, so he did not even have the qualifications to break through to the Dao Source Realm. Right now, his top priority was to find a way to finish this transformation.

Chapter 1976, Maplewood City

Maplewood City was more prosperous than any city in Yang Kai's native Star Field. Even Water Sky City of Heng Luo Chamber of Commerce could not compare.

But in the Star Boundary, it was just one of the countless unknown cities when taking the giant Southern Territory into account.

This was an eye-opening sight for Yang Kai.

The only thing that made him cringe slightly was that he actually needed to pay ten Low-Rank Source Crystals to enter the city!

This made him feel extremely distressed.

He was no longer a filthy rich man like back in his native Star Field. Now, every piece of Source Crystal was precious to him, so he did not dare to use them up casually.

The Source Crystals he had on hand were all from the Space Rings of the Blue Feather Sect disciples he had killed, and they amounted to only a few thousand in total.

There were originally four Space Rings Yang Kai obtained, even one belonging to a First-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator, but Yang Kai had given Liu Xian Yun three of them and only kept one for himself.

In addition to the few thousand Source Crystals in this ring, there were only two artifacts that were of relatively low grade and some miscellaneous materials that were not of any use to him.

After entering Maplewood City, Yang Kai did not hurry to find a place to live but instead began walking around, listening to the various conversations of the surrounding cultivators to obtain information that was beneficial to him.

Just one day was enough to reap significant gains.

As he had expected, the average level of the cultivators in Maplewood City wasn't very high, while the small great forces around it also didn't possess strong masters.

City Lord Duan Yuan Shan was a Second-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator while the two Vice City Lords were both First-Order. The three of them worked together to govern all of Maplewood City. As for the small families in the city, all of them had at most one Old Ancestor at the First-Order Dao Source Realm.

Most of the surrounding great forces also had only one or two First-Order Dao Source Realm masters, with Raging Fire Temple being the exception possessing a Second-Order Dao Source Realm Sect Master, allowing them to be put on par with the City Lord's Mansion of Maplewood City.

But Yang Kai knew that Temple Master Luo of Raging Fire Temple had been killed in Clear Jade Mountain, so that status was likely to change soon, together with the distribution and disposition of the various great forces in and around Maplewood City.

Word of the incident at Clear Jade Mountain had spread to Maplewood City and even across the Southern Territory at an extremely fast speed, but that was not a surprise as a Divine Spirit Luan Feng had appeared. Such an event would likely even attract true masters to come and investigate.

Of course, Yang Kai did not need to care about such things. All he needed to worry about was whether Maplewood City could become his temporary foothold.

And from what information he had gathered, it seemed this place would do for now.

If there were not many strong cultivators around, it meant he wouldn't encounter many great threats, giving him plenty of time to grow his strength.

So, after gathering enough information, Yang Kai immediately decided to settle down in Maplewood City for the time being. At the very least, he had to complete the conversion of his Saint Qi into Source Qi before making other plans.

As night fell, Yang Kai arrived at the administrative building next to the City Lord's Mansion and talked to the staff about getting an Identity Token.

After some bargaining back and forth, Yang Kai spent another three thousand Source Crystals to complete all the procedures, grinding his teeth the whole time he was there.

Although the cost was high, he would now be able to live in Maplewood City with peace of mind for a year and even had a secluded home all to himself.

A number of secluded homes were built and managed by Maplewood City's City Lord's Mansion, and any foreign cultivator could rent one, but depending on the quality of the secluded home, the price would vary.

Yang Kai decided not to be stingy in this regard because he knew that a good environment was necessary to cultivate quickly, so he directly rented a high quality secluded home.

Leaving that administrative building, Yang Kai quickly arrived at the location of the secluded home he had rented.

Using the Identity Token he had acquired, Yang Kai opened the secluded home's protective barrier and entered.

While it was called a secluded home, in reality, it was just a well-built house with a number of good Spirit Arrays arranged around it to prevent others from spying on or disturbing the occupant.

Yang Kai checked around and was quite satisfied. The World Energy aura in this secluded home was much richer than that of the city, obviously due to some form of World Energy gathering Spirit Array, and there were also several rooms with different functions for Yang Kai to use.

Yang Kai did not have very high demands though, as long as he had a secure place to live, everything was fine.

Sitting cross-legged, Yang Kai meditated for the night, slowly converting his Saint Qi to Source Qi as he restored his strength.

The next morning, Yang Kai walked out of the secluded home.

Walking down the streets, looking at the different kinds of cultivators coming and going, Yang Kai's thoughts turned rapidly.

When Yang Kai first entered the Star Field, he had felt a rich sense of curiosity and a deep desire to explore everything around him while growing stronger step by step.

Back then, he was able to succeed, and this time, he was confident he could do the same!

Thinking so, Yang Kai's vision became firm.

The only worry he had... was about his two big helpers. Ai Ou, Gui Zu and the others were also somewhere he did not know about, but if they weren't separated, they would be able to pool their strength to protect themselves.

Yang Kai shook his head and did not think about it anymore as he walked straight ahead.

Not long after, he stopped in front of a shop called 'Spirit Pill Plaza', and after a moment of pondering, he walked inside.

The shop hand immediately walked up to greet him, "May I ask what this guest is looking for? Not to brag, but this Spirit Pill Plaza has a wide variety of pills for sale and always offers fair prices. Moreover, Spirit Pill Plaza has the support of Sir City Lord, so guest can rest assured there are no counterfeit goods here."

This shop hand spoke the last sentence in a hushed voice, as if trying to act mysterious.

Yang Kai smiled slightly, knowing that he must say this to every guest who arrives here, but if that was the case, the City Lord might really be an investor in this Spirit Pill Plaza, otherwise, this shop hand would not dare make such a claim in Maplewood City unless he was eager to lose his life that is.

"I'm not here to buy Spirit Pills," Yang Kai waved his hand.

"Then what is this guest interested in?" The shop hand had good training and continued to ask with a smile, "Spirit Pill Plaza only sells finished pills, nothing else."

"Do you have pill recipes for sale?" Yang Kai frowned.

The shop hand furrowed his brow slightly upon hearing this and smiled awkwardly, "This... I really cannot take responsibility for. If this guest does not mind, I can consult with the shopkeeper."

Yang Kai nodded.

The shop hand immediately turned around and went to the back of the store.

The reason why Yang Kai had come here to buy pill recipes was related to his experiences performing Alchemy in Blue Feather Sect.

Although his little shop had gained great popularity in Blue Feather Sect thanks to his exquisite Alchemy techniques, and his services were sought after greatly by Blue Feather Sect's disciples, in many cases,

Yang Kai had actually never heard of the pills his cultivators came to request, much less refined them before.

After all, the variety of materials available in the Star Boundary was far greater than in his native Star Field, with many herbs existing here that were unheard of back in Yang Kai's home. This of course led to there being many more types of pills in the Star Boundary. With Yang Kai's Alchemy knowledge, he was able to stand at the peak of the Star Field's Alchemic Dao, but it was not even enough to be mentioned in the Star Boundary.

