

My Master 34

Chapter 34: The Joy of Moving to a New Home_1

"Furthermore," Beichen Ying sighed, "a living grave is different from a real tomb. In order to make the rules of Heaven and Earth believe you're truly dead, falsely burying oneself in a sinister, forbidden, evil, or mortal land is ideal. Yet, how easy is it to enter such places? And amongst them could also be phony graves, using the perilous lands to eradicate those who would dare to disturb them."

Cao Zhen began recalling the three volumes of the Great Hollow Scripture, particularly the Chapter on geomancy, originally intended for locating heavenly materials and earthly treasures. It now seemed aptly suitable for unearthing living graves, although not advisable for those of the Taoist tradition. However, digging up the graves of Demonic Path Ancestral Elders seemed quite plausible.

"Let's not talk about living graves anymore," Beichen Ying waved his hand, his expression tinged with a bit of resistance, "The adjustment of the rules of Heaven and Earth during the minor epoch is growing stronger, and soon it will be time for my feigned death. Alas... the minor epoch, also known as the Twilight of the Immortals. One unlucky turn and there might never be a chance to awaken, leading to genuine death."

Beichen Ying's sigh was filled with helplessness and concern. Although it was possible to choose to slumber within the Sect, upon the arrival of Twilight of the Immortals, the Sect's overall strength would suffer a temporary but massive decline. If the Sect were breached by the Demonic Path, the outcome would be nothing less than death and the extinguishing of one's cultivation path.

But seeking a hiding spot outside also entailed much uncertainty, and most importantly... he was not well-versed in the art of geomancy.

Or rather, among the six arts of cultivation within Hundred Peaks Sect, geomancy was the least impressive.

Geomancy was deceptively simple to pick up, but to master it was exceptionally difficult.

"You should practice your Divine Skills more," Beichen Ying advised Cao Zhen, "Every minor epoch, without the deterrence of peak combat power, becomes the most chaotic period. The more Divine Skills you master when you solidify your Golden Core, the mightier its power will be, giving you greater assurance in transcending to become an Earth Immortal in the future."

Upon hearing Beichen Ying mention the business of the Golden Core, Cao Zhen also recalled the issues he pondered during a minor seclusion, stabilizing his Cultivation Base. His comprehension was deficient, and his speed of mastering Divine Skills was too slow. At that time, he lacked the funds to purchase materials for concocting the Bodhi Wisdom Pill. It seemed he would need to practice refining different pills in the future.

While Cao Zhen was contemplating, he saw Yan Yourong, who he had sent to invite Chen Shizhi and Chao Zi Zai, returning. She was followed only by a grim-faced Chao Zi Zai. *freewebnovel.com*

Today, Chao Zi Zai was both extremely happy and exceptionally pained.

People often suffer due to one thing or find joy for another. It's rare to feel both happy and pained over the same matter.

Chao Zi Zai's pain and joy today stemmed precisely from the same cause.

Cao Zhen had won!

As Cao Zhen's good friend, Chao Zi Zai was obliged to be happy and even had to bring out his five-year-aged wine to celebrate the victory of Four Treasures Peak in the magical duel.

Chao Zi Zai's pain too arose from Four Treasures Peak's victory.

Ever since Elder Copper Plate publicly announced Cao Zhen's descent into demonic cultivation, entering the second stage, Chao Zi Zai felt panic! As a disciple of Hundred Peaks Sect, he was well aware that if Cao Zhen's inner demons grew stronger, without taking in disciples for three consecutive years, Four Treasures Peak's legacy would change hands.

To scrape together enough funds for Medicine Immortal Hall, he had no choice but to bet his savings on Starshine Peak's triumph. With the winnings added to the principal amount, it would have been sufficient to send Cao Zhen to Medicine Immortal Hall.

But! Four Treasures Peak had won! His savings were wasted!

"Elder Chao, you didn't bet either?" Cao Zhen looked at Chao Zi Zai's customarily hearty face, now forcing a strained smile, and instantly thought of Elder Copper Plate's recent actions, "Did you actually bet on my defeat?"

Chao Zi Zai, with a bottle of his treasured five-year wine, sullenly replied while placing it on the stone table: "When did you become so strong? Couldn't you have given me a heads-up!"

Cao Zhen, feeling helpless, turned to look at Yan Yourong, who had just entered the courtyard. If it weren't for this Second Disciple unsheathing his sword to strike at him out of the blue that day, causing his hasty retreat, he might have clarified things for his dear friend.

Though Chao Zi Zai's actions matched his rugged appearance, he had moments of insight and quickly caught Cao Zhen's glance; he turned back, casting an accusatory look at Yan Yourong.

Yan Yourong shot back a 'what do you mean by that' look, compelling this Senior Disciple of the Ninety-Ninth Peak to retract his reproachful gaze immediately.

While Chao Zi Zai was the Ninety-Ninth Peak's Senior Disciple, he was still not at the level of Yan Yourong in terms of cultivation. Hence, upon facing this Second Disciple from Four Treasures Peak, he decided it best to swallow his grievance.

"How much did you lose?" Cao Zhen pointed to the pile of Spirit Stones stacked like a small hill, "Go on, take as much as you can with both hands in one go. That should be more than enough for you to break even."

"Heh heh... how could I, how could I..."

While Chao Zi Zai claimed embarrassment, his body honestly approached the Spirit Stones. His painful smile turned shy as his eager hands reached out to grab, scooping up more than three hundred taels in one go, and then he returned to his seat on the stone bench with a joyful chuckle.

Cao Zhen looked toward Yan Yourong and asked, "Where's Old Chen?"

