

Spirit Realm #Chapter 51 — 60

Practice - Read Spirit Realm Chapter 51 — Practice

Chapter 51: Practice

Icestone City, Nebula Pavilion.

Ling Feng and Liu Yan stood before Elder Han Qingrui with slightly restrained expressions.

Following the Ling Family Patriarch's orders, Ling Feng had come to Nebula Pavilion to help Qin Lie obtain "spirit tablets" in order to practice inscribing spirit diagrams... Because he was unfamiliar with Nebula Pavilion, he first sought out Liu Yan and asked him to be his guide.

At Celestial Wolf Mountain, Liu Yan had become very close to the Ling Family and had also expressed his sincerest gratitude towards them, telling them that if they required any assistance at Nebula Pavilion, they should seek him out.

Ling Feng's arrival caused Liu Yan to be elated. He happily guided Ling Feng to find Han Qingrui and had Ling Feng explain the situation.

"Qin Lie and Ling Lie are one and the same, and he possesses three thousand contribution points. The 'spirit tablets' that Nebula Pavilion uses to inscribe spirit diagrams are worth five contribution points each. How many do you want to buy on Qin Lie's behalf?" asked Han Qingrui. He thought, smiled slightly, then inquired "That Qin Lie, is he also an artificer? Spirit tablets can only be used to practice inscribing spirit diagrams, they are just basic materials and have no other purpose. He really only wants to get spirit tablets?"

"Elder Han, during our time at Celestial Wolf Mountain, Qin Lie helped fix my Hexagonal Shield," Liu Yan explained with a smile.

Han Qingrui nodded with shock visible in his eyes and said, "So that's how it is."

"How about a hundred spirit tablets?" Ling Feng suggested.

"Mn, of course, that will be five hundred contribution points. Let me record this, and with that, Qin Lie now has two thousand and five hundred contribution points remaining." Han Qingrui drew a few strokes on the account book and then gave a piece of paper to Ling Feng. "Take this receipt to the Spirit Materials Stockroom to receive them. Liu Yan can lead you there."

"Thanks, Elder Han," Ling Feng gave his thanks.

Han Qingrui waved his hand and said casually, "Actually, Qin Lie can come to Nebula Pavilion to cultivate whenever he would like. He does not have to stay with the Ling Family. My son often speaks of him and hopes that he will come soon. Mn, please pass on my son, Han Feng's greetings."

"I will," Ling Feng said seriously.

"I didn't think that Qin Lie was acquainted with Tu Ze, Kang Ze and the others. This boy really conceals himself thoroughly." Exiting the room, Liu Yan smiled and shook his head. "Qin Lie, Ling Lie, haha, he clearly could have become a core member of Nebula Pavilion long ago, why is he still staying at your Ling Town? Isn't entering Nebula Pavilion and becoming a core disciple the goal that all the young martial practitioners of the families dream about?"

"I don't know what he's thinking," replied Ling Feng with a grimace. "For Ling Xin, Ling Xiao, and myself, breaking through to the Natal Opening Realm before twenty years old and entering Nebula Pavilion is our only goal. If I had the chance, I would move to Nebula Pavilion immediately since the environment here is more suitable for cultivation..."

"You will definitely be able to enter in the future." Liu Yan patted his shoulder.

"Mn!" Ling Feng nodded heavily.

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"Strange, Qin Lie is clearly able to enter Nebula Pavilion to cultivate, so why would he remain in Ling Town?" At the dining table, Ling Chengzhi's brows knitted together and said, "If he wants to wait for Qin Shan to come back, he can wait at Nebula Pavilion. With the Ling Family present, we can notify him immediately if Qin Shan returns. He doesn't have to stay at the Ling Family."

"Maybe it is because of Big Sister?" Ling Xuanxuan's brows moved slightly and she suddenly turned to Ling Yushi beside her. "Right, Big Sister? That guy can clearly leave Ling Town and have a better place to cultivate, but he just happens to want to stay. It's for Big Sister, right?"

Ling Yushi seemed to be thinking of something. Hearing her sister ask, her face blushed red, and her bright eyes flashed as she said in a panic, "I don't know, that's probably not the case. I don't know too much about what he is thinking..." As she spoke, her heart sweetened, and the two circles of red on her cheeks became even brighter.

"Look at you, still saying it isn't for you? Who are you fooling?" Ling Xuanxuan pouted and said furiously, "It's so strange, Qin Lie is the same age as me, but I will have to call him brother-in-law in the future. Really, I'm suddenly his junior, this is horrid!"

"What brother-in-law. You silly little girl, you only know how to speak nonsense, see if I don't tear your mouth apart!" Ling Yushi was furious, her face red as she quarreled with her younger sister. She scolded but her eyes were full of mirth.

"You're both already of marriageable age, but you're still fooling around. Act properly!" Ling Chengye snorted lightly.

The sisters heard his scolding, smiled, and obediently stopped.

Ling Chengye's brows furrowed slightly. He made a sound and suddenly said, "Shi'er, have you forgotten that the engagement between you and Qin Lie... is just a stop-gap measure? When Qin Lie turns seventeen, Father and Qin Lie will be able to end the engagement unilaterally. Your engagement is not real..."

Ling Yushi's eyes dimmed. She suddenly dropped her head and said in a cold tone, "I remember."

Ling Chengye nodded and sighed. He continued, "Even though Qin Lie has helped our Ling Family greatly and I like the child, his origins are unknown. We do not know his background, nor do we know how many secrets he is hiding. Father... is very worried, worried that some of his affairs will create trouble for the Ling Family. Sigh, I am also torn and cannot make a decision. I just want to remind you to not completely commit too deeply."

When the words came out, the table full of Ling Family members became silent.

A moment later, Ling Yushi slowly stood and said with a lowered head, "I'm full."

She walked straight out of the dining hall.

"Daddy, you're worrying for nothing! Really, it's rare for Big Sister to be happy, and now she's bothered by your words!" Ling Xuanxuan abruptly put down her plate and glared at Ling Chengye. She said, "If Qin Lie is truly stupid, I would be the first to object to him and Big Sister. I'll stop it even if it costs me my life so Big Sister does not have to endure that humiliation!"

She paused and then shouted, "But Qin Lie is clearly very smart, his cultivation realm is not weak, and he has helped the Ling Family greatly. Even Ling Feng, Ling Xiao, and Ling Xin admires and respects him to a great extent. I, myself, have not endorsed him this the entire time, but I find him to be pretty good now. I just don't understand. Daddy, why do you have to be so bothersome?"

"Xuanxuan, your father is the patriarch of the family. He needs to consider any potential problem from the perspective of the entire Ling Family." Ling Chengzhi frowned and lectured, "You only go with what makes you happy at the time, simply reacting honestly to everything and without thinking. You don't consider the potential consequences or

how your actions will influence the entire family—but your father cannot be like this. The Ling Family... is just a very tiny clan and cannot weather too much storm. Even the slightest bit of turbulence can destroy the Ling Family and cause it to disappear entirely.”

As soon as he finished saying these meaningful words, the Patriarch of the Ling Family lightly sighed, his face full of bitterness and helplessness.

“Dad, I was impudent,” apologetically said Ling Xuanxuan after she had reflected. “I just feel that Qin Lie isn’t a bad person. Because I had a biased opinion towards him before, I feel very guilty. I saw how he helped the Ling Family so many times for Big Sister, so...”

“Daddy understands, Daddy understands. Actually, I feel that Qin Lie isn’t bad either, but, but... sigh, if he was just a normal person, Daddy wouldn’t have to worry and would allow him and Shishi to be together. Let’s not think too much on this, the more I think, the more my head hurts. Let’s wait and see,” Ling Chengye stated his attitude.

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One hundred spirit tablets were neatly placed in the broad cave of Herb Mountain. The spirit tablets were only palm-sized, mostly made from unique stone materials, and the surface was smooth and regular, able to reflect just like a mirror.

There was also a batch of spirit tablets made from wood. There were natural wood grains on the surface, so it was rough to the touch.

Low grade spirit tablets could only be inscribed with low grade spirit diagrams. The materials used did not have to be the same; wood, stone, bones, and even special leaves could be made into spirit tablets.

There was only one use for spirit tablets—to practice spirit diagram inscription. It was a one-use object. One spirit tablet could only be used to practice inscribing one spirit diagram. Whether or not inscription was successful, the spirit tablet could not be used again.

The one hundred spirit tablets cost five hundred contribution points and were delivered by Ling Feng from Nebula Pavilion for him to practice spirit diagram inscription.

Separating the spirit tablets based on the material, Qin Lie was slightly excited, and he used both of his hands to caress the spirit tablet to feel the texture and using his heart to feel...

A long while later, he slowly adjusted his heart rate and breathing, focusing and calming down to refine his spirit energy.

His left hand's index finger made contact with a stone spirit tablet. A needle-like energy lit up on his fingertip as he carefully moved it along the spirit tablet.

The spirit tablet was the paper, the needle energy at his fingertip was the pen, and the spirit energy was the ink...

His attention was unprecedentedly focused, his mind and consciousness permeating inside the spirit tablet; he seemed to see a snowy-white piece of paper.

As his spirit energy entered, a white dot of light appeared on the paper. That was the gathering of spirit energy, the beginning of everything!

As the white dot of light moved, flashing lines were gradually drawn out on the "white paper" inside the spirit tablet... seeing the spirit lines appear, he suddenly felt excitement and, his calm heart was disturbed.

"Snap!"

His fingertip shook minutely, and he suddenly lost control of his spirit energy. The spirit line he had worked so hard to draw snapped like a split piece of rope. The white light sprayed out and completely ruined the clean and white "paper."

One spirit tablet was now ruined.

Qin Lie forlornly took away his finger with a face full of disappointment. He murmured, "Five contribution points gone just like this..."

Any slight change in his state of mind could cause his hand to tremble and his spirit energy to go out of control!

Taking a deep breath, he took out a new spirit tablet, put his finger on it, and tried to inscribe the Spirit Gathering diagram from his Soul Suppressing Orb etched deep within his memories.

A long while later, he had just finished inscribing the third spirit line and caused another spirit tablet to turn to scrap because his spirit energy control for one of the spirit lines had been wrong.

The Spirit Gathering diagram in his mind was formed from thousands of spirit lines crossing one another. He had just begun, and he had failed once again.

"Five contribution points lost again. This artificer practice is really just burning money."

Qin Lie furrowed his brow. He finally understood why the Ling Family did not have the wealth to nurture artificers, because the growth of an artificer required an astonishing

investment of spirit materials, spirit stone, and spirit herbs. Small forces basically could not afford it.

After sighing over it, he once again took another spirit tablet and continued to practice inscribing spirit diagrams.

Chapter 52: To Keep up with Your Footsteps

Many scrap spirit tablets had been scattered around him, and each spirit tablet showed marks of failure. Some of the stone tablets were fragmented into pieces while some of the wood tablets were scorched as they seemed to be laughing at him.

Beside his left hand were more than twenty untouched and mirror-like stone spirit tablets.

“Snap!”

A piercing explosion came from the wooden spirit tablet on his hand, and a gust of thick smoke erupted. The spirit diagram had cracked, and the spirit tablet once again turned to scrap.

“Seventy-eighth tablet...”

The corner of Qin Lie’s mouth was full of bitterness, and looking at the burned spirit tablet, he helplessly shook his head.

This month, other than the times when there was lightning and he bitterly cultivated Heavenly Thunder Eradication, he would focus the remainder of his energy on practicing spirit diagram inscription.

In the beginning, he would quickly cause a spirit tablet to be scrapped due to tiny mistakes.

In just the first week, more than forty spirit tablets were quickly used up and turned to scrap.

That was when he had been completely unfamiliar with inscribing spirit diagrams. It was where he had wasted the most spirit tablets while gaining the least progress in developing his inscribing skills... Frequently, he would only inscribe a few spirit lines before suddenly failing and turning the spirit tablet to scrap.

As he continued to practice and failed again and again, he gradually discovered the trick to inscribing spirit lines...

His amateur mistakes gradually decreased over time, and the rate at which he used spirit materials visibly slowed.

He started to be able to get the spirit lines to intersect, but out of ten intersections, on average, eight of them would be failures.

The occasional successes would later on fail due to a mistake in the succeeding spirit line intersection which would cause the spirit diagram inscription to break apart.

The Spirit Gathering diagram was formed from thousands of spirit lines criss-crossing one another and were extremely complex and profound.

During the process of inscription, any mistake, no matter how elementary or minuscule, would render all previous efforts worthless and would leave only the bitter taste of failure.

In this month, he had gone from complete ignorance to slight familiarity, so now he was able to avoid many elementary mistakes.

From using turning one spirit tablet to scrap every ten minutes to one a day and from only being able to draw out a few spirit lines at once to being able to draw a simple diagram of hundreds of spirit lines intersecting one another...

He was improving bit by bit.

However, he still had yet to succeed even once and was still relatively far away from success.

The Spirit Gathering diagram was composed of two thousand three hundred and fifty seven lines crossing together. In his best attempt, he had inscribed over six hundred spirit lines on the spirit tablet.

In other words, his best try was only successfully inscribing one-fourth of the entire Spirit Gathering diagram.

Success was very far away, but he had pretty much used up all the spirit tablets. Looking at the rate of consumption, the remaining spirit tablets would not last until he could successfully inscribe the Spirit Gathering diagram...