If he wanted to cultivate, he needed to earn Source Crystals, and the easiest way Yang Kai could think of was to return to his old career of Alchemy.

Increasing his repertoire of pill recipes was just preparatory work; after all, without sharpening one's axe first, it would be difficult to cut wood efficiently!

Moreover, Yang Kai was also in urgent need of a pill recipe for the Source Condensing Pill!

The role of the Source Condensing Pill was to help Origin King Realm cultivators transform their Saint Qi into Source Qi. Once reached the Origin King Realm, breaking through again became increasingly difficult, requiring both skill, opportunity, and accumulation. Compared to breaking through, converting one's Saint Qi to Source Qi was actually a relatively simpler and easier method to increase one's combat strength.

Origin King Realm cultivators would naturally need a large amount of Source Condensing Pills to assist them in shortening the time it took to convert their Saint Qi to Source Qi.

When Yang Kai broke through to the Third-Order Origin King Realm, the remaining starlight in his body was completely consumed, causing the speed at which he could convert his Saint Qi to Source Qi to slow down dramatically. In order to increase this speed of conversion again, he could only turn to Source Condensing Pills.

Moreover, among Origin Kings, this pill was extremely popular, not too expensive, and didn't seem to require any particularly rare ingredients, so as long as Yang Kai could obtain the appropriate pill recipe, he was confident he could refine them himself.

Even if he only refined Source Condensing Pills, Yang Kai felt he would be able to make a lot of money.

While waiting, Yang Kai browsed around Spirit Pill Plaza's wares and saw many Spirit Pills he had never heard of, some with strange and intriguing effects that greatly sparked his curiosity.

As an Alchemist, he naturally desired the pill recipes for these pills and secretly began planning how to acquire them here.

Soon after, the shop hand from before came back with a smile on his face and spoke. "Humble Guest, our shopkeeper has asked me to invite you inside for a discussion!"

Yang Kai raised his brow with some surprise; after all, he was only here to buy some pill recipes and had never met this shopkeeper before, so why was he being received so warmly? However, after thinking about it carefully, Yang Kai nodded lightly, "Alright, lead the way."

“This way, please!” The shop hand eagerly beckoned and soon brought Yang Kai to one of the back rooms of the shop where he stood to the side and bowed.

Yang Kai raised his hand and knocked on the door before a somewhat aged voice called out from inside, “Please come in!”

Pushing open the door, Yang Kai entered a room that was made from fine sandalwood and had some simple decorations. An elderly man stood inside with his hands behind his back. After seeing Yang Kai, this man quickly cupped his fists with a smile and said, “This old master is Spirit Pill Plaza’s shopkeeper Kang Si Ran. May I ask this guest’s honoured name?”

“Yang Kai greets Shopkeeper Kang,” Yang Kai smiled back.

Kang Si Ran nodded, swept his eyes over Yang Kai after which they flashed slightly, “Young Master Yang is quite young.”

Yang Kai naturally knew that he was saying this because he saw through his cultivation and realized that both of them were Third-Order Origin Kings.

However, Yang Kai could feel the aura fluctuations from this Kang Si Ran were quite pure and even. Obviously, this old man had finished converting his Saint Qi into Source Qi, and if he had enough opportunity, would be able to break through to the Dao Source Realm.

Receiving praise from the other party, Yang Kai naturally acted humble.

“Please come in, Young Master Yang. Have a seat and try this old master’s Maple Rain Tea!” Kang Si Ran enthusiastically poured Yang Kai a cup of steaming tea as he spoke, causing a rich fragrance to fill the room.

Kang Si Ran pushed the teacup in front of Yang Kai enthusiastically.

Chapter 1977, Pill Recipe

Inside the back room, Yang Kai took a seat but did not rush to touch the tea in front of him.

The shopkeeper of this Spirit Pill Plaza was a bit too enthusiastic, which made Yang Kai become a bit wary and thus showed a cautious demeanour.

Kang Si Ran apparently noticed this as well, but did not pay it any mind and simply smiled lightly, “I heard that Young Master Yang wishes to purchase some pill recipes?”

“Indeed!” Yang Kai nodded.

Kang Si Ran’s eyes lit up hearing this and asked, “Does that mean Young Master Yang is an Alchemist?”

Yang Kai frowned and asked lightly, “Does your noble establishment have a policy of inquiring about your customer’s details before selling them things?”

Yang Kai made no attempt to hide the blame in his voice, but Kang Si Ran did not become angry and instead apologized, "Please do not take offence, Young Master Yang, it was not this old master's intention to appear rude. This old master will offer this cup as an apology!"

Saying so, he really drank down the cup of tea in one gulp.

Wiping the residual tea from his lips, Kang Si Ran continued, "If Young Master Yang is really an Alchemist and your accomplishments are high enough, this old master can deliver you any pill recipe you want."

"Shopkeeper Kang's meaning is?" Yang Kai was genuinely confused now.

Kang Si Ran smiled bitterly when he heard these words and did not answer right away, taking some time to consider his words before finally saying, "Very well, this old master will be succinct."

"Please speak, Shopkeeper Kang."

"The situation is this," Kang Si Ran began his explanation. "My Spirit Pill Plaza is currently shorthanded of Alchemists... If Young Master Yang is an Alchemist at the Origin King Grade, this old master would like to hire him to work here and can offer very favourable treatment. This old master has two proposals which Young Master Yang may choose from, either offering a certain fixed salary for each month of work, or a percentage of the profits from the shop's sales for each pill Young Master Yang refines. Young Master Yang is free to decide."

Yang Kai was stunned when he heard these words, "Does your noble establishment really lack Alchemists?"

"Indeed," Kang Si Ran said with a troubled expression on his face. He had been worrying constantly about this issue as of late, so now that he saw a glimmer of hope, he knew he had to make an attempt, "Originally my Spirit Pill Plaza had three Alchemists in its employ, but two recently left, leaving only one behind. The last remaining Alchemist is unable to refine enough pills to keep up with ordinary demand. However... Young Master Yang may rest assured. If you agree to assist this old master at this time, you may freely look through any pill recipe Spirit Pill Plaza owns."

This answer could not help making Yang Kai a little excited; after all, he didn't have many Source Crystals on hand right now, so if he were really forced to purchase pill recipes, the most he could probably buy was one or two. As for the pill recipe of the Source Condensing Pill... it would no doubt be extremely expensive, so given his current financial resources, Yang Kai doubted he would be able to afford it.

Yang Kai was only planning to check what kind of price these pill recipes sold for today after which he would go and raise the required amount of Source Crystals some other way.

Unexpectedly, after coming to this Spirit Pill Plaza, he had encountered this kind of pleasant surprise.

