

Medical 1031

Chapter 1031: Forbidden Zone (Part 3)

"Not bad. This Water Mist Orchid already has four petals. A medium-grade item.

"This wood-patterned ginseng is a bit too dark, the earthen forces are too strong. It's completely unbalanced. Sorry, it doesn't meet the requirements."

Circling above was a group of elegant Five-colored Phoenixes, each over three meters long. Occasionally, they would call out melodious calls that echoed in the area.

They belonged to the elder sitting there, who accompanied them whenever the designated day for plants and vegetation arrived. Of course, they were subjects of great envy among the Outer Sect Disciples.

The elder's planting base was established during the Foundation phase, evidently surpassing the ordinary. Although his overall skill in spiritual medicine did not match Li Qinghou's, he was still very famous within the sect. Moreover, his obsession with the way of medicine had reached a terrifying degree, even Li Qinghou could not compare. Many people even said, if a third Master Alchemist ever appeared on the Eastwood Continent, it would surely be this Elder Zhou.

Among the line was a particular young man, not particularly handsome, but standing upright. When he reached Elder Zhou, he clasped his hands and bowed respectfully. "Greetings, Elder Zhou, it's me, Chen Zi.."

When the other Outer Sect Disciples in the area heard the young man's name, they curiously glanced over.

"Oh, so he is Chen Ziang's brother. I've heard he's very talented in cultivating spiritual plants."

"I've heard too. Since Chen Ziang joined the sect, he has never grown anything below high-grade spiritual plants. It's truly incredible!"

As the low-toned discussions continued, Chen Zinan stood there with a serene and indifferent expression. However, deep in his eyes burned a sense of pride and nobility.

Elder Zhou was very pleased to see Chen Ziang. He had long been paying attention to him, considering his talent in cultivating Elf Plants.

"Zi'ang, what type of plant are you growing this time?" Elder Zhou asked warmly.

"Elder Zhou, I am pleased to report that I have grown winter bamboo!" Following this, Chen Ziang waved his hand and revealed ten Elf Bamboos. Each as thick as an arm, over two meters long. They were emerald green, even shimmering with a faint green glow.

"I first soaked the seeds in the Spiritual Spring, then ground some Spirit Stones into rubble, using it as soil. I fertilize the plants with my spiritual energy at least every six hours. Every three days, I carefully tend to their leaves, using the Ninegreens Profound Magic and other medicinal plants to cultivate them to this level!"

"Very well," Elder Zhou said, stroking his beard. The admiration in his eyes was evident. "These bamboo stalks exceed two meters in length, pulsating with green energy. They surpass the high-grade mark and should be classified as extremely high-grade. I encourage you to continue your efforts. If you can grow the bamboos over three meters, they will be classified as an exceptional grade."

When the outer disciples around heard the words 'extremely high-grade', more discussions erupted, with many envious glances cast towards the soul bamboo.

Chen Ziang's face broke into a smile, the light in his eyes growing brighter. He clasped his hands and bowed, ready to step towards his assistant to collect his merits, when a cold snort suddenly sounded.

"Elder Zhou, Disciple Zhao Yiduo has also grown some spiritual winter bamboos!" A sharp-eyed, long-faced man suddenly appeared. As he approached, he cast a glance in Chen Ziang's direction.

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Chapter 1032: Hostility

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He suddenly appeared on the scene, immediately causing excitement among the surrounding Outer Sect disciples, who all looked at him.

"That's Zhao Yiduo's brother! Mr. Zhao's spiritual plants and vegetation skills are said to be neck and neck with Chen Ziang's!"

"Well, now we can see them face to face. They've been rivals for a while now, and both of them want to become the top botanist among all the disciples."

Chen Ziang's expression immediately darkened. He looked coldly at Zhao Yiduo, who glared back at him. The hostility in their eyes intensified immediately.

"Zhao Yiduo, go ahead and bring out your Spirit Winter Bamboo," Elder Zhou encouraged. Clearly, even he was interested in what would happen. He was well aware of the competition between the two young disciples and was actually pleased to witness it. Only through healthy competition can great progress be achieved.

Zhao Yiduo clasped his hands and bowed to Elder Zhou, then patted his bag, producing ten Elf Bamboo stalks, each over three meters long and as thick as a leg. They were a bright emerald green and even seemed somewhat crystalline. Judging by the spiritual energy they emitted, it was obvious that they exceeded the normal range and, in terms of quality, were far superior to Chen Ziang's energy.

Just seeing the bamboo caused an uproar in the crowd. Most people had heard that Spirit Wind Bamboo could grow over three meters, but had never seen it before.

"Spirit Winter Bamboo growing over three meters! I wonder how long it takes to grow?"

"That kind of Spirit Winter Bamboo has reached the stage where it releases spiritual energy. Mr. Zhao's botanical prowess undoubtedly makes him the top Outer Sect disciple on Xiangyun Peak!"

Seeing the crowd's level of excitement, Zhao Yiduo provocatively smiled at Chen Ziang.

Chen Ziang's face instantly darkened.

As for Elder Zhou, his eyes shone with appreciation as he looked at the bamboo and nodded.

"Magnificent, magnificent. Quite a few disciples submitted Spirit Winter Bamboo today, but your quality is certainly the best. It's not just high-grade, it's absolutely top-grade. Very, very good, Zhao Yiduo. Keep up the good work!"

Zhao Yiduo bowed to Elder Zhou again, then challenged Chen Ziang. "Junior brother Chen, it seems you need to put in more effort in your studies."

Chen Ziang's expression grew even darker, and he coldly snorted. "Mr. Zhao, isn't your gloating a bit premature? After all, it doesn't count when you have help. Next time, I'll definitely grow soul bamboo to five meters!"