“As expected, without great perseverance, without the bravery to endure failure, and without being able to avoid delusions of grandeur, becoming an Artificer is extremely difficult.” Sitting in the center of a room full of scrap spirit tablets, Qin Lie’s brows knitted, but his eyes were flashing. “I hadn’t expected that practicing spirit diagram inscription would actually be very beneficial for my cultivation; this is an unexpected gain.”

In the previous month, he had put all his energy into practicing inscribing spirit diagrams. He had originally assumed that it would affect his cultivation realm, however, he found that not only was inscribing spirit diagrams not detrimental to the growth of his

spirit energy, it instead raised both his spirit and mind energy. This made him extremely surprised and overjoyed.

Inscribing spirit diagrams did not just require a continuous expenditure of spirit energy but mind energy as well. He needed to precisely control spirit energy when he was extremely alert and use his mind to grasp the slight changes in the spirit diagram...

Each second of this dramatically consumed both his mind consciousness and spirit energy.

He would quickly expend all the spirit energy in his dantian's spirit sea, and his mind would become exhausted. Whenever this happened, he would temporarily pause his inscription of the spirit diagram and use spirit stones to replenish both his spirit energy and mind energy in the state of Thoughtless Tranquility.

When he recovered, he would always find his mind was refreshed and his spirit energy had become pure and abundant.

"After the spirit sea in the dantian and mind consciousness are completely exhausted, the new round of replenishing and recovery was able to cause spirit and mind energy to receive differing amounts of growth!"

He had made such a conclusion after going through the process multiple times. He then paid close attention and truly found proof that this conclusion was accurate.

Maybe it was that while practicing inscribing spirit diagrams did not affect his cultivation level, it still caused his spirit and mind energy to grow, so even though he failed time and time again, causing numerous spirit tablets to turn to scrap, he still grit his teeth and managed to persist.

"I need to replenish my spirit tablets, soon there won't be enough." After thinking for a while, he walked out of the mountain cave and headed towards Ling Town.

In this period of time, he had essentially been cultivating day and night in Herb Mountain's cave, eating and sleeping there. His occasional returns to Ling Town was only to get food supplies, and then he would spend a few more days without going outside.

Ling Yushi had also been working hard recently. In the multiple trips he made to Ling Town, Ling Yushi was also in a state of cultivation, so the two did not meet up.

Today, he returned to Ling Town in the evening and finally saw Ling Yushi on the dinner table when he ate with the Ling Family.

Not having seen each other for a month, Ling Yushi seemed slightly slimmer, but her mental state was very good, and her eyes were bright when they were opened. It seemed that her spirit energy had a substantial increase recently.

“Why do you make yourself so weak?” Seeing him come over, Ling Yushi said with distress, “When martial practitioners cultivate, they need the nourishment of food the most. Otherwise, their bodies cannot endure it. You cannot stay inside Herb Mountain every day, you need to come out for frequent walks. At least, you need to sunbathe in the day.

“Mn, I will pay attention.” Qin Lie smiled.

He then said to Ling Chengye, “Uncle Ling, can I trouble you to send someone to Nebula Pavilion to help obtain three hundred more spirit tablets for me.”

“Another three hundred spirit tablets? That would use up a thousand and five hundred contribution points. This many contribution points is enough to exchange for a pretty good spirit artifact.” Ling Chengye had a shocked expression as he sincerely continued, “Qin Lie, I will remind you that it is very hard to become an Artificer. The growth of an Artificer requires such an unimaginable pile of spirit stones.”

“I understand.” Qin Lie nodded.

He knew what Ling Chengye said was not an exaggeration. Even such a force like Nebula Pavilion could only support common rank artificers. Even Nebula Pavilion did not have the ability to support artificers of higher rank.

Nebula Pavilion would not be able to even support the spirit materials needed to develop a profound rank artificer which was only one level higher.

“Without support from a powerful force, Artificers cannot grow. It is just a waste of effort.” Ling Chengye seriously suggested, “It is better to put your efforts into your martial cultivation. Even though martial practitioners also need the support of spirit artifacts, spirit pills, and spirit stones, compared to Artificers, the amounts of resources needed is many times less. Even if martial practitioners did not have those spirit materials, there is the omnipresent nature spirit energy. Leveling up would be much slower, but you can keep cultivating and do not have to rely on material items at all.”

“Mn, if Artificers do not have materials to practice with, they cannot progress at all,” Ling Chengzhi chimed in.

“I understand, I will consider it. But still, exchange for those spirit tablets for me since I don’t know what to use those contribution points for at this point in time,” expressed Qin Lie.

Seeing that he was insistent, Ling Chengye nodded and did not try to urge him further. He said, "Alright, I will have someone to do it."

After eating the meal, Qin Lie stood to leave for his stone house.

"I've finished eating." Once he left, Ling Yushi quickly stood up, threw down the words, and followed.

In the night, Qin Lie paced and was unhurried as though he was waiting for something...

"Qin Lie, Gao Yu broke through to the ninth level of the Refinement Realm recently and has been admitted into Nebula Pavilion." Ling Yushi's voice came from behind him. The beauty naturally walked up to him and matched his pace.

"Aren't only those who break through to the Natal Opening Realm before turning twenty able to enter Nebula Pavilion?" Qin Lie said with shock.

"That is true, but nothing is ever absolute." Ling Yushi's expression was calm, her voice as gentle as water. "In Celestial Wolf Mountain, the Gao Family lost too much. Nebula Pavilion allowed Gao Yu's early entrance in order to compensate the Gao Family. Of course, it is also because Gao Yu is at the ninth level of the Refinement Realm and just a step away from the Natal Opening Realm. Additionally, he is still young and will definitely be able to break through to Natal Opening Realm before twenty, so he was admitted early."

"So that is how it is." Qin Lie nodded.

"Feng Yi's brother, Feng Kai, secretly left Nebula Pavilion when our people were still at Celestial Wolf Mountain and defected to Shattered Ice Manor. Because one of Feng Yi's arms was chewed off by a Silver Winged Demon Wolf, Feng Kai recently sent out word that he would definitely kill you, so you should be careful in the future."

"Only one of Feng Yi's arm was broken? Pity..." Qin Lie's brow furrowed slightly. "The Feng Family should be tightly monitored by Nebula Pavilion right now. They definitely would not dare to appear on territory controlled by Nebula Pavilion, so I will not have to worry about him for now."

The two talked as they walked and reached Qin Lie's stone hut shortly. Just like usual, Ling Yushi naturally helped him sweep and clean the house and then ran water for his bath.

Qin Lie sat, sprawled out as he watched her move around with a slight smile and continuously detail what had happened recently. He suddenly felt his heart gradually calm down.

"I've been working very hard recently, and I will continue work hard on my cultivation. I need to break through to the ninth level of the Refinement Realm as soon as possible. I need to enter the Natal Opening Realm as early as possible..."

In the washroom, Ling Yushi shouted as she expressed with great solemnity as though she had made a great decision.

"Why are you suddenly working so hard? I came out a few times this month and didn't see you..." Qin Lie grumbled.

"The water is ready." Ling Yushi walked out. Her face dimmed, and her head was lowered as she said in a low voice, "I do not want you to stay in Ling Town forever because of me. I need to break through to the Natal Opening Realm as soon as possible and enter Nebula Pavilion with you. In the future, I hope I can be by your side. I hope I can help you and not... become your burden."

She suddenly raised her head and looked deeply at Qin Lie, her eyes flashing with a moving light as she said serenely, "You improve too quickly. Your potential and qualities are much too exceptional. If I do not work hard, I will fall further and further behind. I just want... want to keep up with your footsteps."

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Chapter 53: The First Success

In the gloomy mountain cave, the dazzling needle on Qin Lie's fingertips moved slightly, and the stone spirit tablet beneath his hand was also filled with light.

Scrapped spirit tablets were strewn messily around him. At this time, his eyes were completely bloodshot, sweat dripping from his forehead as he held an extremely grave expression with deeply furrowed brows.

He focused all his attention on inscribing spirit diagrams, onto that spirit tablet under his palm!

This was number three hundred and seventy six...

Time passed in a flash and another half a year had passed. In this half year, as before, he still forgot to eat or rest as he focused exclusively on inscribing the Spirit Gathering diagram without a moment of inattentiveness.

He had almost used up the three hundred spirit tablets that Ling Feng had brought back. Right now, he only had twenty four spirit tablets remaining that were usable...

His mind consciousness was inside the spirit tablet under his finger, and a dazzling, extremely complex spirit diagram was clearly imprinted in his mind!

This was the most recent spirit tablet that he had personally used seven days to inscribe. Up until now, there hadn't been a single mistake at all!

Over two thousand spirit lines flashed where they crossed like the stars that flashed in the vast galaxies.

Those bright and complex spirit lines were like the trails left behind by the movement of the stars, containing indescribably profoundness and beauty.

On a corner of this complex and mysterious spirit diagram, a blinding dot of light was still moving and drawing out new spirit lines!

That blinding dot of light moved like a intelligent snake, drawing out clear spirit line marks and slowly neared the end of another spirit line. It had to connect with three other spirit lines and form a perfect rectangle.

This rectangle was at the last corner of the spirit diagram, and was the last part of this spirit diagram...

Qin Lie's finger trembled slightly. He felt that his dantian's spirit sea was close to empty, and his mind was starting to float away.

He gritted his teeth and focused all of his mind consciousness to prevent any outside emotions from affecting his inner heart. He controlled the dot of light to slowly move towards the end of another spirit line.

—Which would complete the entire Spirit Gathering diagram!

The two spirit lines finally met!

“Boom!”

Like countless lanterns lighting at the same time, the enormous spirit diagram suddenly became extremely bright, as thousands of lines completely linked at this moment. The intersections of this complex and mysterious Spirit Gathering diagram were as bright as stars!

As the spirit power flowed, this diagram became alive and filled with a wondrous attraction!

“I succeeded!”

Qin Lie's voice was hoarse as he collapsed due to the lack of strength, but his eyes were frightening bright.

After taking his hand away, he couldn't use his mind consciousness to examine the Spirit Gathering diagram. He could only see the faint light exuded by the spirit tablet; the light slowly spread as though it had an indescribable attraction...

A moment later, Qin Lie's eyes showed shock. He could clearly feel the spirit energies of the heaven and earth start to move and gather where he was.

More accurately, they were converging towards the palm-sized spirit tablet in front of him as if they were attracted by the light of the spirit tablet...

"...Spirit Gathering diagrams, Spirit Gathering diagrams are able to gather the energy of the heaven and earth. This, this is a true Spirit Gathering Diagram!" Qin Lie's body shook ferociously, his face glowed with shock, and his eyes fill with inexpressible joy and surprise.

His knowledge of Spirit Gathering diagrams came from his grandfather.

Yet, according to his grandfather, the so-called Spirit Gathering diagram only gathered the spirit energy that martial practitioners channeled in, and allowed the spirit energy of the material practitioners to gather inside the "artifact," so that the spirit energy could flow through the "artifact" and therefore cause the spirit energy to go through the other spirit diagrams of the "artifact" to release their power.

His grandfather had never mentioned that the most basic Spirit Gathering diagram could gather the spirit energy of the heavens and earth, and was a spirit artifact that could attract nature spirit energy...

"This unimaginably complex Spirit Gathering diagram has such wondrous ability, it is able to directly gather the spirit energy of the heavens and earth. This means that it can increase the rate that martial practitioners consume spirit energy to cultivate." Qin Lie looked with his spirit ablaze at the spirit tablet, took a deep breath, and tried to feel it.

A moment later, he found that the light of the spirit tablet did not expand any longer, and the nature spirit energy in the area around him was more than a quarter as strong as before!

This discovery caused him to become very excited.

Martial practitioners that cultivated in places with high nature spirit energy naturally would have a faster cultivation rate than those who cultivated in places with low spirit energy. The more abundant the nature spirit energy, the faster martial practitioners could condense spirit energy. This was a pattern that was eternal and unchanging.

The Spirit Gathering diagram inside the spirit tablet could cause the nature spirit energy around the cultivator to increase by a fourth. This meant that it could increase the rate that martial practitioners absorb and condense spirit energy!

“Such a wondrous Spirit Gathering diagram...”

Qin Lie’s eyes became brighter. He rested for a while and then put his hand back on the spirit tablet to feel it with his mind consciousness.

He found that the burst of spirit energy he had channeled into it before was flowing through the spirit lines of the Spirit Gathering diagram, as though it had activated this complex and mysterious diagram and caused the Spirit Gathering diagram to have such wondrous effects.

After a long while, he retracted the spirit energy he had put in, and the the spirit tablet’s glow gradually retreated back into the tablet. The additional spirit energy in the surroundings gradually dissipated after losing its constraint...

“Spirit tablets are only the lowest level of spirit materials, they are only used to practice inscribing spirit diagrams and cannot channel the true power of the spirit diagram. If this was not a spirit tablet but a true “artifact,” a high level spirit artifact at that, and this complex Spirit Gathering diagram was inscribed into it, what effect would it have?” After everything returned to normal, Qin Lie thought, and then suddenly stilled.

Spirit Gathering, Amplification, Spirit Storage, Strengthening were the four spirit diagrams. Today, he had inscribed the Spirit Gathering diagram successfully for the first time but he had used three hundred and seventy six spirit tablets!

Also, he was completely unable to guarantee that he would still succeed on the first try if he inscribed the Spirit gathering diagram again.

He had not completely mastered the Spirit Gathering diagram. He needed to continue to practice and experiment.

Only when he would succeed between eight to nine times out of ten tries would he have truly grasped this Spirit Gathering diagram. Right now, he was... still far from that.