Maintaining a calm demeanour, Yang Kai asked, "Why did those two Alchemists suddenly leave? Was it because Shopkeeper Kang did not compensate them fairly?"

"How could that be possible?" Kang Si Ran smiled bitterly, "This old master has lived in Maplewood City for many years now and has always engaged in fair and upright business. The compensation for those several Alchemists was definitely not low, it's just... as water flows to the lowest point, people always try

to ascend to the highest heights. It is because of this immutable truth that they chose to leave this pill shop when faced with greater interests.

Listening to what he said, Yang Kai understood.

“Someone poached them!”

Kang Si Ran heard it put bluntly and couldn't help showing a trace of annoyance on his face as he nodded, “Exactly. Spirit Pill Plaza is actually a subsidiary of Violet Source Chamber of Commerce, while the other major pill shop in Maplewood City is owned by Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce. As such, it was only natural for them to target us.”

“Violet Source Chamber of Commerce, Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce?” Yang Kai frowned.

“Has Young Master Yang not heard of our two establishments?” Kang Si Ran was visibly surprised by his reaction.

Yang Kai smirked and shook his head.

Kang Si Ran was stunned for a moment. He could see that Yang Kai was a Third-Order Origin King, so for him to have never heard the names of these two chambers of commerce was quite shocking. In the Southern Territory, besides the supreme overlord Star Soul Palace, Violet Source Chamber of Commerce and Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce were among the most famous and powerful great forces.

Yang Kai's strength was not low, so how could he not even have heard about them before?

However, Kang Si Ran was an experienced businessman, so in order to avoid embarrassing Yang Kai, he hurriedly smiled and said, “It seems that Yang Master Yang has secluded himself from worldly affairs to focus on his cultivation. En, no wonder Young Master Yang has such profound strength at such a young age, this old master is very impressed.”

Yang Kai gave a dry laugh but did not answer.

However, judging from the information disclosed by Kang Si Ran, the relationship between the two chambers of commerce seemed to be hostile. It was not difficult to understand that rivals would be enemies; since both of these great forces obviously engaged in business, it was natural for them to compete with one another.

The pill shop owned by Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce probably offered a higher price to snatch the two Alchemists from Spirit Pill Plaza, leading to its current embarrassing situation.

Without enough Alchemists, there would naturally not be enough Spirit Pills to sell, and as time passed, fewer people would patronize Spirit Pill Plaza. As the shopkeeper of Spirit Pill Plaza, Kang Si Ran would become anxious in such a conundrum.

These days, Kang Si Ran had been searching frantically for a suitable Alchemist for Spirit Pill Plaza to hire, but Maplewood City was not a big city in the Star Boundary, so even if some Alchemists were living here, most of them already belonged to certain great forces. As for lower-level Alchemists, even if Kang Si Ran were to hire them, they would not be of much use.

That was why he was so passionate about Yang Kai and immediately had the shop hand invite Yang Kai inside when he heard about the latter wanting to purchase pill recipes.

A person who wanted to buy pill recipes must be an Alchemist, as average cultivators would not care about pill recipes at all. Normal cultivators just needed to gather enough materials and compensation to ask an Alchemist to refine the pill they wanted.

“May I ask what grade of Alchemist Young Master Yang is?” After explaining his dilemma, Kang Si Ran asked Yang Kai nervously and expectantly.

If Yang Kai’s Alchemy level wasn’t high, he wouldn’t need to waste any time with him.

Yang Kai thought for a while before replying, “I can refine Origin King Grade Spirit Pills.”

His answer was not complete, and actually concealed many details, but it was good enough to satisfy Kang Si Ran.

Hearing Yang Kai personally say he was an Origin King Grade Alchemist, Kang Si Ran was already overjoyed, his eyes filling with a sincere, almost pleading light.

Without waiting for him to speak, Yang Kai said, “Shopkeeper Kang should understand: I am only interested in earning some Source Crystals by performing Alchemy and using it as an auxiliary to my cultivation right now, it is not my primary interest or profession, and not a job I intend to practice continually. That being the case, I suggest Shopkeeper Kang look for another master to hire.”

The attitude of the other party was very sincere, so Yang Kai did not want to deceive him and so explained his circumstances in a straightforward manner.

After all, to Yang Kai, Alchemy was just a means of cultivation, a field he did not plan on investing too much time and energy into. If he agreed to Kang Si Ran’s request, it would be equivalent to attaching himself to Spirit Pill Plaza, which would restrict his time and freedom in the future.

That wasn’t a situation Yang Kai wanted to see.

“Not your primary interest or profession?” Kang Si Ran was stunned but quickly smiled, “That does not matter. As long as Young Master Yang can assist this old master with Alchemy for three... no, no, two months, everything will be fine. This old master promises he will not delay Young Master Yang’s cultivation for long.”

“Just two months?” Yang Kai looked at him in surprise.

“En, in fact, the situation here has already been reported to the chamber of commerce’s headquarters by this old master, and they have agreed to transfer two Alchemists to assist, but it will take some time for them to arrive; after all, the road to this small place is quite long. What’s more, headquarters will not pay too much attention to a single shop in a small place like Maplewood City. Even so, Young Master Yang will only need to help this old master for two months before help arrives.”

“So that’s how it is!” Yang Kai nodded lightly.

“What does Young Master Yang think? Is it possible?” Kang Si Ran asked nervously.

He had not slept at all since this incident arose, so upon finally meeting a suitable candidate, Kang Si Ran really did not want to miss this opportunity.

“If it’s just two months... it should not be an issue, but Shopkeeper Kang, those pill recipes...”

Before Yang Kai even finished speaking, Kang Si Ran waved his hand boldly, “If Young Master Yang really joins Spirit Pill Plaza, he may freely read all of the shop’s pill recipes. Even taking copies of them is acceptable.”

“Among the pill recipes your noble establishment owns, is there one for Source Condensing Pills?”

“Almost every pill shop will have a recipe for Source Condensing Pills, but each recipe is slightly different. Why? Has Young Master Yang not refined Source Condensing Pills before?”

Suddenly, Kang Si Ran became a little nervous as he worried about whether Yang Kai was lying to him. Which Origin King Grade Alchemist did not own the pill recipe for Source Condensing Pills? This was the pill with the greatest demand amongst Origin King Realm cultivators.

Yang Kai smiled awkwardly and could only say, “I came from a very remote place where there are very few powerful cultivators, so...”

Although this explanation was full of loopholes, it could still be regarded as a proper reason.

Kang Si Ran did not press him further on the issue.

“Good, Shopkeeper Kang, please provide me with a list of pills your noble establishment sells and prepare the appropriate pill recipes. I will go back for today and consider your proposal carefully. I will have an answer for you within three days,” Yang Kai did not rashly agree to Kang Si Ran’s request; after all, he wasn’t familiar with either Spirit Pill Plaza or Kang Si Ran. Who knows if he was a real man of integrity or not?

Acting cautiously was always advisable.