Upon hearing this, Zhao Yiduo burst into laughter. "Junior brother Chen, if you brag too much, you'll surely crash and burn. Spirit Wind Bamboo is incredibly difficult to cultivate because of the unbelievable spiritual energy it requires. For Qi Condensation disciples like us, growing it to three meters is the absolute limit. You think you're going to grow it to five meters? Only Foundation Establishment elders can do such things. Not to mention six meters. In all my years in the sect, I've never seen a soul—"

Before Zhao Yiduo could even finish speaking, a resonant rumbling sound could be heard from the path leading to the mission office, as if some gigantic creature were approaching. The Outer Sect disciples immediately began to look shocked, and gasps started to ring out.

The confrontation between Zhao Yiduo and Chen Ziang was also interrupted, and both of them frowned as they looked toward the path.

Soon, visible were the tops of several massive bamboo stalks, thicker than a person. They were bright emerald green, and upon closer inspection, one could even see some purple spots shimmering on their surface. They also emitted brilliant colorful light.

Shockingly, the bamboo emitted powerful spiritual energy, immediately causing cries of astonishment.

"What is that thing!?"

"It looks like some kind of tree! But at the same time, it looks like bamboo!"

Chen Ziang and Zhao Yiduo frowned, unable even to identify what they were looking at. However, they could tell it was incredible. Meanwhile, Elder Zhou stared wide-eyed at the bamboo, even starting to breathe slightly heavily.

As more and more bamboo became visible, everyone gazed intently. When the bamboo was fully revealed, shockingly, each stalk was 15 meters tall, carried by a petite young man who staggered along the path with the bamboo slung over his shoulder.

He almost looked like an ant carrying steamed buns...

Every step he took caused a resounding rumbling sound, and the Outer Sect disciples made way for him, looking utterly amazed by his appearance.

Of course, that young man was Yan Xiaobao, who had been complaining about the harshness of the competition and the terrors of Wanshe Valley. Although he wanted to cry, no tears came out, and he didn't even notice the crowd watching him as he trudged along. When he reached Elder Zhou, he dropped the bamboo on the ground, causing a massive boom. Then he sat on the bamboo, panting heavily and wiping the sweat from his forehead.

"I can't fit this bamboo in my bag. Man, I'm exhausted. Oh, dear Elder, I've come here for the mission." Suddenly, Yan Xiaobao felt a strange sensation, looked around, and discovered that everyone in the crowd was staring at his bamboo. Audible gasps could be heard, too.

"Bamboo... is that thing actually bamboo?"

"It's so big! I've never seen bamboo that large before. Come on, they must be trees, right?!"

Chapter 1033: Hostility_2

When Chen Ziang and Zhao Yiduo realized what they were looking at, they couldn't hide their surprise. However, they could hardly believe it was real, and knelt down to examine the bamboo more closely. Zhao Yiduo began to tremble, having to resist the urge to open one of the bamboo stalks to inspect it from the inside.

Before he could do so, Elder Zhou made a call and waved his gloved hand, causing Chen Zinan and Zhao Yiduo to flip over. Then Elder Zhou stood there, eyes wide open staring at the bamboo. After a long time, he took a deep breath and said, "This... this is truly Spiritwinter Bamboo!"

The surrounding disciples from the Outer Sect were shocked for a moment, and then there was a clamor.

"Spiritwinter Bamboo!! I can hardly believe those large trees... are actually Spirit Wind Bamboo!"

"How is this possible? How did the Spirit Wind Bamboo become so robust? My god, they actually grew to fifteen meters!"

"Fifteen meters, and as thick as a person. Is that... bamboo?"

As people began comparing Yan Xiaobao's bamboo with Chen Zinan's and Zhao Yiduo's bamboo, the noisy chatter grew louder. Yan Xiaobao was astonished by the commotion. Chen Ziang and Zhao Yiduo, clearly oblivious to the pain caused by being tossed aside by Elder Zhou, rushed towards the bamboo, kneeling to examine it.

Elder Zhou began to study the bamboo stalks one by one, expressing a state of shock and elation.

Everyone's mad reaction left Yan Xiaobao somewhat panicked. In his view, these people seemed like madmen. After all, wasn't it just bamboo? Besides, he initially planned to let it grow to thirty meters before transferring it.

Yan Xiaobao took a step back, then tried to catch the elder's attention.

"Elder..." he shouted loudly.

"Magnificent! Fantastic!" Elder Zhou said with a laugh, beginning to caress every inch of the bamboo. Clearly, he hadn't even heard Yan Xiaobao speak. "Spiritwinter Bamboo like this is very rare. Only when it reaches 15 meters can it achieve such a deep green hue. In fact, at this point, it's not a medicinal plant, but primarily an ingredient for forging a spiritual bamboo sword. It can even be used to perform certain unique magic technologies!

"Listen to what everyone is saying. Take a deep breath." Looking extremely excited, Elder Zhou closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Can you smell that aroma? It smells like meat and bones, right? This unique fragrance emerges once the bamboo reaches fifteen meters!"

Chen Ziang and Zhao Yiduo earnestly followed suit. The other disciples in the area similarly advanced to do the same.

Yan Xiaobao cleared his throat. He noticed the fragrance he sensed while walking with the bamboo on the road. However, he was quite certain... it was actually the fragrance of chicken bones. After all, he had buried hundreds of Spirit Tail Chicken carcasses in the spiritual field where he was cultivating the soul bamboo. Furthermore... those bones had all been stripped of their meat, except by him.

By now, Yan Xiaobao was completely convinced these people were madmen.

"Elder..." he shouted again.

However, at this moment, Elder Zhou suddenly shook violently; angry flames burst forth in his eyes, his expression contorted with rage.

"Damn it! What on earth happened? Did someone really take a big bite? Spiritwinter Bamboo is extremely bitter and can't be eaten raw! What bastard actually bit a big piece, ruining its quality!?" Mr. Zhou seemed filled with sorrow; to him, it was as if he had discovered a piece of perfect jade, only to find it had been destroyed by pests. His head popped up suddenly to look at Yan Xiaobao.