“As expected, bringing up an Artificer requires the support of a large force and requires the endless expenditure of spirit materials. It is terrifying to just think about it.” Qin Lie sighed and then his expression shook. “Grandpa could make the wood sculpture, and the inside of the wood sculpture is made from the perfect merging of several kinds of spirit diagrams.”

Thinking about this, he missed Qin Shan even more, and his desire to open the seal inside his mind and find his memories of ten years ago increased.

“I’m sixteen now, there is still one more year left. If Grandpa doesn’t come back to find me in an year, where should I go?” Qin Lie was confused inside. He cleaned up simply and walked outside the cave.

It had been a long time since he went outside the cave. When the sun shined down as he walked out, he suddenly felt dizzy and his eyes became extremely dry and sore.

He gradually adjusted after a long while. Then, he recalled that Ling Yushi had once reminded him to come out to walk frequently, sunbathe, and not always stay in the cave.

"I wonder how she has been recently..." A thread of mirth was at the corner of his mouth.

"Qin Lie!" Ling Feng's voice suddenly came from the base of the mountain. He waved his hand towards the opening of the cave and bellowed loudly, "It's been seven days, you have finally come out!"

Ling Feng's eyes were anxious, and his expression clearly grave. This caused Qin Lie to be astounded. He jumped off the mountainside and quickly came next to Ling Feng, asking, "You were waiting for me?"

Ling Feng nodded and said with a light sigh, "I've waited two days for you."

"What is it?" Qin Lie said in puzzlement.

"Let's talk as we walk." Ling Feng's eyebrows were furrowed as they walked together towards Ling Town, "It is about the matter of you and First Miss."

Qin Lie narrowed his eyes. "What's going on?"

"Two days ago, Granny Jiu of Seven Fiends Valley passed through Ling Town. When she saw First Miss and Second Miss, she liked them very much. She said that First Miss' personality was gentle, and her spirit art and constitution were all water-oriented. Second Miss's personality was fiery and unruly while her spirit art and constitution were both fire-oriented. The two of them, one fire and one water complemented each other, and they are sisters so they were very suited to a kind of spirit art that she has. Granny Jiu wants to take the two misses as disciples," Ling Feng explained.

"Seven Fiends Valley? What kind of place is that?" Qin Lie asked with creased brows.

"Seven Fiends Valley is a Black Iron force at the same rank as Dark Asura Hall, a whole rank above Nebula Pavilion and Shattered Ice Manor!" Ling Feng's expression was respectful and fearful. "The Seven Fiends Valley is composed of seven valleys: Mystical Fiend Valley, Dark Fiend Valley, Gold Fiend Valley, Wood Fiend Valley, Water Fiend Valley, Fire Fiend Valley, and Earth Fiend Valley. Seven Fiends Valley and Dark Asura Hall are friendly, and the private relationships between high ranking martial practitioners of the two forces are also very good. Granny Jiu's true name is Jiu Liuyu. She is a true Netherpassage Realm expert! And is also the Valley Master of Dark Fiend Valley, ranked second within Seven Fiends Valley!"

Qin Lie's heart felt slightly cold. After being silent for a while, he said, "Isn't it a good thing that she wants to take the two misses as disciples? Does the patriarch not agree?"

"The Seven Fiends Valley that is stronger force than Nebula Pavilion, and Granny Jiu, a Netherpassage expert who is also Valley Master of Dark Fiend Valley, wants to take the two misses as disciples... the Patriarch can't even dream of something this good. He is so happy he has almost forgotten everything, how could he not agree?"

Ling Feng also had a dreaming expression. "To enter Seven Fiends Valley to cultivate, it is something we do not even dare to think about. For the two misses, it is taking one step and going into heaven. They have skipped right past Nebula Pavilion. If this was any other person... they probably would not be able to reject the temptation."

"That is true, it is a hard-to-reject temptation," Qin Lie said indifferently.

"But First Miss refused..." Ling Feng said with a grimace.

Qin Lie's eyes flashed with an odd light, and looked deeply at Ling Feng. "Why?"

"Granny Jiu heard that First Miss has an engagement. She said... she needs First Miss to be pure, and does not want her constrained by the engagement. She wants to end First Miss' engagement, and she also said that when they go to Seven Fiends Valley, it would be very difficult to return to Ling Town, so the two misses have to consider clearly," Ling Feng said.

Qin Lie was silent.

"Also, Granny Jiu said that she would take the two together, or not take any of them at all." Ling Feng's expression was strange. "But right now, First Miss ignored the Patriarch's lectures, the urgings of Clan Elder and Third Master, and will not agree. Granny Jiu gave a deadline of three days. She said that after three days, if First Miss still will not agree, she would not use force, and will leave Ling Town."

Pausing, Ling Feng added, "Tomorrow is the deadline. For this matter, the Patriarch has almost gone crazy from waiting."

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Chapter 54: Parting

While he walked on the small mountain path and listened to Ling Feng's recount, Qin Lie's heart was like an overturned cruet. Sour, sweet, bitter, salty, spicy - they were all mingled into one.

Just half a year ago, when Ling Yushi learned that he held a Nebula Token and could become a core member of Nebula Pavilion at any time, she was even worried for quite

a while. In order to avoid becoming his shackles, Ling Yushi had completely in submerged herself in cultivation, in hopes that one day she could keep up and join Nebula Pavilion with him.

Ling Yushi once said that she hoped that she wasn't left too far behind, and that she hoped to keep up with his footsteps...

But half a year later, while he was still cultivating in Ling Town, Ling Yushi had met a once in a lifetime chance to skip right over Nebula Pavilion and enter Seven Fiends Valley straight away, a force of Black Iron rank.

Such was the way of life; Qin Lie wasn't sure if he should cry or laugh, and for a moment he felt terribly upset.

"The Patriarch is waiting for you at the town entrance." Ling Feng said suddenly.

Surprised, Qin Lie immediately saw Ling Chengye at the town entrance. His cheekbones were sunken and his face was pale white. He was staring blankly towards the sky, and from time to time he would let out a deep sigh.

Southeast of Ling Town, at the courtyard where Du Jiaolan and the family once stayed was an extravagant carriage made out of white jade. The carriage was carved with fine curlicue and embedded with gems and pearls. Under the sun's rays, the blinding reflection from it made even Qin Lie's eyes feel vaguely painful.

There were four Golden Crag Beasts used to pull the carriage with silver chains attached to them, guarding beside the carriage commandingly. These were wild Rank Two spirit beasts, yet they were now all completely docile.

There were a couple of beautiful female martial practitioners scattered about the carriage. Their aura was hidden - their realm obviously high - and they were chatting and laughing in a low tone about something.

Qin Lie looked towards Ling Chengye, then towards the carriage before frowning slightly.

"You're finally back." From the town entrance Ling Chengye finally saw his figure, and with a sudden surge of spirit walked quickly towards him.

Far away, those gorgeous female martial practitioners at Du Jiaolan's courtyard noticed Ling Chengye's actions and smiled. They seemed to find this amusing, and interacted with each other with covered mouths and light laughs.

On occasion they would take a glance towards Qin Lie, but although they were smiling, their gazes were all filled with a kind of natural arrogance...

—It was the attitude of a high ranking martial practitioner looking down at their inferior counterpart.

"Uncle Ling." Qin Lie walked forwards and let out a small sigh, "You purposely waited for me here, but what exactly do you want me to do?"

Ling Chengye suddenly looked embarrassed, and for an awkward moment, he couldn't find the right words to speak. He looked back towards the carriage and thought of tomorrow's deadline, and finally he forced himself to say, "Uncle Ling has done you a disservice..."

Qin Lie kept quiet.

"But this is a once in a lifetime chance for Little Shi and Xuanxuan, and the entire Ling Family. It is an opportunity that I didn't even dare to dream of!" Ling Chengye sucked in a deep breath and sighed, "Ling Family is just a very, very small force, and we have no choice but to attach ourselves to Nebula Pavilion to barely survive. Ten years ago, my wife and many of my childhood friends were lost exactly because of Ling Family's weakness."

"Because the Ling Family is weak, my second brother had died in shame, and all I could do was to endure. Even though I knew very well who did the deed, I could only feign ignorance and suffer that wench, Du Jiaolan's cold glances and words..."

He stared deeply at Qin Lie and with a look of pain said sincerely, "Uncle Ling has done you a disservice. No matter how much you despise me, I am willing to accept all of it and will never rebuke a single word. But, but Uncle Ling hopes, hopes that you can persuade Little Shi to see reason, because not only is this opportunity tied to Ling Family's fate, it is also tied to Little Shi's lifetime growth. If she misses this opportunity, then she will regret it for a lifetime, and so will Ling Family..."

"Qin Lie, we also ask of you to persuade Little Shi." After they heard that Qin Lie had returned, both Ling Chengzhi and Ling Kangan also hurried over to plead for his help.

Seeing the trio's anxious looks and hearing their desperate pleas, the corner of Qin Lie's mouth was curled in bitterness and after a long moment of silence he finally spoke, "Why do you think I can persuade her? You are her father, her uncle, her granduncle; if you have failed, then how can I possibly succeed?"

"Because Big Sister loves you." Ling Xuanxuan voice came silently from the trio's back. Her eyes were flickering, her lips were pursed. She said, "Because she didn't want to break the engagement. Because she didn't want to see you hurt. Because she is afraid that once she leaves Ling Town, she will lose you forever..."

Thunder struck Qin Lie's mind.

"Qin Lie, do not listen to them. If Big Sister is gone, then it is unlikely that she will ever return to Ling Town. Unless, unless you can become strong enough to enter forces at the level of Dark Asura Hall or Seven Fiends Valley, all hope may be lost between you and Big Sister."

Ling Xuanxuan ignored Ling Chengye and the others' scoldings and continued stubbornly, "In the past I have held a misunderstanding towards you, but I did not forget that you have saved Ling Family many times, both in the open and from the shadows. I do not understand what it is to look out for the family's greater good, but I just feel that Ling Family should at least know gratitude; know to keep their promise with grandfather Qin Shan. That's it. That's all I want to say..."

Finished, without caring for the scoldings of Ling Chengye, Ling Chengzhi and Ling Kangan, she turned her head and walked away.

Qin Lie was stunned because of her words for a very long time.

"Unless you can become strong enough to enter forces at the level of Dark Asura Hall or Seven Fiend Valley, all hope may be lost between you and Big Sister..."

"If I do not work hard, I will fall further and further behind. I just want... want to keep up with your footsteps; I don't want to become your burden..."

Ling Xuanxuan and Ling Yushi's words resounded again and again inside his head, sending him into a long trance.

"Where is she?" After a long while, Qin Lie asked suddenly.

Ling Chengye frowned deeply while feeling deep anxiousness inside his heart. Pointing towards Qin Lie's stone house, he said, "For the past three days, she has locked herself in your house..."

Qin Lie's heart suddenly tightened, and without waiting for Ling Chengye and the others to speak he swiftly walked towards his own house.

"How do you think the brat will choose?"

"Who knows? He should know very well that once she leaves, she will rise to the skies like a meteor. If he lets go, then he may very well lose her forever."

"What if he doesn't? If the girl changes her mind later, won't she be complaining about it everyday?"

"I'm very curious about his decision."

Beside the extravagant carriage, a few beautiful women stared at Qin Lie's back from afar. They conversed softly, and their eyes overflowed with great curiosity.

Among them was a girl who looked to be only in her early twenties. She wore a dark blue gauze dress and her figure leaning against the carriage of white jade was incredibly tall and slim. Her skin was like snow, and her beautiful face shone with jade-like luster...

She seemed to be uninterested in the group's conversation and had not uttered a word since the beginning. Her head was bowed as though she was cultivating in silence.

However, those beautiful women in their thirties seemed to care deeply about her opinion, and one of them couldn't help but ask, "Lu Li, what do you think about this matter? If that brat is willing to let go then you will have two new juniors. What do you think of that?"

These women were just the martial practitioners of Dark Fiend Valley, and not Jiu Liuyu's direct disciples, so their status were far more insignificant compared to Lu Li.

"I don't feel like wasting energy making blind guesses. The only thing I'm interested in is the final result."

The rest of the women laughed awkwardly at the reply; seeing that she had said her part, they all stopped discussing.

On the other side.

"Knock knock knock." Qin Lie knocked the door gently.

"I said that I don't want to see anyone!" Ling Yushi yelled in a low tone from inside the house.

"It's me." Qin Lie said with a grave voice.

There was no voice coming from the house. Instead, there was only the rustling of clothes being tidied...

After a while, the door was opened from the inside, and a downcast Ling Yushi moved aside and stared silently towards him. After he came in, she then turned around and shut the door tightly, so that Ling Chengye and the others who were rushing over would not be able to see anything.

Inside the house, the duo stared at each other in silence. They both felt like they had a million things to say, and yet not know how they should start.

"I..." Qin Lie started.

"If you're here to persuade me, then you can stop. I won't hear it." Ling Yushi interrupted suddenly.

Qin Lie sighed softly and stayed quiet for a while. Suddenly he said, "I did not come here because of the Ling Family or your father, uncle and granduncle's persuasion. I did not come here because of your sister either. I had come, for you and me..."

Ling Yushi's eyes flickered as she waited for him to continue, a spark of curiosity bloomed inside her heart.

"You said that you hoped to be of help to me in the future. You said you didn't want to become my burden, hoped to keep up with my footsteps..." Qin Lie looked at her and for the first time grabbed her hands on his own. While Ling Yushi's eyes fell into a mess, he softly continued, "I can tell you right now that if you continue to stay in Ling Town, you will never keep up with my footsteps. Only by leaving, only by going to Seven Fiends Valley can you catch up to me..."