“Fair enough, then this old master will await Young Master Yang’s return. However, please consider this old master’s proposal as soon as possible. The pills in my Spirit Pill Plaza’s stock are all currently running out.” Kang Si Ran knew that this matter could not be rushed, so he could only agree to Yang Kai’s request.

As such, he quickly arranged a list of pills before handing it to Yang Kai.

After bidding farewell to Kang Si Ran, Yang Kai did not immediately return to his residence and instead began wandering around the city.

Whenever he saw a shop selling Spirit Pills, he would go in and ask some questions.

Although he had just negotiated with Kang Si Ran, he still wanted to see whether he could buy pill recipes from other places; after all, if he could act on his own, it would be better than hiring himself to Spirit Pill Plaza as he could monopolize all of the benefits.

Of course, cooperating with Spirit Pill Plaza also had some advantages, such as a fixed source of customers, sufficient materials, and no need to worry about sales channels.

There were pros and cons to both options.

Chapter 1978, Soul Contract

In the middle of the night, Yang Kai returned to his residence with a depressed expression.

His endeavour today had not gone smoothly. Although he had visited a lot of pill shops, these shops either cherished their pill recipes like treasures and refused to show them to outsiders or asked for sky-high prices in order to purchase them, rendering Yang Kai helpless. What's more, the shops that were willing to sell pill recipes were only willing to sell some obscure recipes, which were basically useless.

Pill recipes that were really useful and would sell well were not for sale anywhere.

Of course, Yang Kai was not surprised by this.

He could also understand the practices of those shops. The pill recipes of each shop were formulated, improved, and refined by many Alchemists over a long period of time. They were trade secrets that could not be easily shown to outsiders.

Now, it seemed he had to carefully consider Kang Si Ran's proposal.

For the next two days, Yang Kai enjoyed a rare moment of peace.

On the third day, Yang Kai came to Spirit Pill Plaza again.

Kang Si Ran seemed to have given out instructions already, so when the shop-hand saw Yang Kai, he immediately welcomed him with a smile and said, "Sir, you're here. Please come inside, Shopkeeper Kang has been anticipating your arrival."

Yang Kai nodded lightly and motioned for him to lead the way.

In the same back room as last time, Kang Si Ran was pleased to see Yang Kai keeping a punctual schedule, boosting his trust in him. With a smiling old face, Kang Si Ran greeted Yang Kai enthusiastically and motioned for him to take a seat before pouring him a cup of tea. Immediately after, Kang Si Ran took out a booklet from his Space Ring and handed it to Yang Kai, "These are the pill recipes Young Master Yang requested before, please look to your satisfaction!"

Yang Kai thanked him and took up the pill recipe book before browsing through them.

Just sweeping his eyes over these pages, Yang Kai could not help but brighten up.

Because this booklet contained about fifty pill recipes, the first of which was actually the recipe for Source Condensing Pills.

Although Yang Kai had mastered most of the pill recipes in this booklet already, pill recipes were not something set and then never altered. According to the surrounding environment and what materials were readily available, a pill recipe could vary greatly from region to region. There were also often multiple different methodologies to refine the same Spirit Pill.

As such, even if one had mastered how to refine a certain pill, by studying an alternative pill recipe, they may be able to improve their own technique and ability, so this booklet was not without value.

Of the fifty or so pill recipes, there were only a dozen Yang Kai did not already know.

But this result still made Yang Kai extremely satisfied as he put down the booklet lightly.

Kang Si Ran's eyes were fiery as he carefully observed Yang Kai's behaviour, wondering if he would comply or not. As soon as Yang Kai put the book of recipes down, he asked, "Young Master Yang, are you satisfied with the catalog provided by this old master?"

Yang Kai smiled slightly, "Shopkeeper Kang is very thoughtful. Were these pill recipes not hard-won?"

Kang Si Ran smiled and said, "Young Master Yang is very sharp. En, only a small number of these pill recipes are the property of the pill shop, the rest were acquired by this old master through his various connections. They are not trade secrets of Spirit Pill Plaza, so Young Master Yang need not worry about refining them."

"It seems your noble establishment sells a large variety of Spirit Pills. Does this mean that if I were to become an Alchemist here, I would need to refine all of these Spirit Pills?"

"No no no," Kang Si Ran waved his hand quickly, "My Spirit Pill Plaza mainly sells the first fifteen Spirit Pills in this catalogue while the others are seldom refined because they are not in high demand and do not yield much profit. Source Condensing Pills are by far the top priority of my pill shop. This old master does not mean to boast, but the Source Condensing Pills from Spirit Pill Plaza are at least ten percent more effective than the average Source Condensing Pill on the market so they are greatly sought after by Maplewood City cultivators."

"Oh, and why is that?" Yang Kai asked curiously.

In fact, he had also noticed before that many people had come to Spirit Pill Plaza to buy Source Condensing Pills, and these cultivators were all without exception Origin Kings.

Hearing his question, Kang Si Ran smiled proudly and stroked his beard confidently as he explained, "Because our Source Condensing Pill recipe was personally improved by Grandmaster Huang Fu from the chamber of commerce headquarters!"

After speaking, Kang Si Ran remembered that Yang Kai was somewhat ignorant and uninformed, so he quickly added, "Grandmaster Huang Fu is an Emperor Grade Alchemist and enjoys a very high reputation throughout the Star Boundary!"

Yang Kai was really shocked when he heard these words!

So that was why Spirit Pill Plaza's Source Condensing Pills were so popular, it turns out that the pill recipe was personally improved by an Emperor Grade Alchemist. As a result, the effect was better than ordinary Source Condensing Pills.

This was excellent news for Yang Kai.

Because what he needed most now were Source Condensing Pills. The pill recipe improved by an Emperor Grade Alchemist would be of immense use to Yang Kai and there was even a chance he could spy on some mysteries of the Alchemic Dao from this pill recipe.

“Hehe, Young Master Yang, this old master has shown his sincerity. Now, about Young Master Yang’s intentions...” Kang Si Ran looked at Yang Kai with a smile. At this moment, he was not as anxious as before because he could see from Yang Kai’s demeanour and tone that he was likely willing to temporarily join Spirit Pill Plaza.

As expected, Yang Kai nodded when he heard these words, “It would be this Yang’s honour to work as an Alchemist for your noble establishment. This Yang will be in Shopkeeper Kang’s care for the next two months.”

“Wonderful!” Kang Si Ran laughed loudly, the haze which had been clouding his face for the past few days finally lifting along with his mood.

The current situation of Spirit Pill Plaza was nothing less than precarious. Because Source Condensing Pills had such a large market appeal, Spirit Pill Plaza had always had a steady stream of customers. Before, with three Origin King Grade Alchemists refining Spirit Pills, they had just barely been able to keep up with demand, but when two of the three had been poached by Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce’s Pill Pavilion, the last remaining Alchemist was unable to cope, even if he worked almost nonstop.