"It wasn't me!" Yan Xiaobao blurted out, nervously retreating. He suddenly recalled being struck by that incredible hunger for the first time. In his desperation of not having anything to eat, he had taken a bite of the bamboo. How could he have known this would create such an appalling scene when going about his task, or how it would affect these madmen?

As the disciples all heard Elder Zhou's words, they sneaked a peek at the last remaining spiritual bamboo stalk, and sure enough, there was a large bite mark clearly visible.

Elder Zhou stared at the damaged part of the bamboo, then sighed deeply. After all, he was a Foundation-stage cultivator and deeply indulged in the way of medicine. However, the bamboo Yan Xiaobao brought was so astonishing, so different from anything Elder Zhou had ever seen, that he had momentarily lost his composure.

Finally, he gave Yan Xiaobao a deep look and then flicked his sleeve.

"This bamboo is extremely super... no, wait, exceedingly superior. Yes, let's classify it as the highest grade. The reward is 10,000 merit points!" The reaction from the audience was overwhelming. Normally, the reward for such a plant cultivation task was about 10 merit points. At most, one might get 100. But in this case, it was 10,000!

Off to the side, the assistant was stunned. Over the years, it was rare to list a spiritual plant as highest grade.

In fact, it was the first time in hundreds of years.

Yan Xiaobao was exceedingly excited, immediately heading to the assistant and handing over his identity badge. The assistant hesitated for a moment, glanced at Elder Zhou, who was still inspecting the bamboo, then gritted his teeth and handed some merit points to Yan Xiaobao.

Upon receiving his merits, Yan Xiaobao quickly turned and left, determined never to return and deal with these lunatics again.

However, just before he left, Elder Zhou suddenly called out. "Hey, what's your name?"

"Yan Xiaobao" was the immediate response. "I'm Yan Xiaobao, and my uncle is Li Qinghou!" Before coming here, he had no idea the bamboo would cause such a scene. In fact, he was a bit concerned about it, which is why he brought up Qing Hou's name, as a kind of threat.

"Hmph." Elder Zhou seemed annoyed that Yan Xiaobao would choose to drop Li Qinghou's name. "You might think you're very clever, but the Spiritual Flow Sect is one of the historic great sects. Disciples always come here with their secrets and unique fortunes. I won't lower myself to ask how you cultivated this bamboo, but the next time you grow something similar, you must bring it all to me. I'll make sure you receive a substantial reward!" Finally, he dismissively waved Yan Xiaobao away and returned to studying the bamboo. It was precisely at this point that, due to their association with the bamboo, the entire mission handover event concluded.

As he hurried out of the mission office, he went straight to the Spiritual Medicine Pharmacy at Xiangyun Peak, holding his identity badge, the place where disciples can obtain spiritual medicine.

It's also where disciples can hand over their carefully crafted spiritual medicine to earn merits.

Yan Xiaobao accelerated at top speed, quickly heading to the spiritual medicine shop, trying to decide what to buy. Ultimately, he decided to purchase a bottle of pills suitable for Level 5 Qi Condensation. These pills weren't cheap at all. Yan Xiaobao initially assumed he had 10,000 merit points, but, unexpectedly, spiritual medicine was indeed very expensive.

"Greengod Spiritgathering Pills," he murmured, looking at the medicine bottle in his hand. Inside were three pills, which cost him a total of 4,000 merit points.

However, these were pills that ordinary disciples at Qi Condensation would be unable to acquire. They were very special; their medicinal potency was not only stronger than regular spiritual medicine but also provided purer spiritual energy.

Yan Xiaobao didn't believe merely reaching Level 5 Qi Condensation was enough, so he planned to break through all the way to the great circle of the fifth level.

He had considered aiming for the sixth level to avoid matches during competitions, but if he did so, he could imagine how Li Qinghou would find a way to punish him.

As for his other merit points, he did not let them go to waste. He traded them for some disposable defensive amulets. Hidden inside his robe, they made him feel safer.

Unfortunately, he didn't have enough merit points to carry out his plan to go to the Treasure House to obtain one or two weapons suitable for the Qi Condensation stage. Instead, he returned to his residence. Once back in the courtyard, he sat cross-legged in his small cabin and then carefully examined the medicine pills he had taken out.

"I still have three months. It's time for some secluded meditation!" Gritting his teeth, he looked around, ensuring no one was watching, then cast a spell and pointed. The turtle iron pot immediately flew out, along with a pile of Spirit Tails he used to start the tricolor flame.

One feather wasn't enough to satisfy the turtle pots. Before the three design spots on the pan burned bright, he had to feed ten more. Then, he took a deep breath, placed the three pills inside, and performed a triple spirit enhancement.

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Chapter 1034: Fifth Level

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After completing this process, the Greengod Spiritgathering Pills in his hand were covered with three silver designs on their surface. Finally, he put one in his mouth.

The pill dissolved, and spiritual energy began to explosively surge through him. Yan Xiaobao immediately began to use the breathing techniques and postures of the Purple Qi control art to manage the flow of spiritual energy.

A few days later, a rumbling sound came from Yan Xiaobao's small cabin, and countless dust particles exploded in the shockwave. Moments later, Yan Xiaobao's laughter could be heard.

"The fifth level of Qi Condensation!" he panted, his eyes shining. After having eaten so many Spirit Tail Chickens recently, his cultivation base had reached the great circle of the Qi Condensation Fourth Level. By consuming that one pill, he was able to easily break through to Level 5.

More impurities were expelled from his body, but not as much as before. After washing, he didn't immediately take out another pill, but instead took time to stabilize his cultivation base. After five days,

he took out the second of his triple spirit-enhanced Greengod Spiritgathering Pills and consumed it. As the spiritual energy coursed through him, his spiritual meridian rivers grew larger and the flow speed increased, causing his cultivation base to climb at a faster rate.