"No, it shouldn't be like this, I don't want to hear it." Ling Yushi was close to tears as she shook her head repeatedly.

"Go. Leave Ling Town, join Seven Fiends Valley and work hard for the future when you and I can be together once more." As Qin Lie said with a heavy voice, he took out the first spirit tablet that he had spent more than half a year to successfully create and pushed it into Ling Yushi's soft palm, saying, "This is the one and only spirit tablet that I have successfully made. It is my first step on the path of Artifact Forging. To make it happen, I have spent countless sweat and hard work, and today... I gift it to you."

Ling Yushi's hand shivered, she bit her lips tightly, and tears flowed from her eyes.

"If you want us to have a future, then you must leave Ling Town. Only Seven Fiends Valley can truly bring out all your talent!" Qin Lie roared.

Ling Yushi's body shuddered intensely.

"So go. Go out and tell your father, tell that Jiu Liuyu or whatever that you've figured it out and that you want to go to Seven Fiends Valley." With a heavy expression, still holding her hands, he forcefully pulled her out of the stone house before immediately shutting himself inside the house. He growled through the door, "Put on your best and wait for me at Seven Fiend Valley; wait for me to come for you in the future. I, Qin Lie, swear this now! I will come for you!"

Ling Yushi stood at the doorway, listening to Qin Lie's croaked growls; the tears would not stop.

After an unknown amount of time, under her father's hopeful eyes, she finally stood up with dead eyes and walked towards the direction of the rich carriage.

Inside the house, Qin Lie was curled into a ball behind the door, his eyes crimson, and his teeth gritted to keep himself from screaming.

On the other side, surprise flowed out of Lu Li's stern eyes when she saw Ling Yushi coming over. She stood up and walked over to a window that was once of Du Jiaolan's room and spoke through it, "Master, she has come to a conclusion."

"Very good. Find that kid and give him a Natal Ordering Pill. Tell him to forget about Ling Yushi forever." from inside the room, a cold, crony voice resounded.

"Understood."

Lu Li answered once before she walked in the direction of Qin Lie's stone house. When she and Ling Yushi crossed paths, her body shivered slightly, and it wasn't until after she turned back to look at an indifferent-looking Ling Yushi before she finally resumed her steps.

Not long later, she arrived in front of the door of Qin Lie's stone house and slipped a delicate little medicine bottle from the gap beneath the stone door. She said coldly, "If you can break through to the Natal Opening Realm, the Natal Ordering Pill will greatly increase your chances of success and reduce the risk of your body exploding and killing you when you ascend from the early stage to the middle stage of the Natal Opening Realm."

She paused for a second before continuing, "Your decision surprised me a little, but I still need to tell you this. From today onwards she is my junior, and no longer a simple girl in Ling Town. She has stepped into a completely new world of cultivation, and in the future, she will have broader landscapes to see. She will no longer be in the same world as you are... I hope that this Natal Ordering Pill will make you forget about her, to forget your desires for her. It will be better for the both of you."

Once she finished, not bothering to even listen to Qin Lie's reply, she stood up and prepared herself to leave.

"Wait right there!" Qin Lie suddenly opened the stone door and flung the Natal Ordering Pill right into her palm. His handsome face was as cold as ice as he said impulsively towards Lu Li, "You and your master do not deserve to decide anything between her and me! You do not have the rights! Seven Fiends Valley, is it? One day I will come looking for her, and you will bear witness!"

"What an interesting fellow. Sure, I'll wait." Lu Li curled her lips. She smiled arrogantly and indifferently before withdrawing the Natal Ordering Pill. She even whispered, "How ungrateful..." before she finally walked away.

Chapter 55: Icestone City

At night, the lightless stone house was shrouded in darkness. Qin Lie curled up into a ball and held his knees at a corner, staring blankly towards the front.

The tables and chairs were wiped clean with not a speck of dust on them. It was as if he could hear mumblings coming from the washroom; see a lively and beautiful shadow bustling about in the room...

Those days where they spent their time together replayed again and again in his head, becoming clearer with each repetition.

And yet, she had to go...

Qin Lie clutched his chest. He felt that there were so many things he did not say in time, and didn't even know where to start. His heart ached.

"Bang!"

Abruptly the door slammed open, and one figure after another charged inside his house. Everyone of them was holding a jug of liquor in their hands.

—It was Ling Feng, Ling Xing, Ling Xiao and Ling Ying.

"Let's drink, Qin Lie!" Ling Xing threw down the two liquor jugs, tore open their sealing oilcloths, poured an entire bowl of liquor and passed it over to Qin Lie, yelling, "Come on, drink!"

"Cheers!" Ling Feng and Ling Xiao shouted together.

Even Ling Ying had joined into the fray and urged Qin Lie to drink. Everyone of them had heavy expressions, but they did not say a word of consolation. Instead, they expressed themselves through their own actions.

Qin Lie felt his heart warm a little, and accepted the bowl, cocked his head and glugged it all down.

The fiery liquor entered his stomach, and he felt as if his chest had burned up in flames. The pain in his heart actually seemed to subside quite a bit, and he immediately forgot himself and snatched the bowls from Ling Feng, Ling Xiao and Ling Ying. Ignoring their amazement, he began pouring alcohol down his throat as if he would drown himself with it.

Ling Feng and the others felt their eyes redden. They did not say anything and simply served him even more wine.

“Let’s drink. You guys should drink as well. Let’s get drunk together!” Qin Lie growled.

“Alright! Let’s drink everyone, and don’t stop until you’re all completely drunk!” Ling Xing roared.

Hence the group threw themselves into a drinking frenzy while screaming inside the stone house, making tons of racket.

It was already midnight, and yet every Ling clansmen could still hear screams and cries coming from the house, but they all understood. They simply shook their heads after they heard the roars and thought to themselves: Let’s leave them be.

It was a drunken night.

The next day, when Qin Lie opened his eyes once more, he found the sun high up in the sky. It was already noon.

Inside the stone house, Ling Feng, Ling Xing and the others were all lying upside down and scattered on top of the table, below the table, under the bed, or at a corner of a wall. Even Ling Ying was disheveled and lying soundly on top of his stone bed with saliva at the corners of her mouth, soundly asleep.

These were the friends that he had gone through fire and water together back at Celestial Wolf Mountain, and when he was at the lowest point of his life, they had joined him on a sleepless, wild night in hopes that it would reduce the pain in his heart.

Qin Lie felt grateful on the inside. He did not wake them, and instead took out the remaining spirit pills on his body and carefully slipped them into Ling Feng, Ling Xing, and Ling Xiao’s clothes.

Back when he had entered the Arctic Mountain Range for the first time with Tu Ze and his group, he received those pills after looting them from the dead bodies of Shattered Ice Manor’s practitioners. He had gifted part of it to Ling Yushi as her betrothal gift, and now gave the rest out...

Qin Lie stared at them deeply, silently said “take care” in his heart, and walked out of the stone house and into the town.

Soon, he heard from a Ling Family clansman that Ling Chengye had already announced the dissolution of his engagement to Ling Yushi last night, and that before the sun had even risen Ling Yushi and Ling Xuanxuan had left Ling Town together with the carriage from Seven Fiends Valley.

“Seven Fiends Valley... I will be there one day.”

Qin Lie whispered once, and went straight towards Herb Mountain beneath the scorching sun.

Inside Herb Mountain's cavern.

He tidied up the loosely scattered items; putting the wooden sculpture, Nebula Token, fire crystals and other scattered materials carefully into his cloth bag.

Holding the bag, he gave a complicated look at that one juttred rock behind the stone pillar, and after a while he finally said, "It's about time to leave..."

He then pressed the juttred rock down and left the cavern without looking back. Shortly after, he arrived at the foot of Herb Mountain.

A long time ago, his grandfather said that the juttred rock was the central button of the strange formations inside Herb Mountain. It could wipe out every trace on the inside and destroy everything.

The foundation of his Heavenly Thunder Eradication had been solidified a long time ago, so even without borrowing its interior environment he would be able to continue cultivating from here on.

In truth he could have left Herb Mountain and cultivated at Nebula Pavilion half a year ago. But he had chosen to stay at Herb Mountain, to stay in Ling Town.

Now, the one person who kept him here had left first, so he no longer had a reason to stay here.

"Boom boom boom!"

Suddenly, a shocking explosive sound came from inside Herb Mountain, and it was as if the entire mountain itself was shaking violently.

For a moment Qin Lie quietly watched from the foot of the mountain and listened to the explosions, and after one final look towards Ling Town, he strode towards Icestone City.

An hour later.

The Ling brothers, Elder Ling Kangan and the rest made their way frantically to the foot of the mountain. A few people tried entering the cave from different directions, but they found that every cave or path had been completely blocked by rubble.

Even Herb Mountain itself seemed to have dwarfed a whole level, as if it had sunk deeply inside.

“Until this day I still do not know what is hidden inside Herb Mountain, and it looks like we’ll never find out in the future.” Ling Chengye sighed softly.

“He should be on his way to Nebula Pavilion.” Ling Chengzhi said.

Ling Chengye’s brows were locked together, “We are the ones who have let Qin Lie down, and I am the one who did not keep my promise and broke their engagement a year ahead. Sigh, I wonder why I keep feeling that I’ve made a mistake...”

Elder Ling Kangan looked towards the distance and said, “Chengye, you have done nothing wrong, do not blame yourself too much. As long as Xuanxuan and Yushi stays at Seven Fiends Valley, then the Ling Family will surely become powerful one day! Moreover, they are Granny Jiu’s direct disciple, and in the future they will be in a wider, better world. Yushi... will surely find a better man for herself too. We should be happy for them.”

“I hope so.” Ling Chengye sighed.

In the evening.

Just as Ling Feng, Ling Xing, Ling Xiao and Ling Ying slowly woke up from their sleep, they then received news that Herb Mountain’s caverns had been completely destroyed and covered in rubble, and Qin Lie himself had disappeared without a trace.

The second they moved, they discovered the spirit pills inside their clothes and became conflicted.

Naturally they understood that Qin Lie was gone, and that he had left Ling Town and went to Icestone City.

“First Miss and Second Miss are gone, and even Qin Lie has left. We are the only ones who are left in Ling Town.” Ling Xiao’s expression was dejected as he looked towards the night sky, “Sigh, everything is moving too quickly. Two days ago everything was still fine, and just because Seven Fiends Valley showed up, our lives had turned around completely.”

“Water will flow downwards, and man will walk towards higher grounds. This has never changed. If we want to catch up to them, then we must work harder and cultivate harder, or we will only be left further and further behind!” Ling Feng exclaimed heavily.

“Mn!” Everyone’s expression was firm as they answered together.

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Six days later, a thin figure stood at the entrance of Icestone City.

With a cloth bag in his hand and a face of dust, he looked up to the tall and wide stone ramparts and then at the guards on each side of the gates. He whispered, "Icestone City. I am finally at Icestone City."

Icestone City was divided into North and South City. Shattered Ice Manor could be found in North City, and everything in it fell under Shattered Ice Manor's jurisdiction. Most of the people entering and living inside the city were people who belonged to Shattered Ice Manor.

Likewise, South City was where Nebula Pavilion's headquarters was situated, and they were responsible for everything inside the city.

Most of the people who lived in South City were the families of Nebula Pavilion's martial practitioners. There were also normal people who were inclined towards Nebula Pavilion.

The two forces might live in the same city, but they were absolutely antagonistic towards each other. They had fought each other both in the open and the shadows for many years without an outcome, and hence the grudge between the two forces had only deepened with each passing day.

Outside South City, towards the southern area would be the direction to the Arctic Mountain Range. Its perimeter were scattered with many small forces like the Ling Family, Gao Family, Du Family and so on. They all belonged under Nebula Pavilion's domain.

The northern area above North City would be Shattered Ice Manor's domain, and there were also many small forces scattered in the area.

After the Feng Family had betrayed Nebula Pavilion, the area they had moved their whole clan into was exactly that northern side of North City.

And Icestone City was situated right at the center of Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion's vassal forces.

Regardless of their respective powers, both Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion's martial practitioners had their own families and relatives; their wives, children, parents and so on. These people were either normal people or martial practitioners with low realms, and thus did not qualify to enter either Shattered Ice Manor or Nebula Pavilion to cultivate.

Such people lived in either Icestone City's North City or South City. Whenever the two powers' martial practitioners were free of duties and were not cultivating, they would go out of Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion and spend time with their relatives and children, and live with their family at North and South City.

Between North City and South City was a Commerce Street, and again this Commerce Street was like a watershed that split up the two cities.

Because Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion were enemies, there were often huge fights erupting between them. Therefore, normally speaking, neither the normal people nor the martial practitioners from Shattered Ice Manor would enter South City easily, and vice versa.

On the other hand, this Commerce Street between the two cities was unusually crowded. Both Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion martial practitioners would often appear in Commerce Street.

There were countless spirit materials, spirit herbs, spirit plants, spirit artifacts and other shops on that street, and some of these shops had incredible backgrounds and were branches that belonged to incredible forces. Not even Shattered Ice Manor or Nebula Pavilion dared to disturb them.

Although the two sides fought consistently, they had a tacit agreement to not fight in that street.

Qin Lie entered the South City through the southern gate. He did not use the Nebula Token in his hands to enter Nebula Pavilion's headquarters immediately, but instead walked in the direction of Commerce Street.