Currently, the Spirit Pill Plaza was all but out of stock of Source Condensing Pills, causing many customers to complain constantly.

Consistency was an essential part of doing business, so once there was a shortage of goods, even the most loyal customers would be lost. This was a fatal blow to Spirit Pill Plaza.

With Yang Kai joining, although the situation wouldn’t be rectified immediately, Kang Si Ran could finally breathe a sigh of relief. All that was left now was to hold out for two more months while waiting for the two Alchemists to be transferred over from headquarters.

“Young Master Yang, this old master is first and foremost a businessman, so some things must be made clear up front. If this old master comes off as offensive in any way, I hope Young Master Yang can be forgiving,” After the great joy, Kang Si Ran suddenly wore a solemn expression.

“Please speak freely, Shopkeeper Kang!”

“Good, while Young Master Yang is free to observe and emulate these pill recipes, even taking copies for his own use, they cannot be disclosed to others, especially the pill recipe for Source Condensing Pills. Regarding this, this old master needs Young Master Yang Kai to sign a Soul Contract, I hope Young Master Yang can agree to this condition.”

“Not a problem,” Yang Kai nodded lightly.

“Very good, then this old master will ask Young Master Yang to review this contract to see if any changes are necessary.”

Kang Si Ran had already prepared everything in advance, so he directly took out the prepared contract from his Space Ring.

Yang Kai could not recognize what material this contract was made from, but he could sense a subtle energy fluctuation coming from it.

Yang Kai picked up the contract and began looking over the details about what responsibilities and obligations were expected of both parties. Regarding the pill recipes, the conditions were especially strict in that Yang Kai was to under no circumstances disclose the secrets of these pill recipes to anyone else.

After a quick review, Yang Kai nodded and said, "I have no issues with this."

Kang Si Ran nodded and said, "Then this old master asks Young Master Yang to leave his Soul Imprint on this contract."

Saying so, Kang Si Ran first sent a burst of his Spiritual Energy into the contract. Although Yang Kai had never done something like this before, all he had to do was follow Kang Si Ran's example.

After the Soul Imprints of the two were branded into the contract, the contract suddenly ignited and a faint trace of Spiritual Energy split into two parts and poured into Yang Kai and Kang Si Ran's Knowledge Seas.

Faintly, Yang Kai felt that a small seal had been added to his Knowledge Sea, one that normally had no effect on him, but would clearly cause some kind of backlash if he were to violate the conditions of the contract he had just signed.

[Such a mysterious thing!] Yang Kai secretly thought to himself as he wondered which master's hands this Soul Contract stemmed from. Undoubtedly this was an excellent tool for those who wished to conduct business.

Kang Si Ran knew that Yang Kai was somewhat lacking in common knowledge, so he took the initiative to explain, "This Soul Contract is a specialty item of Serene Soul Palace and was personally developed by Serene Soul Great Emperor. Serene Soul Great Emperor is one of the Ten Great Emperors. The Soul Contracts he researched can guarantee the integrity and compliance of both parties who use them. If, during Young Master Yang travels in the future, he needs to cooperate with strangers, signing a Soul Contract can add a layer of security. However, each Soul Contract is not cheap, 150,000 Low-Rank Source Crystals are required for even the lowest level Soul Contract, but that does not make them any less popular, so it is often impossible to buy them in the open market."

"So expensive!" Yang Kai couldn't help being shocked. He was only able to make a total of 30,000 Low-Rank Source Crystals in Blue Feather Sect for a month worth of Alchemy, so 150,000 would have taken him at least five months of work to obtain and even then he might not be able to obtain one.

"Hehe, this old master's Soul Contract was also obtained inadvertently from an adventure he had in his youth," Kang Si Ran said with clear pain on his face.

Although he was reluctant to use this Soul Contract in this way, in order to keep Spirit Pill Plaza from closing down, Kang Si Ran had no other choice.

“Alchemist Yang, I look forward to working with you for the next two months,” Kang Si Ran quickly adjusted his expression and smiled at Yang Kai while cupping his fists kindly.

“Same here!” Yang Kai replied.

“Alright, since the Soul Contract has been signed, let us talk about the issue of remuneration next,” Kang Si Ran said and sat down. The Soul Contract just now only guaranteed that Yang Kai would not reveal any of the pill recipes he learned here while the matter of compensation was not written. This would require further discussions between Kang Si Ran and Yang Kai.

At that moment, a knock suddenly came from outside.

Kang Si Ran frowned and asked coldly, “What is it?”

He had clearly told everyone in the shop that he was discussing an important matter with Yang Kai today and that no one should disturb him, but now one of the ignorant shop-hands had done just that, making Kang Si Ran very annoyed.

“Shopkeeper Kang, it’s terrible! Alchemist Fan says he wants to leave our pill shop!” The panicked voice of the shop-hand called out quickly.

“What?” Kang Si Ran stood up abruptly, his face filled with shock and anxiety, obviously not having expected such a development.

“Shopkeeper, please come quickly, Alchemist Fan is insistent on quitting.”

“How can this be!?” Kang Si Ran was so angry that he hurried out after hearing these words, but when he reached the door, he suddenly remembered that Yang Kai was still here and asked, “Does Alchemist Yang want to come as well?”

“Is that appropriate?”

“Naturally, you are no longer an outsider!”

Chapter 1979, Poaching

Kang Si Ran had a very hard time this past month with Seven Glories Chamber of Commerce’s Pill Pavilion using despicable and shameless means to poach two of his Alchemists.

If Spirit Pill Plaza really folded because of this, Kang Si Ran’s career in Violet Source Chamber of Commerce would be over.

After finally finding Yang Kai and having him sign a Soul Contract to become the second Alchemist in Spirit Pill Plaza and stabilize the situation, Kang Si Ran had really not expected to receive news that Alchemist Fan was planning to leave.

If Alchemist Fan really left, then the situation he had worked so hard to restore would likely collapse again, making the future worrying.

Kang Si Ran was incredibly anxious as he hurriedly led Yang Kai towards the shop's backyard. Even before the pair arrived though, Fan Hong's shouts could be heard, "Who dares to stop me!? This Fan must quit! Make way! Any who block this Fan's path cannot blame this Fan for being impolite!"

In the backyard, several shop-hands were trying to persuade Fang Hong to stop, but they were not having any success.

Kang Si Ran heard these shouts and knew that the situation was indeed dire, so he quickly increased his speed and in the blink of an eye, he arrived to see a bristling Fan Hong who seemed to be on the verge of attacking.

However, after seeing Kang Si Ran, Fan Hong frowned as a hint of guilt flashed deep within his eyes.

"Alchemist Fan, what seems to be the matter?" Although Kang Si Ran was annoyed by Fan Hong at this moment, he did not dare to use a harsh tone and could only ask politely.

Fan Hong sighed and said, "Shopkeeper Kang, this Fan Hong feels sorry for you, but this Fan had decided he must leave. Please forgive me, Shopkeeper Kang."