After stabilizing himself for a few days, he consumed the third Greengod Spiritgathering Pill, and his cultivation base shot up to the great circle of Qi Condensation Fifth Level.

By this point, everything about him seemed different from before. His skin was fairer, and his energy had some unique traits.

Yan Xiaobao was delighted, but he also realized that typically, breaking through from the Fourth Level of Qi Condensation to the great circle of the Fifth Level with just three pills was impossible, and he was still a long way from reaching Level 6.

He knew that the only reason he could achieve this was due to the turtle's spirit enhancement capabilities.

The more Yan Xiaobao practiced, the more it became evident to him how much the turtle helped. In turn, this made him more curious about its origin.

Although it looked like a turtle shell, the more he studied it, the more it seemed to be something else entirely.

In recent days, he focused more on spiritual enhancement issues and learned that Violet Cauldron Peak was renowned for its spiritual enhancement capabilities. In fact, if you paid enough merit, you could even engage the services of the elder there for spiritual enhancement. Rumor had it that the Peak Lord of Violet Cauldron Peak was a great master of spiritual enhancement.

Yan Xiaobao's eyes sparkled as he ran his fingers along the engraved design of the turtle pot. Finally, he shook his head. There were too many things he didn't understand, and wasting time thinking about them was of no benefit. Reaching out, he produced a green jade pendant and a wooden sword.

This was the only magical artifact he currently possessed. When he prepared to perform a triple spirit enhancement on them, he gritted his teeth, generating more soul tails.

"I wonder what the wooden sword and jade pendant will be like after a triple spirit enhancement."

The waves in his hand caused the three designs on the turtle pot to light up. When he placed the jade pendant inside, a silver light shone, and a thunderous sound could be heard. Fortunately, they did not resound very far, so no one heard them.

As the silver light gradually faded, the green jade pendant had three silver designs, which flickered for a while before disappearing. However, Yan Xiaobao could feel that the aura of the heavens was now different from before, as if the heavens came from the earth.

In fact, glowing violet speckles could even be seen within the green of the jade pendant. Even the shape of the pendant had changed; it was now flattened into a round shape instead of an oval.

Yan Xiaobao infused it with some spiritual energy, and when a green shield sprang up around him, a rumbling echoed around, a full meter thick and utterly astounding. After quickly testing the defensive power of the jade pendant, Yan Xiaobao couldn't help but laugh aloud. Next, he directed his attention to the wooden sword. From the moment he joined the sect, he had obtained this wooden sword, and since then, he had performed spirit enhancement on it twice.

"With the protective power of this jade pendant, after a triple spirit enhancement on my small wooden sword, I will definitely be very special!" Yan Xiaobao laughed, then began preparing the small wooden sword for spirit enhancement.

Light flickered in the turtle pot. As it gradually faded, the small wooden sword appeared before Yan Xiaobao. The three silver designs on its surface glowed and then gradually vanished. Simultaneously, the sword's appearance changed. The length of the finger-length grip extended further, and the grain of the wood was now almost entirely violet in color.

An exotic fragrance also emanated from the sword, seemingly sweet as it entered the nose, but soon inducing a state of confusion in the mind.

Yan Xiaobao trembled for a moment, then his eyes cleared up. He stared at the wooden sword in shock for a while, then reached out and grasped it, discovering it was many times heavier than before. Unexpectedly, when held in his hand, it felt as heavy as a boulder.

His eyes sparkling, he examined the sword until a deep light emerged in his eyes.

"This wooden sword is made from a rarely seen heavy wood," he whispered, "it only needs refining for forty-nine days before it can be used for equipping and forging. It can also be used for mass production." Next, he focused on the veins within the wood of the sword.

Chapter 1035: Fifth Level (Part 2)

"The violet veins. The only explanation for this is that these are signs of sword transformation after completing the spirit enhancement." Yan Xiaobao closed his eyes, beginning to recall the information he had gathered about Heavy Cloud Wood while studying plants and vegetation.

After a moment, his eyes opened, gleaming with anticipation. He made a gesture to cast a spell, then tapped the small Wooden Sword, instantly causing a flash of black light with tiny violet spots inside. Suddenly, the sword shot out from the small wooden cabin, passed through the yard, and then moved about thirty meters further to pierce into a gigantic boulder.

Without making a sound, the sword spun within the rock, piercing through it, and then flew back to Yan Xiaobao.

The sword was not damaged at all; in fact, it began to emit a piercing aura.

Yan Xiaobao's expression brightened. He toyed with the sword a bit more before applying the design again. Finally, he opened the door of the small wooden cabin and walked out, taking a deep breath. Unfortunately, as soon as he considered the competition in two months, his previous high spirits would sink.

"This isn't good enough. I'm not ready. The others in the competition are sure to be ferocious beasts. I need to do more." He gritted his teeth, thinking of the two levels of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art he had read about in the manual.

The function of brightness is heaviness. The function of heaviness is brightness.

These two levels of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art are powerful magic arts that emerge during cultivation. If both are cultivated to the peak, they might result in a holy power known as Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning.

On the South Shore of the Spirit Stream Sect, the basic techniques of the Violet Qi Cauldron Control Art are actually practiced by everyone. However, few cultivate the lightness of heaviness, and for the second stage of light heaviness, this occurrence is even rarer. As for those who cultivate the art to the absolute peak and can unleash the holy power of Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning, they are the rarest of all.

In fact, most who gain enlightenment of the Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning are disciples of Violet Peak.

"Lightness of heaviness... Only when I reach the stage where I can fully control objects will I be absolutely assured of surpassing the pack." Yan Xiaobao continued to ponder the description of this technique as he gazed at the small Wooden Sword.

When he fought with Xu Baocai, everyone from the Supervision Department and even the oven mistakenly thought he had achieved enlightenment of heavy lightness. Now he recalled this situation, and an idea emerged in his mind.