Once he entered Nebula Pavilion he would become a core member. He could borrow their resources to cultivate, could use contribution points to enter special cultivation rooms and improve his cultivation or study martial books. He could even listen to martial practitioners' lecture on their understanding of the realms...

This was what Ling Feng and the others dreamed of, the reason he had come to Nebula Pavilion, and something he really looked forward to in his heart.

However, if he entered Nebula Pavilion and became a core member, then it was very possible that he might be sent to perform duties and thus lose his freedom.

At the moment, he hadn't recovered from Ling Yushi's departure, and his heart... was still in turmoil.

Besides, he still wanted to spend more time to familiarize himself with inscribing Spirit Gathering spirit diagrams, and thus would not be able to utilize Nebula Pavilion's cultivation resources for a short while anyway.

Therefore, he decided to slow down a little, and would enter Nebula Pavilion after he had finally calmed down and truly mastered the few spirit diagrams inside his head.

And so he arrived at a tavern very close to Commerce Street at the south and stayed inside. He locked himself in his room and continued to practice inscribing Spirit Gathering spirit diagrams.

There were twenty four spirit tablets remaining, and after his first successful experience, he was gradually gaining confidence.

He took out a tablet, calmed himself and focused his mind and consciousness on the tablet in his palm; he began to practice inscribing.

He quickly realized that, by inscribing spirit diagrams, he was able to separate himself from the pain of Ling Yushi's departure. The incredible focus needed could help him ignore everything, if only for a moment.

Therefore he threw himself entirely into the work.

He began to enjoy this dry, boring, and incredibly harsh training.

Chapter 56: Armament Pavilion

Time flowed, and another two months passed.

During these two months, Qin Lie had stayed inside the tavern and focused all of his energy towards inscribing Spirit Gathering diagrams, losing track of time.

Following his two months of practice, of the twenty four spirit tablets, fifteen of them had turned into scrap, and only nine of them had successfully been engraved with Spirit Gathering diagrams.

"I wasted fifteen spirit tablets. It seems that I am still quite far away from being able to truly master it." Within the room, Qin Lie furrowed his brows as he opened the windows, silently musing to himself, "I don't have any more usable spirit tablets. If I want to continue practicing, I must buy more spirit tablets. Only, once I enter Nebula Pavilion, I might not be able to be so laid back..."

Outside the window, cultivators of varying levels were passing by. They were all headed towards the Commerce Street located between North and South City.

From the room that he lived in, he could see the many shops on Commerce Street on the other side of the river, as well as the Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion martial practitioners who were moving along Commerce Street.

Looking carefully, he could even secretly watch the martial practitioners of Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion oppose each other as verbal conflicts arose and proceeded to glare at each other.

However, they all abided by the rules as they only shouted mutual provocations and nothing more, not daring to truly fight on Commerce Street.

Qin Lie observed out the window for a while as he rubbed his chin in deep thought, trying to determine how he was going to get more spirit tablets in order to continue practicing spirit diagram inscription.

Before he had left Ling Town, he had left all of his spirit pills and stones to Ling Feng and the rest. All he had on him were things like the wooden sculpture, some fire crystals, and the Nebula Token. Amongst these items, only the wooden sculpture and Nebula Token were extremely valuable. Meanwhile, the fire crystals were just ordinary materials and weren't valuable. Furthermore, in the future he would need them as a fire source for smelting artifacts, and thus, they couldn't be traded for spirit tablets either.

His fingers tapped on the wooden table as he looked at the nine spirit tablets which had been engraved with Spirit Gathering diagrams. After thinking awhile, he suddenly got an idea: Could spirit tablets engraved with Spirit Gathering diagrams be sold in order to buy more blank ones?

This thought caused his expression to visibly change. He might as well try his luck and see if there were any shops on Commerce Street which would be willing to buy them.

He walked down the stairs. After walking across a stone bridge atop the river, he arrived at Commerce Street which was located in between the two cities. He looked the bustling figures atop the street, many of which were either wearing the special uniforms of Shattered Ice Manor or Nebula Pavilion. There were also a few unaligned martial practitioners who wore casual clothes like him mixed in.

The two sides of Commerce Street had all kinds of various shops. There were shops selling many different things, including spirit pills, spirit herbs, spirit grass, and even various levels of cultivation art formulas.

In the center of Commerce Street was a magnificent, grand wooden five story building. At its doors, an endless stream of people flowed in and out.

Most of the slightly higher level martial practitioners would all go straight to this shop. It was as if their true purpose of coming to Commerce Street was this largest shop.

“Armament Pavilion...”

Even from extremely far away, Qin Lie could see the light reflecting off the store's dazzling sign, without any idea how the sign had been propped up. Under the sun's rays, the two characters “Armament Pavilion” were illuminated, attracting the attention of many.

In front of him, the martial practitioners of Nebula Pavilion and Shattered Ice Manor, as well as a fair amount of regular pedestrians, moved towards Armament Pavilion. Thus, Qin Lie also subconsciously went over.

Arriving at the store's main entrance, he raised his head and once again looked at the store's sign. He was surprised to find out that, upon looking at it from so close, the two characters "Armament Pavilion" weren't overly glaring.

Instead, it seemed as if the flashing light was just used for attracting people. Once the people had been led over, they would no longer be uncomfortably bright.

From just this one small detail, it was clear that Armament Pavilion was not simple. Qin Lie inwardly nodded as he went in along with the crowd.

The first floor of the pavilion was extremely spacious. Alongside all of the walls on this floor were extremely exquisite glass cases. Within these glass cases were various delicate and beautiful spirit artifacts. There were all sorts of dazzling swords, golden spears, rings of varying colors, and hammers which flickered with light... there were at least more than ten spirit artifacts.

Many of the martial practitioners who came to Armament Pavilion were gathered in front of those glass cases displaying spirit artifacts, asking the shop's attendants for descriptions as they tried to discern the artifacts' functions, prices, and grades.

"...Common Grade Three, Common Grade Four, most of them seem to be of this grade. However, it's no wonder that everyone comes here as, unlike all of the other stores which only sell spirit pills and spirit materials, Armament Pavilion sells spirit artifacts on the first floor. Here, they can even purchase a finished product."

Qin Lie quietly observed for a while, paying attention to the various ongoing conversations. In no time, he understood how this place operated.

Armament Pavilion's first floor only sold Common Grade Four and lower spirit artifacts. The second floor sold Common Grade Five spirit artifacts, the third sold Common Grade Six ones, and the fourth floor sold Common Grade Seven ones. On the fifth floor... even Profound Grade spirit artifacts could be bought!

However, starting from the second floor, there were restrictions required to ascend — one either needed to have reached the Natal Opening Realm or pay some spirit stones to prove to Armament Pavilion that they were wealthy enough to afford artifacts of that quality. This way, it would ensure that they wouldn't waste Armament Pavilion's time.

Carefully looking around, he discovered that the majority of people who came just stayed on the first floor, wandering between the Common Grade Three and Four spirit artifacts as they asked the shop's attendants about prices.

Only a select few people didn't bother staying around on the first floor and instead headed straight for the stairs to the upper floors.

In front of the stairs to the upper floors were two of Armament Pavilion's guards. They would quickly inspect anyone who attempted to proceed upward, identifying them either as a practitioner of the Natal Opening Realm or someone who had sufficient spirit stones before standing aside to allow them passage.

Everyone who went upstairs had a proud expression on their face and didn't bother to take a glance at those who remained on the first level. It was as if they had been born with superior status.

As for the people on the first floor, when they looked at those going upstairs, their expressions would be colored with envy and awe. Some would even make a slight bow and smile to express their humbleness.

"The person who just went up is Hall Master Pei An of Nebula Pavilion. He is a subordinate of Elder Wei Xing and his cultivation is of the early stage Natal Opening Realm."

"The one who is going up now is called Ji Feiwen. He's the patriarch of the Ji Family which is under the control of Shattered Ice Manor. It's rumored that he is extremely powerful and has reached the middle stage of the Natal Opening Realm."

"Eh, that is?"

The martial practitioners on the first floor were constantly whispering to each other, clarifying the identities of each practitioner who went upstairs. Suddenly, at this time, their eyes all showed astonishment towards a young martial practitioner.

This youth seemed around twenty years old and wore the practitioner clothes of Shattered Ice Manor. He looked very handsome and, with an indifferent expression, bore a surprising resemblance to Feng Yi.

He directly went up the stairs.

"Feng Kai! He's Feng Kai! Over half a year ago he was still cultivating within Nebula Pavilion. I wonder why he suddenly defected and entered Shattered Ice Manor," someone shockingly shouted.

From amongst the crowd, Qin Lie secretly sized up Feng Kai, his pupils shrinking.

"So this is Feng Yi's brother, the one who clearly stated he would kill me. Unfortunately... he doesn't seem to recognize me."

“Feng Kai! You traitor! You, along with the Feng Family, will definitely be ruthlessly executed by Nebula Pavilion!” At this time, the Nebula Pavilion martial practitioner, Pei An, who had gone upstairs earlier could be heard on the second floor, verbally threatening Feng Kai.

“Hmph, you can try. Let’s see just who will kill who!” exclaimed Feng Kai on the second floor, not showing any weakness.

As for Qin Lie and those who remained on the first floor, they could only hear the sounds of arguing coming from above and were unable to see what was happening.

“Be quiet.” An irritated sound emanated down from above. Snorting, a deep and powerful voice said, “If you don’t abide by my rules, then scat!”

As soon as this remark was made, the sounds of Feng Kai and Pei An’s argument immediately ceased. Their two mouths moved as they simultaneously apologized, “Elder Pan, we apologize.”

“Elder Pan? Who is he?” quietly asked some newcomers who had just entered.

“Elder Pan refers to Pan Jueming, the person who was put in charge of this Armament Pavilion by Icestone City. Even Shattered Ice Manor’s Lord, Yan Wenyan, and Nebula Pavilion’s Master, Tu Mo, have to give him some face, so what do you think about Feng Kai and Pei An?” quietly explained a knowledgeable practitioner.

As Qin Lie listened from within the group of people, he quietly looked towards the start of the stairs, bitterly smiling inwardly.

His cultivation wasn’t high enough nor was his net worth. Clearly, he wasn’t qualified to shop upstairs. After thinking for a moment, he decided to take advantage of the fact that everyone else’s attention was still fixated on what had just happened. Finding a female shop attendant, he took out one of the Spirit Gathering inscribed spirit tablets and asked, “Does Armament Pavilion buy spirit materials?”

“Of course. However, it depends on the grade. We won’t buy ones which are too low,” replied the female attendant. She was in her twenties, and her looks were rather ordinary. There was also some acne on her face. She glanced at Qin Lie from head to toe and then indifferently continued, “For spirit materials, which are below Common Grade Five, I suggest you go sell them at another shop. Even for Common Grade Five spirit materials, it would be best for you to sell in bulk. The pavilion isn’t very interested in a few of them.”

Qin Lie was slightly stunned as he quietly sucked on his tongue. He hadn’t expected that even one of Armament Pavilion’s minor shop attendants would be so hard to get along with.

"This spirit tablet is inscribed with a Spirit Gathering diagram and can gather the world's spirit energy, increasing the spirit energy a cultivator can gather by a fourth. I wonder if the pavilion has any interest in buying it?" Qin Lie had a premonition that he was about to fail. However, he was currently strapped for cash, and thus, he could only bite the bullet.

"Spirit tablets which are used for practicing inscribing spirit diagrams are only considered low level spirit materials. Even if there is a Spirit Gathering diagram inscribed within, it doesn't make a difference," said the attendant, shaking her head. With a cynical look in her eyes, she very clearly rejected him, "I'm sorry, but even those smaller shops outside might not be willing to buy them, let alone our pavilion."

Qin Lie's expression became somewhat embarrassed. Nodding, he didn't continue speaking. He didn't even have the face to stay and could only disheartenedly exit Armament Pavilion.

"Let me go try out the smaller shops outside..." Reaching Armament Pavilion's entrance, he took a deep breath and smiled bitterly before stubbornly trying every shop.

"My spirit tablet can gather nature's spirit energy nearby and increase the amount a cultivator can gather by one fourth. I wonder if you have any interest towards it?"

"No interest, go try another shop."

"High level practitioners have spirit stones when they cultivate and have no use for such things. Increasing the spirit energy of nature by one fourth isn't considered much anyway as you can just find an area where the spirit energy is dense."

"Sorry, we don't buy them."

"My apologies, but my small shop is not interested."

"....."

Qin Lie went from shop to shop, but the results were all the same as he was politely rejected time and time again. They clearly had no interest towards his spirit tablets.

"I wasted an entire afternoon. The sky is beginning to darken. Hm, there is still one more shop left, might as well try it. If it doesn't work, then I'll go home."

Just as he was about to give up, he saw one more extremely small shop tucked into a remote corner of Commerce Street.

The store was extremely remote as it was a good distance away from the bustling main road. Atop the door hung a sign on which the name "Li's Shop" was written crookedly with peeling paint...

Within the building there was only the faint figure of a person sitting in a rocking chair. Perhaps it was because business was too slow, he seemed to have already fallen asleep.

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Chapter 57: Li's Shop

Qin Lie had run into walls all afternoon and didn't mind if he hit another before he returned to the tavern, so he walked towards this strange store.

"Little Friend, it is late already. I am closing, come back tomorrow." Before he stepped in, the person on the rocking chair actually called out first to signal that he did not even need to come in.

Qin Lie was shocked and raised his head to look at the sky. There was still some time until dusk, and many of the shops in the distance were still open. Armament Pavilion, which was further away, was still full of people and at its busiest.