"Has this Kang not offered Alchemist Fan enough for his services? Or perhaps Alchemist Fan has received a better offer somewhere else? If so, there is room for discussion!" Kang Si Ran knew that the most important matter right now was to figure out why Fan Hong wanted to leave Spirit Pill Plaza so he could try to find a remedy to the situation.

"Shopkeeper Kang saying so is an insult to this Fan! This Fan has worked for Spirit Pill Plaza since he came to Maplewood City and has refined pills for Spirit Pill Plaza for more than a decade. This Fan regards this place like his home and would not be tempted by mere greed," Fan Hong implored in an impassioned tone as he looked truly offended by Kang Si Ran's words.

Kang Si Ran smiled bitterly, "If the reason is not payment, why does Alchemist Fan suddenly insist on leaving?"

Fan Hong sighed and said, "Shopkeeper Kang, this past month this Fan has been performing Alchemy day and night and is now nothing but a dried-up oil lamp. If this continues, this Fan is afraid he will not be able to bear it. Shopkeeper Kang, just allow this Fan to leave."

Hearing this, Kang Si Ran was at a loss for words.

While the two of them were talking, Yang Kai was also observing Fan Hong and found that, as this man said, he had most likely experienced excessive consumption of his strength. Not only was Fan Hong's hair a mess and his eyes bloodshot, but even his aura was also fluctuating somewhat chaotically. It was clear he was extremely fatigued.

What's more, this Fan Hong was not very strong to begin with, only a peak Third-Order Origin Returning Realm cultivator.

With this kind of cultivation, Yang Kai estimated that even if he was an Origin King Grade Alchemist, he could only be at the Origin King Grade Low-Rank.

After all, Alchemy often needed the support of enough internal Qi, otherwise, refining good Spirit Pills would be impossible. However, Alchemists normally immersed themselves in Alchemy year-round,

causing them to neglect their own cultivation. But without a strong cultivation, how could they have enough strength to support high-level Alchemy?

This became a vicious circle for most Alchemists.

“This is indeed because this Kang’s failure of management. Please forgive my incompetence, Alchemist Fan!” Kang Si Ran also knew that Fan Hong had paid a great price this past month, so he did not hesitate to bow his head upon hearing this.

Fan Hong seemed surprised by this act and quickly said, “Shopkeeper Kang is too polite.”

Kang Si Ran shook his head, “It was this Kang’s failure of responsibility, but everything is alright now. This Kang has just hired another Alchemist, so Alchemist Fan need not bear this burden alone anymore. You can refine the normal number of Spirit Pills as before. That being the case, would Alchemist Fan consider remaining in the plaza? Of course, Alchemist Fan can take a few days to rest and recuperate first.”

“Hired another Alchemist?” Fan Hong was stunned when he heard these words and quickly scanned the crowd, finally stopping on Yang Kai’s unfamiliar face.

Yang Kai smiled at him slightly.

“This Kang has naturally seen Alchemist Fan’s contribution to the store with his own eyes, and no mere words of gratitude will be enough thanks. Please take some time to rest, and when you feel it appropriate, return to the store to discuss this matter again.” Kang Si Ran said sincerely, looking at Fan Hong imploringly as he really did not want to let Fan Hong go.

“This...” Fan Hong looked awkward and seemed a little hesitant.

Just as Kang Si Ran was preparing to persuade Fan Hong further, a clear and sweet voice suddenly came from outside, “Alchemist Fan, the time has arrived. This Mistress has come to meet you in person.”

As soon as this person’s voice fell, Fan Hong’s complexion changed drastically, going from red, to blue, to green, embarrassed to the extreme.

Kang Si Ran was also startled, but soon grit his teeth and cursed, “Zhuo Ning Si!”

His eyes flashed with anger, as if there was some great hatred between him and this woman named Zhuo Ning Si.

Yang Kai’s eyes narrowed slightly as he vaguely understood something before he turned a grin towards Fan Hong.

Fan Hong was clearly uncomfortable, and his eyes were darting around erratically, his lips moving lightly, as if he was cursing.

When Kang Si Ran’s gaze shifted back to him, Fan Hong flushed even further and seemed to be looking for a hole to crawl into!

“This old master understands!” Kang Si Ran sneered coldly, “Alchemist Fan really found a better place to go. If that is the case, Alchemist Fan might as well have just said so earlier so this old master could offer his congratulations. Why bother looking for some excuse instead?”

Fan Hong gritted his teeth, becoming angry out of shame and snapped, “What is Shopkeeper Kang trying to imply? Is it not true that this Fan has made great contributions this past month? In order to refine enough Spirit Pills for the store, this Fang has coughed up blood several times already! If it were not for this Fan’s efforts, Spirit Pill Plaza would have closed already!”

The more he spoke, the more excited he became and the louder his voice resounded.

Kang Si Ran heard all this and frowned deeply, after a long time simply sighing and slumping his shoulders, as if he had suddenly aged a thousand years. Nodding faintly, he admitted, “What Alchemist Fan said is true, if not for Alchemist Fan’s support, Spirit Pill Plaza would indeed have closed a long time ago.”

“Hmph! If you understand, then there’s no need to say anything more!” Fan Hong coldly snorted, “This Fan must also consider his future. Sacrifice alone is not enough to support one’s life! Shopkeeper Kang should also understand this truth. You take care, this Fan will take his leave!”

Finished with what he had to say, Fan Hong pushed away the two shop-hands blocking his path and walked towards the front of the shop.

When he walked past Yang Kai, he paused for a moment and smiled at him faintly, seemingly taking pleasure in his misfortune, “You’ll be miserable as well soon.”

Yang Kai just shrugged in a noncommittal manner.

Kang Si Ran stood in place, pondered for a moment, then suddenly turned around and followed Fan Hong out.

Outside Spirit Pill Plaza, a beautiful woman with a rather revealing dress smiled as she stood before the gates, a few beautiful maids standing by her side. She exuded a kind of intoxicating charm that was only amplified by her exposed snow-white skin and deep cut dress which revealed a rather profound valley, drawing countless looks from the passing male cultivators.

This woman did not seem to care at all about the looks she was getting; on the contrary, she seemed to enjoy those men’s gazes very much. From time to time, she would even send out a wink or two, causing some men to nearly lose their souls.

Fan Hong hurriedly walked out of Spirit Pill Plaza, arrived in front of the beautiful woman, and muttered, “Didn’t I say I would come myself? What did you come here for?”

Zhuo Ning Si giggled as she pursed her lips and said, “Is there something wrong with this Mistress coming to greet you in person?”

“You... Haa...” Fan Hong sighed helplessly.

Zhuo Ning Si continued, “Even if Alchemist Fan wants to conceal the truth, unless he hides from the public forever, eventually, everyone will know. Besides, it is only changing one’s place of employment, is there anything wrong with that?”