"People assumed I had achieved lightness because of how skillfully I controlled my small Wooden Sword. However, the real reason behind it was mainly how incredibly the sword became after my spiritual enhancement.

"The truth is, my ability to control it was actually not that incredible, definitely not the lightness of heaviness." Frowning, Yan Xiaobao casually sat cross-legged, looking at the Wooden Sword. Gradually, his eyes grew blank, and soon they were bloodshot.

A moment later, his right hand suddenly waved in the air, sending the small Wooden Sword flying out. It whistled through the air in front of him, kicking up a cloud of dust. Yan Xiaobao's frown deepened, and he flashed a spell gesture with his right hand, then pointed. However, he wasn't pointing at the sword, but rather at the gigantic rock outside the yard he had just stabbed with the sword.

The wave of his finger caused the massive stone to tremble slightly, then gradually rise about a third of a meter into the air. But then Yan Xiaobao's spiritual energy became unstable, and with a boom, it settled back down.

However, Yan Xiaobao did not feel discouraged. Quite the opposite, in fact. His eyes began to shine brightly. Fully focused, he spread his spiritual energy and waved his finger again.

Once, twice, three times...

Time flew by. Half a month vanished in the blink of an eye. Almost the entire time, Yan Xiaobao attempted to control the gigantic rock. Of course, the rock was about as large as three people standing together, with a weight of about 1,500-1,600 kilograms. Even though Yan Xiaobao was at the great circle of Qi Condensation fifth level, maneuvering such an object was no easy feat.[1]

The only reason Yan Xiaobao could do so was because his cultivation base was very refined. Anyone else at the fifth level of Qi Condensation would never be able to move the giant rock more than a few centimeters.

Yan Xiaobao worked hard for a whole month. At this point, he realized the reason controlling the giant rock was so difficult wasn't due to a lack of spiritual energy, but rather his lack of control level. Even if he still had sufficient spiritual energy, the connection would always break.

"The key is to move the strands of spiritual energy at a constant speed," he hoarsely muttered, his eyes bloodshot but shining brightly. "That's how to ensure they'll never break."

The same principle applied to mortals making noodles at home. If you pull the dough too quickly, it snaps. If you go too slowly, it's impossible to stretch them far. You need to use the right amount of force, and you can smoothly and clearly control the object.

If a cultivator wants to control an object to a degree beyond ordinary objects, they need to use the right amount of strength and maintain stability. This, of course, significantly increases the difficulty.

"Now I understand!" Yan Xiaobao thought excitedly. "The lightness of heaviness isn't just 'light' and 'heavy.' It isn't only about being able to control heavy objects as if they weren't that heavy. That's just

the surface meaning. The real, deeper meaning must be related to physical objects and the way you manipulate spiritual energy!

Chapter 1036: Fifth Level_3

"At the fifth level of Qi Condensation, your spiritual energy reserves are heavy. When you transform the spiritual energy into many small, indestructible threads, that is when it becomes light. Doing this correctly is the weight of lightness. Naturally, the end result is that you can effortlessly control the speed of objects!" After identifying the root of the problem, he waved his hand again, and the boulder began to tremble. Then it suddenly rose into the air.

It was almost as if a giant hand grabbed and lifted it. Then, it started to blow towards Yan Xiaobao in the air. However, before it could reach him, it suddenly fell from the sky into his yard, where it kicked up a huge cloud of dust.

Yan Xiaobao did not feel discouraged. He continued to practice for half a month. Unfortunately, during that time, he couldn't maintain a consistently stable spiritual energy thread.

Even if he could form a stable thread, the incredible heaviness of the rock ensured that the spiritual energy thread always became unstable and shattered.

Of course, when it came to controlling the small wooden sword, he had no issues. Due to the significant weight difference between the boulder and the sword, Yan Xiaobao now found it easier to control the wooden sword. Moreover, after a month or more of training, he could move it at a faster speed.

In fact, he had indeed achieved the weight of lightness. However, he wasn't satisfied. His eyes completely filled with bloodshot veins, he gritted his teeth and once again exuded a vicious determination.

"I refuse to believe I can't do it!" He made a spell gesture with his right hand, making the boulder fly over and hover directly above him.

As he nervously looked up at the rock, beads of sweat appeared on his forehead, and he exerted all his effort to maintain the invisible spiritual energy. After all, if it broke, the rock would fall. Although it wouldn't kill him, it would certainly be very painful.

This time, he was obviously able to maintain the connection longer than before. However, after about an hour, a rumbling sound began to echo, and Yan Xiaobao let out a roar as the boulder shattered. A long time later, when Yan Xiaobao crawled out from underneath, he trembled and fell to the side.

Due to his Immortal Skin, he wasn't injured. However, the pain from what just happened made him grimace.

Nonetheless, his determination became more intense. Another month passed, and the rock crashed onto him over and over again. Eventually, he reached such a level that he could let it hover for an entire day without dropping it.

Additionally, he could lift it to greater and greater heights. Soon, he could send it as high as thirty meters. Of course, the pain from falling from that height left Yan Xiaobao completely pale.

However, this was the only way to elevate himself to the peak.

Gradually, his ability to achieve lightness with his inner spiritual energy became increasingly stable. Eventually, he reached a point where he almost never broke the connection. But he still wasn't satisfied. Next, instead of sitting cross-legged to practice, he practiced while exercising.

This made things even more difficult and led to constant roaring sounds echoing through his courtyard.

Time passed, day by day. Soon, the competition Li Qinghou mentioned was now only three days away. The scene in Yan Xiaobao's courtyard was of a lone figure, surrounded by a 1500-kilogram boulder floating above him. Despite Yan Xiaobao moving around, the boulder remained motionless.

Finally, Yan Xiaobao stopped running and stood in front of his small cabin, laughing heartily. Then, he waved his right hand, and the boulder flew out of the courtyard before landing steadily on the ground.

Next, he made a spell gesture and pointed, causing his small wooden sword to chop down in front of him. It moved so fast that it was nothing but a blur; clearly, it was much stronger than before.