"I'm not here to buy. I'm here to sell something and hope that you could take a look." Qin Lie entered politely.

Inside the room, a middle-aged uncle lazily reclined on a bamboo rocking chair and rocked himself. Looking at Qin Lie, he said lightly, "There are so many shops on this commerce street, and mine is the most remote, I'll be damned that you were able to find this place. What? Did you try all the shops here, and since no one was interested in your goods, you wanted to try it here for one last time before leaving?"

His words instantly exposed Qin Lie's thought process.

Qin Lie was embarrassed and nodded honestly. "Yes, alright, you probably won't be interested anyway. I was presumptuous, sorry for disturbing your rest, I'll leave now..."

"Give it here." The middle-aged person was actually quite handsome, just that his clothes were disheveled. He reached out a hand towards Qin Lie from his spot on the rocking chair, with no intentions of getting up; his interest clearly not great either. "You've already entered, so I'll take a look at it, just in order for you to entirely give up."

The store was extremely messy with spirit materials piled up everywhere and covered in dust, seemingly none were of a high grade.

The middle-aged person's rocking chair actually took up a great amount of space. On the two cabinets beside him were some stones and wooden materials covered in spots. There were also a few damaged artifacts. Nothing looked valuable in here, so it was no wonder there were no customers in the store.

Just by glancing over the state of the shop, Qin Lie was already very disappointed. He knew he had probably come to the wrong place and birthed the thought of leaving.

But the uncle's eyes narrowed, and his hand was already outstretched, so it would be rude to just turn and leave. He took out one of the Spirit Gathering inscribed spirit tablets and handed it to this lazy-looking uncle.

"...Spirit tablet, a low grade material used to practice inscribing spirit diagrams. No wonder people ignored you." The uncle had an odd expression in his eyes. He casually took the spirit tablet, his eyes narrowing slightly as though he inspected it in secret.

Then his eyes lit up, as he looked at that the spirit tablet, and then became silent.

A long while later, just as Qin Lie was getting impatient, did he finally ask, "What is the use of this spirit tablet?"

Qin Lie explained.

"It can only increase the nature spirit energy in the surroundings by a fourth. For the martial practitioners who can cultivate with spirit stones and those large forces, this clearly does not have any great use." He furrowed his brows while he looked at Qin Lie, his two of his fingers playing with the spirit tablet as he said, "I don't know if there will be people interested and don't know if I am able to sell it, so I cannot give you an exact price..."

"Then never mind." Qin Lie already knew it would be so and sighed in disappointment. He could finally give up.

Reaching out to retrieve his spirit tablet, he gave an apology for disturbing the other man and turned to leave.

"Wait a moment," the middle-aged uncle shouted. When Qin Lie turned around, he said indifferently, "I do not know who would be interested, but you can try to see if it can be sold. Hm, the thing... is actually not bad and has a bit of use. We just have to see if people will buy it..."

Just as Qin Lie was puzzled, he said, "You can stay in my shop and sell it yourself. Whether it can be sold or not will depend on you, how about it?"

Qin Lie scratched his head and found it strange. He examined the state of the shop again and said with a grimace, "Never mind..."

"What? You are disdainful of my little shop? Are you scorning it for being too remote and scared that no one will come?" asked the uncle as he chuckled. He then continued lazily with narrowed eyes, "Even though the location is not all that great, there will be a

dozen or so greenhorns that come everyday, like you. Didn't you come? At least, you can try. Isn't that better than having it rot in your hands?"

"Then I will try tomorrow." Qin Lie thought. He truly did have hope left and agreed.

"I am called Li Mu, you can call me Uncle Li. I see you have bags, so you must have come to Icestone City very recently? Where are you staying?" he asked.

"At a tavern nearby," Qin Lie obediently answered.

"I still have an empty room here, it's just a little dirty, so if you do not care, you can stay there." Li Mu rocked on his chair as he lazily continued on, "There are also some blank spirit tablets inside the room. If you want to practice inscribing spirit diagrams, you can use those spirit tablets first. Mn, after you sell your stuff, repay me with the equivalent price. If you really can't repay me back, then help me look after the shop to pay it off."

Qin Lie looked dazedly at him. A long while later, he said, "Are you serious?"

"Rubbish!" Li Mu barked and then pointed at the door behind him. "There is a little yard there and two or so small rooms. You can stay in the room on the east. There's some blank spirit tablets in there that you can use first. During the day, you can sit here and try to sell your stuff. It's up to you whether or not you can sell them, how about it?"

"Alright!" Qin Lie was overjoyed and inquired, "I have my possessions with me so I won't return to the tavern. Can I move in now?"

"Yes," Li Mu said unconcernedly.

Qin Lie nodded and chuckled. He passed by Li Mu and entered the yard through the little door behind him to go to the room he had pointed out.

Opening the door, the dust suddenly rushed at him and caused Qin Lie to cough loudly.

This room was filled with cobwebs. Wood pieces, stone fragments, unknown metals, and other items that did not look like high grade spirit materials were piled on the small wooden bed in the room. He had no clue how long they had been there for.

There were dozens of dust covered spirit tablets in the corner, and the dust somehow managed to seem even thicker than the spirit tablet itself.

"This small shop makes little profit and cannot hire people. You need to clean up yourself," came Li Mu's voice from the shop outside.

"Oh." Qin Lie acknowledged and then started to clean.

He worked until midnight before he had cleaned up the small room, and as he put away all the low grade spirit materials, he took a blank spirit tablet, His eyes started shining the moment he started to practice inscribing spirit diagrams...

In a flash, nine days passed.

During the day, he and Li Mu stayed inside the shop together and occasionally hawked his spirit tablets to the passerby that came in. At night, he continued to practice inscribing spirit diagrams.

He quickly found that he had been fooled...

In the nine days, only ten people entered Li Mu's store in total, and they were all low ranking martial practitioners. They came in to look at the store's decorations and then left with strange looks.

—There wasn't anyone that was interested in the shop's merchandise.

Qin Lie didn't even have the chance to hawk. Usually, the other would have turned around by the time he opened his mouth, only leaving him behind, awkwardly smiling.

If it wasn't for the small room that had a supply of blank spirit tablets for him to practice, he probably wouldn't have been able to bear it and would have already left long ago. He knew that this shop's business would not be good, but he had not expected it to be terrible to that extent.

The little shop's business was unusually quiet, and it was not strange that Li Mu rested on the rocking chair every day as though he wasn't running a business.

Li Mu did not question or mention the fact that Qin Lie was continuously using up spirit tablets and did not calculate an account. He also did not ask anything about Qin Lie's identity or history. This caused Qin Lie's worries to ease, and he continued to stay.

"Uncle Li, I've already used twelve of your tablets. If my things still can't get sold, how can I repay you?" This day, Qin Lie couldn't resist and finally asked.

"I haven't thought about it. Just use them, and I will tell you when I think of something." Li Mu replied like so.

"Uncle Li, the store is too messy and it seems unclean..." Qin Lie's tone was nuanced as he continued, "Why don't I sweep around and clean it up? This way, business might be better, and they wouldn't leave right after coming in. What do you say?"

"Ignorant people. Who cares if they go, there's no need to pay attention to them," said Li Mu as he snorted. He then continued, "Don't bother. I like this kind of unclean and

messy environment. If it is too clean, I can't bear it. Just complete your own matters, and don't meddle in other things."

Qin Lie grimaced.

On the sixteenth day of his stay at Li's Shop.

This day, Qin Lin was inside the shop as usual, also lazily sitting on a chair as his hands propped up his chin while he reviewed the details of the Amplification diagram's spirit lines.

Recently, he had managed to successfully inscribe five Spirit Gathering diagrams in a row. The most recent inscription only took six hours.

He remembered when he had succeeded for the first time; it had taken him seven whole days.

Right now, he gradually started to master how to inscribe Spirit Gathering diagrams. Due to his familiarity, his inscribing speed had also clearly increased.

He presumed that he could be considered to have mastered inscribing this Spirit Gathering diagram, so he turned his attention to try the Amplification diagram.

"Li's Shop? There's actually a shop here..."

"Miss, do we really need to look at this shop? Going in is just a waste of time. With how remote and uncared for this shop is, it definitely has nothing."

"We've already walked over, so let's go to look."

Conversation came from the outside, and moments later, a tall and beautiful female came in along with a middle-aged family servant.

The white-clothed female seemed to be in her twenties and wore a loose snowy-white martial practitioner robe. The color of her clothes complemented her snowy skin. She had bright eyes, a high nose, and looked like she possessed a strong personality. Her beautiful face held an innate indifference as though she was used to being in high regards, and when she looked at others, it seemed that she was looking down on them.

When the middle-aged servant came in, he shorted and said with a creased brow, "An old one and a young one, both sitting in a daze, don't you do business?"

Li Mu faintly smiled and nodded his head at Qin Lie to signal for him to deal with it. Li Mu himself still laid lazily on the chair, his eyes closed as he rested.

“Feel free to look around.” Qin Lie stood and looked with amazement at the white-clothed female. He secretly praised the female’s beauty, but felt that her expression was a bit too cold.

“Are you an employee?” The white-clothed female nodded distantly and said, “Introduce the rarest thing in your store to me. Don’t talk about anything common, I’m not interested.”

“Okay.” Qin Lie took out the spirit tablet with the Spirit Gathering diagram he had successfully inscribed and put in on the table in front of the white-clothed female. Then he said briskly, “The most interesting thing in our shop is this...”

“You scamp.” Li Mu grinned and muttered in shock as he shook his head.

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Chapter 58: Spirit Gathering Board

“Once activated, this Spirit Gathering inscribed spirit tablet can directly gather the world’s spirit energy nearby. In addition, this spirit tablet can increase the amount of spirit energy a martial practitioner is able to gather by one fourth!”

“More importantly, this spirit tablet only requires the consumption of an extremely tiny amount of spirit energy to activate and can be used repeatedly!”

“If a martial practitioner cultivating in the wild had this spirit tablet, then the efficiency of their cultivation would increase. This spirit tablet would also increase the recovery speed of their spirit energy after a fight.”

“.....”

Within Li’s Shop, Qin Lie held a spirit tablet within his hand as he eloquently spoke to the lady in white, passionately trying to sell his goods.

The expression atop the lady in white’s face was indifferent. After listening to his explanation for a while, she gradually became impatient, interjecting, “It only does that?”

“What else do you want?” asked Qin Lie, stopping.

“Does it help when attacking? Can it defend?” The eye-catching lady in white prettily furrowed her brows. “If all it can do is simply increase the spirit energy of the world by a fourth, then there is no need for you to continue.”

She turned her head towards the middle-aged servant beside her, disappointedly saying, “It seems we have come to the wrong place.”

As she made this remark, she already no longer held the interest she had previously and turned around, preparing to leave.

“Kid, how many spirit tablets do you have in total?” suddenly asked Li Mu at this juncture as he still lazily sat in the rocking chair.

“Seventeen,” replied Qin Lie.

“Take them all out and activate all of their Spirit Gathering diagrams. Let me see if there are any overlapping effects,” lightly said Li Mu.

“Overlapping...”

As if an extremely bright light had suddenly appeared within his mind, Qin Lie’s eyes suddenly became shockingly bright. He had been reminded of a crucial point through Li Mu’s words.

The white-clothed lady and her middle aged servant also suddenly stopped. Qin Lie didn’t bother thinking any longer, quickly taking out all of the successful spirit tablets and injected a wisp of spirit energy into each one, activating the Spirit Gathering diagram within.

One spirit tablet after another suddenly emitted a faint white glow, creating a rather strong suction force.

All of the scattered nature spirit energy around Li’s Shop was sucked over, as if a whirlpool gradually converged all of the energy towards this one spot, and rushed into the center of the store.

Originally, many of the store’s low grade spirit materials, spirit stones, and various metals had all been covered by a layer of dust, causing the air to feel turbid and polluted.

However, as the the world’s spirit energy slowly accumulated, the few people within the shop could feel the air begin to naturally freshen up. After taking a few breaths, they all felt their spirits rise.

“Put the spirit tablets farther apart. Put one in each corner of the stop,” commanded Li Mu as he rocked in his chair, narrowing his eyes.

Qin Lie’s eyes lit up again as he hurriedly took the seventeen spirit tablets from on the table in front of him and placed them in each of the store’s corners.

He separated the spirit tablets, leaving seven in the middle, while evenly arranging the other ten alongside the walls and corners.

Within the dilapidated shop, the seventeen spirit tablets released a serene, misty light. All the spirit energy of the world, which was circulating in Commerce Street, slowly began to move towards and gather within the small “Li’s Shop.”

Within the store, the lady in white and middle aged servant, who had been about to leave, had long since stopped in their tracks.

Surprise shined from both of their eyes. Their expressions were frozen as they silently looked at the glowing spirit tablets scattered within the store, quietly feeling the changes in the world’s spirit energy.

Qin Lie’s eyes became increasingly bright as he felt the changes, his heart full of surprise.

Li Mu still lazily reclined on the rocking chair. Within the extremely silent shop, only the harsh creaking sounds of his rocking could be heard.

Commerce Street.

Several of the slightly higher level martial practitioners nearby became aware of the sudden and strange change in the flow of the world’s spirit energy. Becoming stunned, they subconsciously followed the direction of the spirit energy towards “Li’s Shop.”

“That’s weird, nature spirit energy is beginning to gather over there. Is there a powerful expert about to break through?”