Yan Yourong, who was coldly observing the more than three hundred spirit stones in Chao Zi's hands, hastily replied upon hearing the question, "Mr. Chen said he was very busy, so he will not be coming. However, according to my observations, Mr. Chen isn't busy at all."

"This Chen surname!" Cao Zhen laughed as he stood up, "He's still as stingy as ever. He must have made some money and is afraid I'll ask him for a tip, or that I might throw a celebration feast and he'd have to bring a gift. Just you wait! I'll go and invite him myself!"

Without waiting for any reaction from the others, Cao Zhen got up and went outside. He used the communication magic artifact he had bought in the market after making money, channeled a bit of spiritual energy into it, and called for an Immortal Cloud Carriage to rush straight to the Taoist Institution.

The Immortal Cultivation institutions of Hundred Peaks Sect numbered in the dozens. Within the vast territories, commoners were as numerous as sand in the sea, which was also the true foundation of the continuous legacy of Hundred Peaks Sect through the generations.

Chen Shizhi's and Cao Zhen's former institution was the Returning Heart Taoist Hall, located about two hundred li away from Four Treasures Peak. It took the Immortal Cloud Carriage about a quarter of an hour to reach Returning Heart Taoist Institution.

Cao Zhen entered the row of wooden houses forming the major courtyard at the foot of the mountain and casually asked a student for Chen Shizhi's residence.

Arriving at Chen Shizhi's private courtyard, he saw Chen Shizhi packing his bags and walking out of the house, talking to himself with infinite fondness, "Ah, farewell, my little courtyard, I will surely come back to see you someday."

Hearing Chen Shizhi's soft monologue and seeing the look of longing on his face, Cao Zhen suddenly understood. Old Chen must have won a large sum at the gambling house, which was why he was bidding farewell to himself here before moving to a better Taoist institution with a higher level and more abundant spiritual energy.

Each Taoist institution of Hundred Peaks Sect had its standards for accommodation. Poor teachers could stay in the communal cave mansions provided by the institution, where the spiritual energy was relatively thin, and it was hard to focus on cultivation with others around. For those who could afford it, renting a small courtyard was an option.

For example, the kind of small wooden house Chen Shizhi currently had was a slightly better solitary dwelling. The spiritual energy wasn't very abundant, but it was quiet.

As for higher quality dwellings, there were the Taoist cave mansions where the extent of spiritual energy was quite abundant. Although not comparable to the spiritual energy of Hundred Peaks, it was still a rare and good place to be.

However, the price of the cave mansions of the Taoist institution was quite high, and ordinary teachers like Chen Shizhi could not afford such expensive cave mansions.

"Old Chen! Are you moving house?" Cao Zhen said with a smile as he walked into the courtyard to Chen Shizhi, "That's not very nice of you! Moving house is a joyous occasion, and you didn't even tell me! Are you afraid I'd hit you up for a meal?"

"A joyous occasion?"

When Chen Shizhi turned around and saw Cao Zhen, a surge of anger welled up in his heart, dispelling the chilly autumn air that had been shrouding him!

"Yes, a joyous occasion! Aren't you leaving this broken institution?" Cao Zhen reached out to take Chen Shizhi's bundle and said, "Shall I help you carry this? Consider it my contribution to your housewarming."

Contribution? Contribution? The sound of Cao Zhen's robust voice echoed in Chen Shizhi's mind, and anger rose from within. Where was the joy in his housewarming? After all the struggle to save some money to rent this little courtyard for some face-saving lifestyle!

And the result? It was just a single confrontation! Merely one confrontation! And everything was gone! The savings accumulated over many years vanished in an instant due to the victory of the man before him! He was going to have to move back to the noisy and thin-spiritual-energy communal cave mansion!

"Speaking of which, I've also made quite a bit this time." Cao Zhen was much stronger than Chen Shizhi and pulled the bundle to his side, saying, "Did you wager everything this time? Did you buy a 'yi' or went straight for the 'jiazi' number cave mansion?"

Chen Shizhi's chest heaved violently, and he wondered why it had come to this. In terms of talent, qualifications, and even looks... perhaps the looks were not quite up to Cao Zhen's, but in talent and qualifications, where was he not better? Why could he make big money, become a Peak Master, live in a nice house, and have a place with abundant spiritual energy for cultivation?

And I? Chen Shizhi's vision became clouded with thousands of golden stars dancing before his eyes. His body swayed, barely able to stand steady, but he still couldn't swallow his pride!

After years of diligent effort and careful planning to finally save up some spirit stones, thinking about buying some pills in the market to make further breakthroughs, aspiring to become an Elder or at least the head of a Taoist institution one day!

All the wonderful things that were supposed to be had vanished without a trace! And the culprit had the gall to show off and gloat right in front of him!

He couldn't give in to his opponent's satisfaction! Chen Shizhi quickly calmed the fury in his heart, telling himself over and over to maintain decorum and not let this show-off before him feel smug!

That's right! Chen Shizhi made a swift judgement. He had to pretend he had made a lot of money and couldn't let anyone know he had lost everything. If others knew he had lost everything, he feared they would mock him for not taking his advice.

"A 'jiazi' number," Chen Shizhi forced a smile and said, "But it's not that I've reached my goal in one step; I just had a little money in hand to make an interim purchase before getting a truly better cave mansion when I become an Elder."

"A 'jiazi' number!" Cao Zhen's eyes widened in amazement, clicking his tongue in admiration, "Back when we were in school, we all heard about the 'jiazi' number cave mansions but never saw one. Now that you've bought one! Let's go, let's go! Let's check it out first! Fulfill my youthful dream! Then we can celebrate at my place afterwards!"