Yan Xiaobao's face was full of joy, and his hand began to flash with the gestures of the spell.

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Chapter 1037: Speed and Strength

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The combination of speed and the sword's power produced a stunning effect. Suddenly, the courtyard seemed to be filled with countless small wooden swords, all flying about.

Finally, he flicked his sleeve, causing the sword projections to disappear, leaving behind only a single wooden sword, which shot towards Yan Xiaobao and then vanished into his hand.

"Now I'm finally ready to enter the top 5," Yan Xiaobao took a deep breath. Although he wasn't a hundred percent confident, there was little time left. All he could do was resolve his Qi, calm himself, then sit cross-legged in meditation to get into the right state. Yan Xiaobao's eyes opened at sunrise. He took a deep breath, showing a serious expression on his face. It was his first time participating in such a tournament.

His early conflict with Xu Baocai wasn't really considered a true fight. However, since he would participate in the tournament at Xiangyun Peak's Outer Sect, he would truly fight with other sect members.

He slowly stood up, tidying his satchel, then gloomily walked out of his residence. Soon after, he ran back, rummaging under his bed until he found his leather jacket from his days by the furnace. After putting on several layers, he hung the jade pendant where he could easily reach.

If not for it causing too many issues, he would have strapped his turtle on his back.

"Ah, why didn't I think of this earlier?" he regretfully thought. "I can't believe I forgot my big black pot." However, there was no time, and he had no choice but to grit his teeth and turn to leave. Glancing in the direction of the distant sun, his eyes were full of determination. He puffed out his chest and started climbing toward the peak.

At the moment, he wore too many layers of leather clothing. Even without the big black pot, he still looked a bit like a sticky rice dumpling... tightly bound, and after walking for a while, he already started sweating.

However, even dripping with sweat, he wouldn't take off a single piece of clothing. The tournament was too important, and he couldn't stop thinking about how brutal it would be. As he walked along the path, he suddenly realized it was a foggy morning on the mountain, and he actually didn't know where he was.

"Did I take a wrong turn??" he thought, immediately looking around for someone to ask for directions. Meanwhile, his heart began to pound with fear of possibly being late.

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At the top of Fragrant Cloud Peak was a combat stage, the venue for the tournament. Quite a few people had already gathered there to watch the meeting, quietly chatting.

There were even some disciples among the audience at the fifth level of Qi Condensation, though most of them stood with their arms folded across their chests, watching the young siblings who would participate in the tournament. Of course, there were those there cheering for their friends too.

This Outer Sect tournament wasn't very formal, but participants could stand out from the crowd. About twenty people were participating in the competition, all seated in meditation positions, ready to start fighting.

None of the contestants were at the Qi Condensation third level. Although the rules allowed it, most participants were at the Qi Condensation fifth level, though there were five or six people at the fourth level.

Among this group, a young woman stood out. She was tall and beautiful, and her Outer Sect disciple uniform couldn't hide her curvaceous figure. Anyone who saw her couldn't help but fall into a sort of reverie.

Her skin was white as snow, and her eyebrows gracefully arched like willow leaves. She was truly very beautiful. As for the Daoist pants she wore, though loose, they clung tightly around her rear, making it almost impossible for any man not to notice.

A number of Outer Sect disciples gathered around her, obviously her admirers.

Although she couldn't compare to Zhou Xinqi, she was still one of the most famous Outer Sect disciples, Lingfei Du. [1. Du Lingfei's Mandarin name is Dù Língfēi. Du is a common surname. Ling means "rise." Fei means "luxurious."]

"Sister Du's cultivation base is at the big circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, so she will undoubtedly dominate this tournament. There's not even any suspense about it."

"But, you can't underestimate Elder Chen Zie. I heard he had a breakthrough in his cultivation base last month. He might not be in the big circle of the fifth level of Qi Condensation, but he's close." Standing not far from Du Lingfei was a young man who looked arrogant, equally shocked by Yan Xiaobao, Chen Zi... at the bamboo outside the mission office that day.

While everyone was discussing this, Chen Ziang looked at Du Lingfei, a strange light flickering in his eyes. Although he wasn't too confident about securing the first place, he was sure he could get second. Besides, he could use this situation to better understand Du Lingfei.

It was at this moment two beams of light streaked across the air from a distance. It was Li Qinghou, followed closely by a gaunt old man. The old man's skin was dark, but his eyes sparkled brightly, giving him a very strict appearance.

The surrounding Outer Sect disciples were completely shocked to find Li Qinghou attending the tournament and quickly clasped hands in greeting.

"Greetings, Peak Lord. Greetings, Elder Taiyang." Everyone was surprised that the Peak Lord would personally attend such an event. Small tournaments like this almost always fell under the presiding of Elder Sun.

Chapter 1038: Speed and Strength (Part 2)

Du Lingfei and Chen Ziang were also shocked, their expressions very serious as they greeted Li Qinghou.

Li Qinghou kindly looked around and nodded. However, when he scanned the disciples and realized Yan Xiaobao was absent, he frowned.

When the surrounding Outer Sect disciples saw Li Qinghou frown, their hearts began to pound. Du Lingfei immediately grew nervous, unsure why the Peak Lord might be displeased.

"Shall we begin, Lord Pike?" asked Elder Sun, who stood beside Li Qinghou.

Li Qinghou was about to answer when suddenly, a sphere-like silhouette could be seen flying towards them from afar.

"I'm lost!" Yan Xiaobao shouted as he ran. "It's too foggy..." Yan Xiaobao was not only very nervous, but he also felt the whole situation was very unfair. After all, he wasn't very familiar with the mountain paths, and considering how foggy it was, he had simply lost his way while thinking.

Once these words left his mouth, all the Outer Sect disciples couldn't help but look over. Many of them were familiar with Yan Xiaobao, and when they heard his shout, they began to snicker. As for those who didn't know him, they frowned, mockery visible in their eyes.