“No, it doesn’t seem like that. The flow of this nature spirit energy isn’t that fast; it’s actually extremely mild. It doesn’t seem to be attracted by a person, but by some powerful spirit artifact instead.”

“Could it be that some extremely powerful spirit artifact has appeared?”

“I don’t know, let’s go and find out.”

“Mn, let us go have a look.”

On the street, only a very small portion of the martial practitioners who could sense the change were moving to Li’s Shop. Upon suddenly feeling the weird changes in the world’s spirit energy, they all became perplexed as they slowly made their way towards the shop.

Armament Pavilion.

Within the top floor of the five storied pavilion, a skinny old man donned in luxurious silk clothing who was approximately sixty years old was just about to sleep.

"Hm?"

The old man suddenly looked outside the window, and taking a deep breath, his expression suddenly changed faintly.

He directly went downstairs, going from the fifth floor to the first floor under the respectful gazes of the many shop attendants.

"Elder Pan, you?"

"Elder Pan, why have you come down from the fifth floor?"

"Elder Pan, it is currently noon. Don't you usually nap at this time?"

"Haha, so Elder Pan does have times when he changes his habits. How interesting."

Many of the martial cultivators on the first floor of Armament Pavilion had originally been gathered around the spirit artifacts, asking the shop attendants about details and prices. However, upon seeing that the elder had come down, they all became shocked, unable to resist opening their mouths and began whispering to each other.

The name of this old man was Pan Jueming. He was the true head of Armament Pavilion and had an extremely high status within Icestone City. Even Tu Mo and Yan Wenyan would respectfully call him "Elder Pan" when they saw him.

His unique habit of an afternoon nap was pretty much known to every martial practitioner who often visited Armament Pavilion. They also knew that during his afternoon nap, they must not make any loud noises within Armament Pavilion. Otherwise, they would be immediately kicked out and perhaps never to be allowed back in.

But today, at this special time, he had surprisingly come downstairs...

Everyone was completely astonished.

Even more so from what transpired afterwards.

All of the people who had previously ascended to the second and third floors followed Elder Pan downstairs. People with surprised expressions came down one after another from above. The two who had just ascended to the second floor for a little while came down, even though they probably hadn't been able to see very many spirit artifacts during that time. Like Pan Jueming, they all walked out onto the street.

"Elder Pan..."

A sturdy looking male wearing the practitioner attire of Nebula Pavilion descended from upstairs and walked to Pan Jueming's side, whispering something to him.

The name of this person was Wu Chong. He was the number one Hall Master under Nebula Hall Pavilion Elder Chu Yan and had just broken through to the middle stage of the Natal Opening Realm. He had come to Armament Pavilion to look for a spirit artifact which was suitable for his techniques.

Pan Jueming didn't even turn around, only slightly nodding, as he lightly said, "It seems you felt it too."

"Mn." Wu Chong slightly bowed, his eyes showing deep respect, as he said, "My perception isn't as sharp as elder's. I only felt the change after following elder downstairs..."

After pausing for a moment, he then asked, "Elder Pan, from your point of view... what is happening?"

"We will know once we see it," casually answered Pan Jueming as he suddenly began to move forward. Wu Chong and the others who had descended all quickly followed.

"What happened? Why can't I understand what they are talking about?"

"I don't understand either. I have no clue what they could be talking about. However, since Elder Pan didn't take his afternoon nap, it could already be considered extremely peculiar..."

"They seem like they are going to look at something. Something that can catch their attention must definitely be ridiculously interesting!"

"....."

The people on the first floor were all low level Refinement Realm practitioners with correspondingly low perception skills. Unclear on what had happened, they began to curiously converse amongst themselves.

After a while, upon seeing Pan Jueming, Wu Chong, and the rest gradually walking further and further away, they finally reacted.

They all began to shout in surprise as they also followed, regardless of their original reason for coming to Armament Pavilion. They too wanted to find out just what exactly had happened.

If there was someone floating in the sky above Commerce Street, they would have been able to clearly see the subtle changes in the flow of spirit energy and discover how the world's spirit energy surrounding Li's Shop was circulating in a strange manner, as if Li's

Shop was a whirlpool. Right now, it was constantly gathering the world's spirit energy nearby, causing the spirit energy within the shop to become very dense.

They would also be able to see the scattered people on Commerce Street gather in the exact same manner...

Within Li's Shop.

Qin Lie, the lady in white, the middle aged servant, and the shop owner, Li Mu all seemed to not know of what was going on outside as they remained silent, quietly feeling the changes of spirit energy within the shop...

The seventeen spirit tablets that had been scattered amongst the various corners, cabinets, and table continued emitting a faint white glow as they gathered the world's spirit energy closeby, causing a faint milky mist to gradually appear within the shop — it was the clearest indicator that the density of the world's spirit energy within the shop had reached a certain extent.

"It's almost four times..."

The bewildered voice of the lady in white's middle aged servant suddenly broke the silence within the shop. His slightly dusky eyes looked from tablet to tablet as his expression gradually became serious.

Li Mu, who had been constantly rocking in his chair, suddenly stopped as he said, "If there were more Spirit Gathering Boards, the amount of the world's spirit energy which would be gathered... should be even more."

"Spirit Gathering Board?" asked a stunned Qin Lie.

Li Mu slightly smiled as he nodded towards Qin Lie. Afterwards, he looked in the direction of the door and leisurely said, "It should have a pleasant, easy to remember name."

Qin Lie followed his gaze and also looked at the door, suddenly discovering that a lot of people had all gathered outside this remote and empty shop since who knew when.

"Miss, these seventeen Spirit Gathering Boards can be used to build a cultivation room. With these seventeen Spirit Gathering Boards and our place's denser nature spirit energy, if there aren't any problems, the effects... will be extremely shocking!" quietly brought up the middle aged servant.

"Name your price," said the lady in white towards Qin Lie. She added, "I want them all."

"This old one is also interested."

At this time, the voice of Pan Jueming emanated over. Shock appeared within the eyes of many who stood outside as the head of Armament Pavilion was the first person to stride into Li's Shop.

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Chapter 59: First Transaction

"Compared to other places in the city, the world's spirit energy is four times denser here. If one is able to cultivate inside this shop, then they would progress at a much faster rate."

"Mn, the denser the spirit energy, the faster it can be refined."

"It almost rivals the cultivation arenas of some high ranking forces, it's really strong!"

Many of Icestone City's most prominent people had gathered outside of Li's little shop. There were people from Shattered Ice Manor, Nebula Pavilion, and even unfamiliar martial practitioners that were passing through Icestone City...

These people had come and gathered here due to the slight change in the flow of nature's spirit energy and were loudly discussing it in front of the shop.

"So it is Mister Li's shop." Inside the room, Pan Jueming walked in and faintly smiled at Li Mu. He then looked at the Spirit Gathering Boards that had been scattered around and said, "This old one is also very interested in quality goods that can quadruple the world's spirit energy. If you don't mind, this old one also wants to join the ranks of those buying."

Li Mu glanced at Qin Lie and then looked at the people outside that were furtively poking their heads in. He suddenly said, "This little store cannot hold too many people. Hm, those in the Natal Opening Realm and higher can come in. Everyone else, please continue to stay outside."

When these words came out, Wu Chong and the others at the doorway smiled and naturally walked in.

When they entered, they saw the white-clothed female and instantly felt their vision brighten.

Then, their eyes gathered on the white-clothed female's body and showed clear shock as though they had been entranced by her beauty. They actually forgot why they had entered the shop in the first place.

Her skin was like snow, and her two eyes were as clear as pure crystal. Her cool presence was like a snow lotus blossom on a glacier and caused people to feel ashamed of themselves.

“Hmph!” The servant beside the white-clothed female snorted with a cold face.

“Boom!”

All those who were looking at her suddenly shook. That “hmph” was so loud it had hurt their eardrums.

Qin Lie, Pan Jueming, and Li Mu were completely unaffected. That “hmph” clearly was not directed at them...

“Sorry for the impoliteness...”

Wu Chong was woken by the shock and the expression on his face changed. He bowed with folded hands towards the middle-aged servant and the white-clothed female to show his apology.

The other people were shocked inside when they saw Wu Chong’s attitude towards them and became uncertain as well. Hurriedly, they retracted their gazes from the lady in white and carefully displayed their apologies.

“Haha, both of you are not denizens of Icestone City, where are you from?” Pan Jueming had a startled gaze as he smiled at the white-clothed female and her servant, asking politely.

The white-clothed female’s brows creased. She did not answer his question but instead looked at Qin Lie and Li Mu, saying coldly, “I will take all the Spirit Gathering Boards here, name a price.”

“Mister Li, what do you think?” Pan Jueming also stated his attitude. “Our Armament Pavilion is also interested in this Spirit Gathering Board, is it possible for you to accommodate us?”

“Qin Lie? How come you’re here?”

Suddenly, Liu Yan’s voice came from the door. He had coincidentally came today to Commerce Street and felt the changes in the flow of spirit energy.

He had arrived later and made his way through the flood of low level martial practitioners gathered at the door, looking inside, and when he saw the familiar figure inside the shop, he couldn’t help but call out.

“Big Brother Liu.”

Qin Lie stilled slightly and then smiled. He nodded at Liu Yan who had charged into the room.

“Elder Pan, Brother Wu, Brother Zhao...”

After Liu Yan entered, he found that the occupants inside the shop were shocking and had to greet Pan Jueming, Wu Chong, and another male attired in Nebula Pavilion’s robes.

Pan Jueming and the others nodded and returned his greeting.

“Qin Lie, when did you come to Icestone City? You brat, coming to Icestone City but not going to Nebula Pavilion, what are you doing here?” Liu Yan walked with a smile next to Qin Lie and smacked him on the shoulder. He said, “You might not know this, but at that time... the two hall masters under Yan Dewu’s command from Shattered Ice Manor were bitten to death by the Silver Winged Demon Wolves. Feng Yi also lost an arm, ha! It was so good!”

When he said this, the faces of the two martial practitioners inside the room, attired with Shattered Ice Manor’s clothing suddenly darkened.

“He is part of our Nebula Pavilion?” Wu Chong was shocked.

The other people also looked at Qin Lie. Because they didn’t recover in time, they had no clue of what was happening.

“Of course. He is from the Ling Family, one of the families under us, and he went to Celestial Wolf Mountain with us,” Liu Yan explained simply but did not elaborate any further. But even so, everyone’s attention landed on Qin Lie.

Even Li Mu showed shocked astonishment. He had finally learned Qin Lie’s identity and name through Liu Yan’s explanation.

“Name a price, don’t waste my time!” The white-clothed female’s expression was impatient as she coldly interrupted everyone’s conversation. She exclaimed, “Quick!”

“Mn, let’s manage this first.” Pan Jueming also agreed.

Li Mu glanced at Qin Lie, rubbed his chin, and said, “One Common Grade Seven spirit stone for one Spirit Gathering Board. Mn, you just have to give seventeen Common Grade Seven spirit stones.”

“Mister Li,” Pan Jueming opened.

Li Mu waved his hand at him and said, “She came first.”

Pan Jueming nodded and did not say anything else as though he respected Li Mu's decision greatly.

"There's at least some protocol."

The white-clothed female nodded slightly and then walked outside. Wu Chong and Zhao Duo, the two Nebula Pavilion martial practitioners that were blocking the door, had shocked faces when they saw her turn around and hurried to turn their bodies to let her pass.

"Seventeen Common Grade Seven spirit stones, please check." The middle-aged servant that remained swiped his left hand on the table before Qin Lie. When his left hand moved away, seventeen glowing jade stones were on the table, each flowing with faint luminescence. It was possible to see the quality was high with just a glance.

"Alright." Li Mu's gaze only briefly swept over them before nodding.

Qin Lie, on the other hand, looked at the servant next to the white-clothed female, or more accurately, he was looking at a crisp green ring on this person's left hand...

He was the closest, so he saw it the clearest. The seventeen glowing jade stones that suddenly appeared on the table came from that green ring. This had fascinated Qin Lie.

While he was in shock, the person moved and picked up the scattered Spirit Gathering Boards. Whenever his left hand touched the Spirit Gathering Boards, they disappeared.

"Spatial ring..."

Liu Yan's eyes were locked onto the ring on that person's left hand as he exclaimed lightly in a dry voice. His expression was slightly strange.

He was not the only one. Inside the shop, Wu Chong, Zhao Duo, and the people from Shattered Ice Manor also had dumbfounded expressions as they all looked at the ring on that person's hand.

"Haha, not someone from Icestone City, as expected." Pan Jueming smiled and then nodded slightly towards the middle-aged servant before stealing a look at the ring.

That person did not chat with anyone else and did not say another word after putting away the Spirit Gathering Boards. He did not even spare a look at anyone before walking out of Li's Shop.

As the Spirit Gathering Boards were put away, the thick spirit energy inside Li's Shop also gradually dissipated. In a short period of time, the level of spirit energy returned to normal once more.

Many people were clamoring over the Spirit Gathering Boards and looked around to feel the change in spirit energy. They gathered and discussed closely.

“Big Brother Liu, a spatial ring?” Qin Lie suddenly inquired in a low voice.

“The inside of the ring forms a space that can store items. Even the lowest tier spatial rings are worth cities.” Liu Yan’s voice was moderate as he explained to Qin Lie. “In our Icestone City, only Shattered Ice Manor’s Manor Lord Yan Wenyan, our Nebula Pavilion’s Pavilion Master, and Elder Pan have the lowest grade spatial ring, just these three people.”

Qin Lie’s expression changed. He finally understood why everyone was so incredibly astounded.