Fan Hong wore a sullen face and did not answer.

He knew that Zhuo Ning Si had not come here to welcome him, but rather to strike a blow against Spirit Pill Plaza. He was just a pawn that could be used by Zhuo Ning Si.

So, he knew that arguing here was also pointless.

As the two talked, Kang Si Ran walked out and staring at this graceful and beautiful woman, his eyes nearly spat flames.

Zhuo Ning Si noticed his gaze and gave a strange cry as she placed her jade white hand atop her well-rounded peaks, "Shopkeeper Kang's gaze is quite fierce, like he wishes he could eat this Mistress whole. But Shopkeeper Kang, you are not young anymore, are you sure you could handle such a rich meal?"

As she spoke, she covered her mouth and smiled.

"Shopkeeper Zhuo!" Kang Si Ran was not moved by her beauty at all and instead just smiled coldly, "You certainly are praiseworthy, this old master admires your methods."

"Oh, what does Shopkeeper Kang mean? This Mistress does not understand," Zhuo Ning Si pulled out a folding fan and began waving it lightly.

"No one here is a fool, so why bother acting? However, if Shopkeeper Zhuo thinks that this is enough to force my Spirit Pill Plaza to shut down, you could not be more wrong," Kang Si Ran sneered.

"Haha..." Zhuo Ning Si covered her mouth with her fan as she stared at Kang Si Ran with her beautiful eyes, "This Mistress remembers that Shopkeeper Kang had three Origin King Grade Alchemists in his employment before, but they all seem to have left for this Mistress's Pill Pavilion now. Could it be that Shopkeeper Kang is also a Grandmaster in the Alchemic Dao and plans to support his store all on his own? Shopkeeper Kang is truly not young anymore and should take better care of his body."

"Hmph, with Maplewood City being so big, how hard do you think it is to find an Origin King Grade Alchemist?" Kang Si Ran grinned.

Zhuo Ning Si was truly stunned this time and asked in surprise, "Has Shopkeeper Kang hired another Alchemist?"

Fan Hong leaned over at this moment and whispered a few words in Zhuo Ning Si's ear.

Zhuo Ning Si's brow furrowed as her gaze shifted to Yang Kai, her beautiful eyes lighting up as she smiled and said, "Sir Alchemist, dare I ask your surname?"

"Yang!"

"So it is Alchemist Yang, this Mistress has been impolite," Zhuo Ning Si smiled and said, "Alchemist Yang is young, but his cultivation is profound and he is also an Alchemist, this Mistress is deeply impressed."

"There have always been many people who admire me," Yang Kai chuckled.

Zhuo Ning Si slightly froze for a moment, not having expected Yang Kai to be so brazen, but she didn't pay it much mind as she simply smiled and continued, "Then I wonder if Alchemist Yang is interested in coming to my Pill Pavilion to perform Alchemy, this Mistress can promise Alchemist Yang..."

“Zhuo Ning Si!”

Before she could finish speaking, Kang Si Ran cut in furiously.

Chapter 1980, Remuneration

Two Alchemists had been poached by Zhuo Ning Si previously, and she had surreptitiously stolen Fan Hong today. Not content, she was now openly trying to woo Yang Kai in front of him. Clearly, she didn't put him in her eyes.

Kang Si Ran was furious!

“Why is Shopkeeper Kang so angry?” Zhuo Ning Si did not show the slightest fear; after all, both of them were Third-Order Origin Kings who had completely transformed their Saint Qi into Source Qi. It was only due to lack of opportunity that they could not breakthrough to the Dao Source Realm. Pursing her lips, Zhou Ning Si continued, “I just said a few words to Alchemist Yang, it shouldn't matter to you.”

Kang Si Ran's face filled with murderous intent, but he knew he could not make a move here, so he was forced to choke down his burning anger while feeling his lungs burn.

Seeing his reaction, Zhuo Ning Si turned her beautiful eyes back to Yang Kai and continued, “Alchemist Yang, what do you think of this Mistress' proposal? Regarding compensation, you need not worry, this Mistress will offer you twice as much as what Shopkeeper Kang has offered?”

Hearing this, Kang Si Ran's face grew more and more ashen.

Before, the three Alchemists from Spirit Pill Plaza were tempted away by this woman's wiles. He did not know much about Yang Kai or have any kind of friendship with him, so he could not be certain how he would react to such an offer.

Looking at Yang Kai with extreme anxiety, Kang Si Ran's heart suddenly sank!

Yang Kai actually wore an eager expression on his face and said with a big smile, “Is such a good deed possible?”

Zhuo Ning Si smiled more happily and nodded, “Naturally. If Alchemist Yang does not believe this Mistress, he can simply ask Alchemist Fan. In addition to rich remuneration, this Mistress can also arrange four beautiful maidservants to serve Alchemist Yang and tend to his daily needs.”

Zhou Ning Si was a worldly woman who knew men spent all their lives chasing after power and wealth, so she was well aware of what methods to use to tempt them, as was obvious by her successfully poaching three Alchemists from Kang Si Ran in just over a month.

She believed that as long as Yang Kai was not a fool, he would make a wise choice.

“Shopkeeper Zhuo's proposal is truly of great interest,” Yang Kai's gaze shifted to the beautiful maidservants who were accompanying Zhuo Ning Si.

Seeing the look on Yang Kai's face, Fan Hong could not help sneering as a light of contempt flashed across his eyes, thinking to himself that Yang Kai was a man without any integrity or character, but when he recalled his own situation, he suddenly felt awkward because he did not have the qualifications to look down on Yang Kai.

"Alchemist Yang... you..." Kang Si Ran looked at Yang Kai with a frustrated look of despair. A thousand words came to his lips, but in the end, he could not vocalize them and just hung his head helplessly.

Although he had signed a Soul Contract with Yang Kai just now, that contract only stated Yang Kai could not disclose the pill recipes Kang Si Ran provided him.

Yang Kai had yet to formally receive the pill recipes from him, so the Soul Contract was of no use!

Kang Si Ran felt deeply annoyed. If he had known this would happen, he would have added various conditions and terms to the contract, but it was late to regret now!

Zhuo Ning Si chuckled, her beautiful eyes flashing brilliantly as she seemed able to see the collapse of Spirit Pill Plaza. Once she succeeded here, she would receive much more attention from the upper management of the chamber of commerce.

As long as she could deliver a devastating blow to Spirit Pill Plaza, or better yet, force it to shut down, there was a chance she would be favoured by the higher-ups and allowed to transfer out of this small Maplewood City to a larger city where she would receive more status and benefits.

Just when she was about to seal the deal though, Yang Kai put on an awkward look as she said, "It's a pity..."

"What a pity?" Zhuo Ning Si frowned.

"Actually, this Yang signed a Soul Contract with Shopkeeper Kang just now... So even if he had the intention, this Yang can't accept Shopkeeper Zhuo's proposal," Yang Kai sighed with regret, his expression full of chagrin.