As far as they were concerned, the only reason he got lost on his way to the tournament was that he rarely ventured to the mountain's peak and didn't care about the competitions held by the sect. Most likely, he was just used to wandering around.

Du Lingfei looked at him and remembered he was one of those who had been chasing Zhou Xinqi recently. It was said he had worked hard to catch this great 'chick bandit'. Du Lingfei immediately turned away disdainfully, unwilling even to look upon him.

Chen Ziang looked at Yan Xiaobao in complete shock, casting a quick glance toward Li Qinghou. He hadn't forgotten that Yan Xiaobao had said in the mission office that Li Qinghou was his uncle. That explained why Li Qinghou was now frowning, and after analyzing the situation, he realized that when battling Yan Xiaobao, he would have to be careful not to fight too hard.

Li Qinghou snorted coldly, glaring at Yan Xiaobao for a moment, then nodded toward the sky.

Elder Sun took a thoughtful look at Yan Xiaobao for a moment, then chuckled, waving his hand. "Very well. All disciples wishing to compete in the Outer Sect tournament, please enter the arena."

Seeing Li Qinghou's glare made Yan Xiaobao feel the situation was more unfair than ever. However, he didn't dare voice his opinion. As soon as Elder Sun's words left his mouth, Yan Xiaobao was the first disciple to leap onto the platform, his chest proudly puffed out, looking as though daggers and a mountain of fire could not affect his honor.

Soon, all the competitors were in the arena. Including Yan Xiaobao, there were twenty in total.

The rules for competitions like these were relatively loose. Elder Sun watched for a moment, then took out a small cloth bag containing some marbles with numbers on them. The competitors took turns drawing a marble, indicating the order in which they would fight.

Yan Xiaobao did not succeed in drawing to fight first. He ended up in the middle, and when he took out his marble, it had the number 11 written on it.

"Very well," Elder Sun said calmly. "Now, everyone step back so the first match can begin. Warriors numbered one and two, prepare to start!" Yan Xiaobao and the others quickly left the battle stage, while the disciples with the first and second marbles remained. As they gazed at each other, a brilliant light began to flash in their eyes.

Before long, they began to fight, the rumbling sounds of battle echoing out. Meanwhile, Yan Xiaobao's thoughts were racing. He kept reminding himself that with twenty people in this competition, all he had to do was win twice to make it into the top five. He also wondered who had drawn the number twelve marble, but no one was willing to reveal their number, leaving him almost unable to determine who he would battle against.

Even as his spirits began to sink, the first match ended, and the second match began. Du Lingfei was one of the warriors in this match. She immediately made a spell gesture, causing a flag to fly out and transform into a mist that enveloped her opponent. After a brief struggle, the disciple was unable to escape and admitted defeat, filled with admiration for Du Lingfei.

The third and fourth matches proceeded very quickly, and when the fifth match arrived, Chen Zinan quickly and effectively defeated a disciple at Qi Condensation Fourth Level.

"Warriors numbered 11 and 12, step forward and begin the match," Elder Sun called out. Yan Xiaobao took a deep breath and stepped forward with a very serious expression on his face. Once on the arena, he found his opponent was a tall, gaunt young man with a cold sneer on his face.

His cultivation base was extraordinary, at the fifth level of Qi Condensation. His eyes flashed like lightning, and he seemed like the type of person not to be trifled with.

"Well, junior brother," the gaunt young man said, his voice cold, "you were unlucky to meet me in the first round. It's not too late to concede. If you don't, and you get hurt, you'll have to take responsibility for it yourself."

However, the moment those words left the young man's mouth, Yan Xiaobao suddenly let out a powerful roar.

The roar was so intense that everything trembled, leaving quite a few spectators shocked. The gaunt young man was also taken aback, reflexively retreating a step, his eyes widening as he stared at Yan Xiaobao.

Chapter 1039: Speed and Strength (Part 3)

After the roar, Yan Xiaobao tapped his jade pendant, causing a green glow. However, this didn't make him feel safe, so he took out a large pile of paper amulets and quickly attached them to himself. Each time he did, they emitted a strong light until he was covered by no less than ten individual shields. Their combined energy transformed into a protective wall nearly a meter and a half thick. From afar, the sight was utterly astounding.

Due to all the protective shields, Yan Xiaobao's subsequent shout was actually a bit muffled.

"All right, bring it on!"

The gaunt young man continued staring blankly at Yan Xiaobao, and it wasn't just him. Other Outer Sect disciples, including other contestants, were all stunned. They had observed competitions like this before and had never seen anyone use shields to such an extent.

Li Qinghou's face twitched, but from his expression, it was evident he was completely baffled by the situation.

Chen Ziang took a deep breath, becoming increasingly convinced that Yan Xiaobao and Li Qinghou were indeed relatives. However, Du Lingfei merely let out a cold snort, her sneer only growing.

Everyone watched wide-eyed as the gaunt young man on stage let out his own roar, then made a spell gesture with both hands, sending a Wooden Sword flying straight at Yan Xiaobao. The gaunt young man's Wooden Sword, pulsing with strange energy, streaked through the air in a prismatic beam straight toward Yan Xiaobao. However, even before it could get close, it rebounded with a banging sound off Bai Muchun's thick, meter-and-a-half shield.

Yan Xiaobao's shield flickered, and his eyes shone brightly as he breathed a sigh of relief. Clearing his throat, he simply sat cross-legged.

The audience exchanged confused glances. Regarding Yan Xiaobao and his extreme defense, they weren't sure what to make of it. They had seen individuals who focused on defense before, but... never anyone who shielded themselves so thoroughly.

As for his opponent, the young man's face first flushed, then turned pale. Gritting his teeth, he roared and sent his Flying Sword shooting at the glowing shield. Even as it flew through the air, its power continued to increase.