“Mister Li, where did you get these Spirit Gathering Boards? My Armament Pavilion is very interested, is there any merchandise left? If there are, Armament Pavilion can purchase this according to your price of Common Grade Seven spirit stones, what do you think?” After that person left, Pan Jueming smiled slightly and looked at Li Mu again.

Li Mu’s expression was relaxed as he said coldly, “There are more, but it will take some time. When I get a new batch, I will inform you.”

“Good.” Pan Jueming nodded and then looked at Qin Lie, saying with a slight smile, “What is the relation between this young one and you?”

“A shop apprentice,” Li Mu casually replied and then he shrank back into his rocking chair as he relaxedly said, “That’s all for today, everyone, leave.”

Li’s Shop hadn’t ever had good business, nor could it gather this many people in a hundred years. He didn’t take this opportunity to hawk more goods or gather more eyes, instead chasing them all out at once.

Either Li Mu actually had no idea how to conduct a business or did not care about Li’s Shop at all. This caused everyone to chuckle.

“Mn, see you soon.” Pan Jueming was the first to leave.

The people dressed in Shattered Ice Manor’s robes looked at Wu Chong, Liu Yan, and Zhao Duo with slightly cold expressions and also committed Qin Lie’s appearance to memory before they left.

The two hall masters of Nebula Pavilion, Wu Chong and Zhao Duo, chatted out of friendliness for a while longer after learning Qin Lie’s identity and background, in order to get him to report to Nebula Pavilion as soon as possible, before leaving as well.

The people around were shocked, but after the powerful people left one after the other, they lost interest and gradually left.

Liu Yan and Qin Lie chatted for a while longer with Liu Yun asking him why he was currently an apprentice at Li's Shop and why he did not go to Nebula Pavilion earlier to use their cultivation resources to advance himself as quickly as possible.

When Qin Lie stated how he was worried that doing missions would affect his cultivation, Liu Yan couldn't help but grin and then told him the person in charge of missions was Han Feng's father, Elder Han Qingrui. Liu Yan explained that, with the relationship between him and Han Feng, if Qin Lie did not want to do missions, Han Qingrui would not make life difficult for him.

Also, Liu Yan stated that, unless Nebula Pavilion encountered great trouble, they would usually not force people to complete missions and that the pavilion would give the martial practitioners the freedom of choice.

Qin Lie finally understood that he had worried too much.

Liu Yan conversed with him for a little while longer before bidding farewell, reminding him once more to come to Nebula Pavilion as quickly as possible.

Li's Shop once again became quiet.

"I did not tell others that you inscribed the Spirit Gathering Boards and did not let you shine in front of others, are you disappointed?" In the suddenly quiet shop came Li Mu's voice. His eyes were squinting as he looked at Qin Lie with an amused expression.

"No, as long as I can make money," Qin Lie said sincerely.

Li Mu nodded. After a moment, he suggested, "You can continue to inscribe Spirit Gathering diagrams on the spirit tablets. I can also help you sell the Spirit Gathering Boards. However, it would be best if you did not let others know that the Spirit Gathering diagram on there... were inscribed by you."

Qin Lie stilled. "Is there a need to intentionally conceal it?"

"Just listen to me." Li Mu's brow creased.

"Mn." Qin Lie did not understand but nodded and inquired no further.

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Chapter 60: Amplification Spirit Diagram

“Your Spirit Gathering Boards are being sold from my shop, so I will take a portion as commission. Seventeen Common Grade Seven spirit stones, hmm, I will take two as commission and the remaining fifteen are yours, how is that?”

Li Mu’s expression was faint as he lazily rocked the chair and drawled after Qin Lie closed down the shop.

“No problem.” Qin Lie took out two spirit stones from the pile on the table and handed them to Li Mu. He then asked, “So how many spirit tablets for practicing can I exchange Common Grade Seven spirit stones for?”

“One tablet for every Common Grade Five spirit stone. For Common Grade Seven spirit stones... how many do you think you can get?” Li Mu said with a smile.

When he said this, Qin Lie’s eyes suddenly showed joy. “Twenty five spirit tablets.”

Spirit stones were ranked based on the spirit energy they contained within. If the spirit energy in five Common Grade One spirit stones were added together, it would be roughly equivalent to a single Common Grade Two spirit stone. So, obviously, one Common Grade Two spirit stone was the same as five Common Grade One spirit stones. Using the same principle, one Common Grade Three spirit stone was equivalent to five Common Grade Two spirit stones...

Based on this ratio, one Common Grade Seven spirit stone was worth five Common Grade Six spirit stones or twenty five Common Grade Five spirit stones.

It was also equivalent to twenty five spirit tablets.

Other than the two stones given to Li Mu as commission, he had fifteen stones which could be exchanged for three hundred and seventy five spirit tablets, supplying his inscription practice.

He had used up two thousand Nebula Pavilion contribution points and only gotten four hundred spirit tablets. Now, through the selling of Spirit Gathering Boards, he had easily obtained so many spirit tablets. This current turn of events made him elated, and he suddenly realized the Spirit Gathering diagram that he possessed would be of great help to him in the future.

“There should be more than a hundred blank spirit tablets in that room of yours. You have already used some. Hm, I will calculate it together. Give me four more spirit stones.” Li Mu stuck his hand out at him.

"Mn, okay." Qin Lie handed over another four spirit stones. Thinking about it, he shoved all the remaining spirit stones into Li Mu's hands, saying, "I need more spirit tablets. Can you help me to exchange all of this?"

"No problem," Li Mu replied with a slight bit of astonishment. He didn't hold back at all and took all of the remaining spirit stones. "There are shops on Commerce Street that sells spirit tablets, so I can buy them with spirit stones. However, think this through, eleven Common Grade Seven spirit stones could net you a pretty good spirit artifact in Armament Pavilion. You're sure you want to use all of these to buy spirit tablets?"

"Yes," Qin Lie confirmed.

Nodding, Li Mu faintly said, "Alright, I will help you turn these into spirit tablets."

"Uncle Li, that spatial ring... what is its usual price?" Qin Lie's mind moved and he suddenly inquired. His eyes clearly showed his desire for one.

If he could have a spatial ring that could form its own space, he could abandon his cloth bag. After Liu Yan's explanation of spatial rings, he became deeply interested in them. He thought that if the price wasn't too high, he could consider getting one for himself.

"That's not something you should be thinking about currently." Li Mu was not gentle in crushing his hopes. "Even the lowest grade spatial ring requires at least three thousand Common Grade Seven spirit stones, that stuff isn't something anyone can have. Right now, your cultivation realm is low and you do not have many possessions, so you do not need to be so luxurious."

"Three thousand Common Grade Seven spirit stones?" Qin Lie gaped inside.

"This is a conservative estimate. Usually, the value of a spatial ring would exceed this price." Li Mu jerked the corners of his mouth and comforted him, saying, "In all of Icestone City, only three people possess spatial rings. Don't think too much about it, kid. Hm, if, one day, you join a great force and you have more materials and equipment, you might be able to consider getting one."

"I thought too much." Qin Lie grimaced.

Currently, he needed four to six hours to inscribe a Spirit Gathering diagram and then had to rest for a while after.

At most, he could only inscribe three Spirit Gathering diagrams a day, which was three Spirit Gathering Boards. And each Spirit Gathering Board could only be sold for one Common Grade Seven spirit stone...

He calculated that if he wanted to get a spatial ring right now and inscribed spirit diagrams without rest, he would need three years. Furthermore, he had to somehow

eliminate all failures in order to gather all the spirit stones needed to buy the lowest grade spatial ring.

—He decisively gave up.

“You can enter Nebula Pavilion at any time, so there is no need for you to stay here in my little shop. Uh, what are your plans for the future?” Li Mu asked.

“Your place here is pretty quiet. If Uncle Li doesn’t mind, for the time being... I still want to stay here.”

“Up to you, the little room will be empty otherwise. Mn, there is a benefit to Commerce Street, your safety is at least guaranteed here. Regardless of whether it’s Nebula Pavilion or Shattered Ice Manor, they definitely wouldn’t dare to do anything on this street.”

“Then, thank you, Uncle Li.”

Qin Lie continued to stay in Li’s Shop and focused his energy on practicing the other spirit diagrams. Uncle Li also exchanged all the spirit stones into spirit tablets for him so he could concentrate on practicing and not worry about how many tablets he had remaining.

As of this moment, he didn’t need to be in the shop during the day to sell spirit tablets, so he could use that time to practice. Additionally, he had a guaranteed supply of spirit tablets, so his progress on inscribing spirit diagrams was extremely rapid.

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North City, Shattered Ice Manor.

Inside a frigid cultivation room, Yan Ziqian, Yan Qingsong, Feng Yi, and some others were sitting on a an iceberg. Beside them were martial practitioners from Shattered Ice Manor that were all concentrating on their cultivation.

The walls of this cultivation room were made from special ice jade stone, and this special stone could turn spirit energy into cold energy to nurture people who were cultivating in cold and ice arts, greatly enhancing their growth.

The martial practitioners of Shattered Ice Manor mostly cultivated ice and cold arts, so not long after Shattered Ice Manor was established, they spent an enormous sum to build this cultivation room for the martial practitioners of the manor to cultivate.

Inside the cultivation room, circular ice stones were scattered about like millstones.

The martial practitioners that came here to cultivate would sit on these stones meters from each other and cultivate amongst themselves.

“Qin Lie? He’s at Li’s Shop?” Feng Kai opened his eyes and looked at a martial practitioner far away. “Are you sure that person is the Qin Lie that caused my younger brother to lose an arm?”

That person was one of the Shattered Ice Manor martial practitioners that had appeared a few days ago in Li’s Shop. He grinned and replied, “Liu Yan yelled it himself, how can I be incorrect? Liu Yan wouldn’t recognize the wrong person, it has to be that Qin Lie. I’ve investigated recently, and he also used the pseudonym ‘Ling Lie’...”

“Qin Lie! This person left Elder Yan in a sorry state and almost caused him to be bitten to death by the Demon Wolf King!” Yan Qingsong shouted coldly.

“Qin Lie, Qin Lie...” The Young Manor Lord of Shattered Ice Manor, Yan Ziqian, murmured with a furrowed brow. His face suddenly became dark and frigid as he shouted, “It’s him! It’s definitely him! If it wasn’t for him, Tu Ze and the others wouldn’t have left the Arctic Mountain Range alive!”

“Ziqian, your prior loss at Arctic Mountain Range was due to him?” Yan Qingsong was shocked.

“Tu Ze called him Ling Lie, who would it be but him?” Yan Ziqian’s body was freezing as he continued, “He must cultivate a rare thunder art. When he attacks, lightning and thunder are released, is it like that?”

Among these people, only Yan Qingsong and Yan Dewu had gone to Celestial Wolf Mountain, so only they could recognize Qin Lie since they saw Qin Lie fight. Hearing this, he was sure. “Yes, it definitely is this person. I saw him attack with my very own eyes, he cultivates a thunder art!”

“I will go to Li’s Shop and kill him.” Feng Kai stood, coldness filling his handsome face. “If it wasn’t for him, my brother wouldn’t have lost an arm, the Feng Family would not have been exposed, and even the Fiery Solar Jade Mine would have been ours!”

“I will kill him,” Yang Ziqian exclaimed lowly.

“You can kill him, but you definitely cannot act in Commerce Street.” Yan Qingsong’s brow furrowed. “That business street forbids private fighting. The rules were set in place by Dark Asura Hall, so Shattered Ice Manor and Nebula Pavilion must unconditionally abide by them. If you want to kill him, set up a more thorough plan and wait until he leaves the street.”

“Mn, take note of his habits and get people to learn them.” Yan Ziqian’s face instantly calmed down.

“Heehee, I’m the best at things like this, leave it to me,” Yan Qingsong stated.

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Time flowed quickly.

Another three months passed.

In this period of time, Qin Lie continued to stay in Li’s Shop, working hard on inscribing the Amplification diagram.

It was probably due to his experience of success with the Spirit Gathering diagram that he didn’t make many mistakes when he practiced inscribing the Amplification diagram. This caused his progress on the Amplification diagram to be much faster than when inscribing the Spirit Gathering diagram.

His consumption of spirit tablets was also much less than with the Spirit Gathering diagram. Up to now, he had only scrapped two hundred spirit tablets, and he predicted that the Amplification diagram... could successfully inscribed soon.

In this period of time, because Tu Ze and Zhuo Qian had broken into the Natal Opening Realm and were in seclusion to stabilize their cultivation, no one came to find him.

Only little fatty Kang Ze, Zhu Peng, Han Feng, and the others came to find him a few times after learning he was at Li’s Shop. They also invited him to Nebula Pavilion and wanted to take him to see the “interesting places” in Icestone City.

He was at an important stage in learning the inscribing process of the Amplification diagram, so he had refused with a smile multiple times. But he also stated that he would soon report to Nebula Pavilion to rest their hearts.

“Poof!”

—A thread of green smoke came from the spirit tablet. The complex Amplification diagram inside the spirit tablet suddenly crumbled.

Qin Lie’s expression was fragile as he took his hands away with empty eyes. He took out a new spirit tablet and prepared to start again.

“Kid, sometimes, working hard endlessly is not the correct way. If your nerves are too tense, your failure rate might increase. If you are too urgent in pursuing success, it usually has the opposite effect.” Li Mu’s voice suddenly came from outside the door. “May I come in?”

Qin Lie was shocked. He temporarily put down his inscribing practice and replied, “Of course you may.”