Kang Si Ran was taken aback and immediately shot Yang Kai a look of joy.

He did not believe that Yang Kai didn't understand what restrictions the Soul Contract actually imposed. Yang Kai saying this now meant he truly had no intention of siding with Pill Pavilion, a pleasant surprise to Kang Si Ran.

At that moment, he directed a look full of gratitude towards Yang Kai.

After all, if Yang Kai really left, what else could he do besides cursing him for his impropriety? At that time, Spirit Pill Plaza would have no more Alchemists and would soon need to close.

Yang Kai's attitude had become a life-saving straw for a drowning Kang Si Ran, causing his evaluation and impression of Yang Kai to undergo a complete change. Yang Kai's figure even seemed a bit taller and grander now.

"A Soul Contract!" Zhuo Ning Si was shocked, "Shopkeeper Kang certainly spared no expense, even using a precious Soul Contract."

Kang Si Ran coldly snorted, "I had no alternative."

"Shopkeeper Zhuo, what do you think of this?" Yang Kai looked at Zhuo Ning Si with a smile, "I can perform Alchemy for Shopkeeper Kang while also for your noble establishment. I only need half of the benefits you promised before, how about it?"

"In your dreams!" Zhuo Ning Si rejected with no trace of politeness, glaring hatefully at Yang Kai.

After learning that Yang Kai and Kang Si Ran had signed a Soul Contract, she knew that it would be impossible to poach him, so she no longer had any reason to speak with him and shut him off completely.

Since she could not snatch him, what point was there in being polite?

Seeing this woman's attitude turn so quickly, Yang Kai was a bit stunned.

Zhuo Ning Si had no intention of dealing with Yang Kai anymore, and she had already completed her objective in coming to Spirit Pill Plaza for now, so she sneered and spat, "Shopkeeper Kang, you only have one Alchemist left now, so I wonder how long your Spirit Pill Plaza will last! We're leaving!"

Saying so, she waved her hand and led her beautiful maids down the street. Fan Hong naturally didn't have any face to remain, so he hurriedly followed them.

Although the ruckus had subsided, Kang Si Ran's brow remained deeply furrowed.

The predicament of Spirit Pill Plaza had not improved. Originally, with Yang Kai joining Fan Hong, there would be two Alchemists working for the shop. Kang Si Ran had felt a little relieved and was confident he could hold on for two more months until help arrived from the headquarters.

But what he did not expect was that just after inviting Yang Kai, Fan Hong would leave!

The situation had not changed at all.

The only thing he could hope for now was that Yang Kai's Alchemy skills were substantially superior to Fan Hong's but thinking about it carefully... Kang Si Ran felt that was unlikely. Yang Kai was already a Third-Order Origin King and had said to him at the outset that Alchemy was only a means of making money to him, a field he did not invest much energy into.

Such a cultivator would only regard Alchemy as an auxiliary profession. It would already be good if Yang Kai was able to refine Origin King Grade Spirit Pills by chance, so how could Kang Si Ran expect Yang Kai to be a true Grandmaster?

However, Yang Kai's previous actions had left Kang Si Ran with a good impression of him. At the very least, Yang Kai was a trustworthy person.

Back in the meeting room, Kang Si Ran cupped his fists solemnly and said, "Alchemist Yang, regarding today's matter, this old master offers his sincere thanks. If not for Alchemist Yang's integrity, the face of Spirit Pill Plaza and this old master would have been completely lost."

Yang Kai waved his hand lightly and said, "Shopkeeper Kang is too serious, this Yang did not do anything worthy of such praise."

Kang Si Ran smiled and said, "This old master is actually a little confused. Since Shopkeeper Zhuo offered so many favourable conditions, why did Alchemist Yang..."

"En, I went to Pill Pavilion three days ago to buy pill recipes from them but was driven out by their shop-hand without even the slightest sign of courtesy."

"Is that all?" Kang Si Ran's jaw dropped slightly.

"What reason did Shopkeeper Kang expect?" Yang Kai chuckled.

"This old master understands. En, let us continue our discussion about remuneration then. Spirit Pill Plaza can provide two methods of compensation. One is a monthly salary where Spirit Pill Plaza will pay Alchemist Yang a certain amount of Source Crystals every month. As for the exact number... This old master can offer you twice the normal rate."

Perhaps because he was grateful for Yang Kai's choice to stay and help him, or perhaps because of the reward that Zhuo Ning Si had offered before, Kang Si Ran was not stingy with this issue and readily offered twice the normal salary.

"The other option is a sales commission! Spirit Pill Plaza will be responsible for providing you with various materials while Alchemist Yang will be responsible for Alchemy refinement. Once the Spirit Pills are sold, Spirit Pill Plaza will split the profits with Alchemist Yang. What does Alchemist Yang..."

"The second option," Yang Kai replied before Kang Si Ran could even finish.

Kang Si Ran was startled!

He originally thought that Yang Kai would choose the first method; after all, only Alchemists who had great confidence in their own ability would choose the second method, because the more pills they refined the more profits they would make.

As a cultivator who did not focus on Alchemy, Yang Kai should have chosen the first method as it would protect his interests to the greatest extent, but he had actually chosen the second method, surprising Kang Si Ran greatly.

[Is Alchemist Yang a true Alchemy master?] Kang Si Ran wondered to himself.

Just to be cautious, he still asked, "Alchemist Yang does not want to take some time to consider? Alchemist Fan who left before was paid according to the first method."

"No need," Yang Kai shook his head.

"If so, then... good," Since it was someone else's choice, Kang Si Ran did not have much to say.

Soon, the two finalized the profit-sharing arrangement.

Originally, the ratio between Spirit Pill Plaza and its hired Alchemists was thirty-seventy, with the Alchemist taking thirty. Spirit Pill Plaza needed to procure materials and sell the various pills while the Alchemists were only responsible for refining pills, so it was not a loss for the Alchemist to only receive thirty percent of the profits.

But Kang Si Ran took the initiative to arrange a forty-sixty split with Yang Kai, to which Yang Kai naturally had no reason to refuse.

With everything agreed upon, Kang Si Ran asked, "Does Alchemist Yang need to go back and rest for a few days before beginning?"

Yang Kai smiled and looked at him, "With Spirit Pill Plaza in its current state, is there any time to rest? En, let us begin now. Shopkeeper Kang, please provide me with the complete pill recipe booklet first. I will take two days to study it before beginning the refinement."

"There's no rush, appropriate preparations should be made first," Kang Si Ran said as he took out a stack of pill recipes, he had prepared long ago from his Space Ring and handed them to Yang Kai, "Alchemist Yang, please come with me to the Alchemy Room!"

Spirit Pill Plaza has its own Alchemy Room, which was equipped with a large Spirit Array which could extract the underground Earth Fire for Alchemists to use. This room was located a hundred meters below ground and was originally used by three Alchemists, but now it was Yang Kai's private site.