A series of banging sounds erupted as the Flying Sword flew back and forth, but each time it was deflected. Eventually, the pale-faced young man's spiritual energy was more than half exhausted, and a hint of despair appeared on his face.

He had been dueling for years, but this was the first time he had encountered an opponent who hid within their shell like a turtle. However, he wasn't willing to give up yet. He had entered the competition aiming for third place. Staring bloodshot at Yan Xiaobao, he roared, "Come out from behind that shield!"

Yan Xiaobao wasn't afraid of the young man at all, so he had no reservations about staying behind the shield, shouting back loudly, "If you're so good, why don't you come inside!"

Everyone in the audience had strange expressions on their faces as they looked at Yan Xiaobao, unsure whether to laugh or cry. The gaunt young man was so enraged that blue veins appeared on his forehead as he clenched his jaw. Finally, he bit his tongue and spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, which, upon landing on his Wooden Sword, turned the entire thing blood-red.

The audience immediately erupted in discussion.

"Blood Elf Magic!"

"For him to use such a magical technique means he's truly gone mad!"

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Chapter 1040: Wondrous Artifact

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The blood-colored wooden sword moved faster than before, and the pressure doubled as it shot towards Yan Xiaobao, spreading blood-colored light in all directions.

When the wooden sword stabbed into the shield exactly three inches, a loud noise sounded. As it tried to pierce further, rumbling was heard but it failed. In fact, due to too much force applied, cracks started to spread across the sword.

Moments later, the entire wooden sword emitted a popping sound... shattered into pieces, slowly drifting down to the ground.

The exhausted young man's eyes widened, with blood spurting from his mouth. His spiritual energy was heavily depleted, his magical item destroyed, he was so angry that he just fainted.

As Li Qinghou watched the scene unfold, his face grew increasingly unsightly. Shaking with laughter, Elder Sunx stepped forward, signaled for people to carry away the exhausted young man, and then declared Yan Xiaobao the victor.

"Ah, he let me win!" Yan Xiaobao said as the shield light around him disappeared. Looking very serious, he suddenly thrust out his chest, clasped his hands behind his back, resembling a choice. As for the exhausted young man, as he was taken away, he clearly heard Yan Xiaobao's words, regained consciousness, coughed another mouthful of blood, and then fainted again.

Yan Xiaobao cleared his throat, turned to Elder Taiyang, clasped his hands. Then he flicked his sleeve and walked out of the arena.

The outer sect disciples who had come to watch the match were in an uproar. At most, their faces bore strange expressions. For the contestants, they looked at Yan Xiaobao with extremely unsightly expressions.

This was especially true for those who had won their own matches. When they compared the exhausted young man's current state with Yan Xiaobao, they couldn't help but feel a need to remain vigilant.

The competition continued, and soon other matches were completed. Out of the initial 20 participants, half had already been eliminated, producing the current top ten.

Among them stood Du Lingfei, Chen Ziang, and Yan Xiaobao, who raised his chin and looked around at his top ten opponents. Deep inside, he said, "All I have to do is win one match, and I'll succeed!"

Seeing hope before him, he felt extremely excited.

Granny Sunx glanced at the ten contestants, her gaze lingering on Yan Xiaobao for a moment, then said, "The top five will be selected. Please, all ten of you come forward to choose your marble."

This time, Yan Xiaobao scrambled to line up, pulling out a marble with a number two written on it. Then, he immediately turned to study his competitors.

Soon everyone had drawn a marble, and afterward Elder Sunx announced that the first two warriors would start their match. Yan Xiaobao and a burly, muscular man were together, upon seeing who he was fighting against, started laughing.

"Others might fear your defense, but I don't care about them at all. I'm also good at defense, so let's wait and see which one of us can last longer!" With a laugh, the man patted his bag, producing a small clasp. After supplementing with some spiritual energy, the clasp enlarged and began emitting a yellow glow, completely enveloping the man.

Yet the man was not finished. Roaring, his muscles swelled, he even grew a few inches. The entire scene was extremely shocking.

"I can't believe it's Body Forging Magic!"

"That shield looks familiar. Don't tell me it's a Dawnlight Buckler! This thing costs 9,000 merits!" Everyone was shocked, as for Yan Xiaobao, his forehead furrowed.

When Granny Sunx saw what was happening, she slightly nodded, her eyes flashing with a hint of praise. Speaking to Li Qinghou, she said, "This child is Li Shan, Level 5 Qi Condensation. He'll be a tough opponent, born with devout power, and also practices Body Forging Magic. Not only is he very strong, he's also good at defense."

Li Qinghou slightly nodded, then looked at Yan Xiaobao.

Yan Xiaobao was studying the burly man's transformed body, and the shield he possessed. He recognized the shield from visiting the Treasure House, although he wasn't sure how many merits it cost, his frown deepened.

Everyone watching the match seemed very interested in knowing what would happen next, especially the other disciples in the match, who were clearly glad to escape others' misfortune.

"That fair-skinned disciple is certainly unlucky."

"Well, he was extremely lucky before, that's just it. Now facing such a strong opponent like this, naturally, he'll be beaten back to his original state."

As the audience discussed developments, the burly man laughed maliciously and then began to stride rapidly towards Yan Xiaobao.

"You can't do anything. I defeated the last disciple I fought without even taking up a weapon. My fists are the strongest magic technology I possess!"

The man accelerated, causing the wind to stir. As he closed in, Yan Xiaobao's eyes flashed, and he suddenly waved his finger, letting his little wooden sword fly from his hand.

Without the slightest pause, it shot towards the burly man in front of Yan Xiaobao.

As it charged towards him, sword qi built up around the sword for dozens of meters, causing rumbling sounds.

The burly man's face fell, his scalp tingling painfully, feeling it might explode. His eyes widened, as a strong sense of crisis engulfed him. Without the slightest hesitation, he plunged into retreat. Roaring, he swung his hands, bringing his shield out to block the sword.