

Chapter 3: The Yellow Realm

The queen, who wore a colorful gown and a golden phoenix coronet, sat at a tent near the altar. In Zhang Ruochen's eyes, the queen was an aged woman and yet she looked like a 28- or 29-year-old lady with an elegant and exquisite character.

"His Majesty has currently secluded himself for refining and, thus, I will be in charge of the ceremony this year. Minister, have you evaluated the class of the Sacred Mark that the Ninth Prince acquired yet?" asked the queen.

The minister of the Yunwu Commandery shook his head while he checked the metallic book in his hand. "The Bible of Sacred Marks' records all the marks of Martial Artists in Kunlun's Field. From the First Class to the Ninth Class, all the marks have been documented in this metallic book. However, none of them matches with the Ninth Prince's."

The queen then glanced at Zhang Ruochen apathetically and said, "If there is no matching mark in the book, then I suggest that the mark you acquired carries a Zero Class on it. Indeed, it has happened to warriors from other commanderies in the past. Eventually, limited achievements have been made."

The Eighth Prince was also inside the tent. He interrupted and said, "The queen has made a good point! After all, our ninth brother is 16 now. He has missed the best age to cultivate Martial Arts. Even if he obtained a Fourth or Fifth Class Sacred Mark, I doubt he would get anywhere."

The queen nodded her head to acknowledge what the Eighth Prince had said. "To preserve refining resources as much as possible for other warriors in the Royal Family, only a bottle of Marrow-washing Liquid will be given to the Ninth Prince, since he only has a Zero-Class mark at 16 years old."

Concubine Lin was shocked and her expression changed after hearing what the queen had said. "My Queen, it is a fact that the first year of acquiring the Sacred Mark is the most significant year in terms of cultivation. Remember the year that the Seventh Prince acquired the Sacred Mark? He was given 12 bottles of Marrow-washing Liquid in 12 months. Why does my Chen-er only receive one bottle of it?" exclaimed Concubine Lin.

"The Seventh Prince had already acquired a Seventh Class Sacred Mark when he was three. How dare you compare the Ninth Prince to such a genius?" Queen grimly responded.

The Eighth Prince, who wanted to ingratiate himself to the queen, said, "Our seventh brother is the son of our queen, who is the first wife of the Commandery Prince. He has a Seventh Class Sacred mark which ensures powerful descendants for the queen. No one is comparable with my seventh brother in the entire Yunwu Commandery! Both the stability and prosperity of the Yunwu Commandery in the future depends on him."

"Moreover, it is impossible to compare the Seventh Prince and the Ninth Prince. The fingertip of my seventh brother is a thousand times more important than my ninth brother's life," he added.

Concubine Lin bit her lip hard and continued to argue with the Eighth Prince. "Don't forget that when you obtained your Sacred Mark, you received four bottles of Marrow-washing Liquid. Why can Ruochen only have one? This is so unfair!" shouted Concubine Lin. As a mother, she was trying her best to protect

Zhang Ruochen and fought for what he deserved to receive. After all, the more Marrow-washing Liquid Zhang Ruochen had, the better he could cultivate Martial Arts.

“The more talent a person has, the more resources they receive to cultivate their skills. Apparently, the talent of the Ninth Prince is not as significant as that of the Seventh Prince or the Eighth Prince. Compared to his outstanding brothers, surely he should get fewer resources.” Queen angrily responded to Concubine Lin.

“But wait...” Squeaked Concubine Lin, who had led the argument with the queen.

However, she had truly annoyed the queen before she asked for anything. “I have already made my decision, Concubine Lin. Don’t you dare challenge me again! Otherwise, I will have you beaten with a rod again!” said Queen in a low voice.

“Again...?” Zhang Ruochen raised his head hearing what Queen said.

He wondered if the queen had once beaten his mother with a rod.

Concubine Lin shut her mouth at once when she heard what the queen had said. Concubine Lin’s body shook slightly as if she was recalling some frightening memory from the past. Something that had to do with the queen and the rod.

While Zhang Ruochen was trying to figure out the story behind the two women and a rod, a bottle of Marrow-washing Liquid was handed to him.

After taking the Marrow-washing Liquid, Zhang Ruochen walked toward his mother who stood next to the queen said, “Mom, let’s go home!” Zhang Ruochen’s head was still spinning about with what he had heard about the rod. He did not want to spend one more minute in the Queen’s Palace. He even took a quick glance at the queen with hatred as he left.

“Alright!” Concubine Lin pursed her lips and bitterly nodded her head. It seemed like Concubine Lin was bothered by something that the queen had said.

It seemed that the queen had also noticed the tension between Zhang Ruochen and herself. She stared at Concubine Lin and Zhang Ruochen as they walked away and muttered, “Ninth Prince, you had better practice as hard as you can in preparation for the Year-end Assessment among the Royal Family three months from now. You have to do your very best to reach the ‘Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels’ stage within these three months so you can become an outstanding warrior. By that time, His Majesty will have finished his self-refining and will attend the assessment. If you can attain that result in such a short period of time, he will be overwhelmed.”

“Even if you gave him three bottles of Marrow-washing Liquid, it is impossible to reach the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage in three months’ time. Not to brag, but even with my talents, I still spent six months to cultivate that skill. Since my ninth brother obtained a Zero-Class mark from the gods, I guess he will probably need more than a year to acquire the technique. Haha!” The Eighth Prince claimed contemptuously as if he viewed Zhang Ruochen as a fool rather than a brother.

Zhang Ruochen heard everything that the Eighth Prince mentioned about his lack of talent. He did not look back and try to start an argument. Rather, he grasped his fists firmly and thought to himself, “I will never let all of you down! You will see a completely different Zhang Ruochen in three months! I will

obtain the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels technique!” Zhang had never felt so determined. Their anger and the teasing motivated him to succeed.

Zhang Ruochen could not wait to start practicing. As soon as he got back to Ziyi Side Hall, he instantly went back to his room and started traveling down the path to success.

In fact, he did not understand what obtaining the Sacred Mark meant. Yet, he believed having the Sacred Mark would definitely help him learn how to practice Genuine Qi.

The first step was to open up the “Qi pool” underneath the Sacred Mark on his eyebrows.

The so-called “Qi Pool” referred to a pool that stored Genuine Qi power.

The larger the pool, the more storage for this power. The “Qi Pool” would also expand with cultivation and study.

Generally speaking, if Zhang Ruochen wanted to develop a “Qi Pool”, he needed to cultivate it under the guidance of an experienced and elder practitioner.

In regards to Zhang Ruochen, who was an exceptionally talented Martial Arts warrior in his previous life, establishing the “Qi Pool” was a fundamental step as well as the easiest task out of all of the steps of cultivation. In only half an hour, he had already built a “Qi Pool”.

Yet, for other monks, it took them at least several days to figure out how to build a “Qi Pool”.

Zhang Ruochen, the genius, only needed half an hour.

However, he did not seem satisfied with the performance of this feeble body. “Although I only spent 30 minutes to establish the ‘Qi Pool’, the size of the pool is comparable to an egg. It is definitely too small to store Genuine Qi!” He moaned.

He clearly understood that it was too small for a proper “Qi Pool”.

The “Qi Pool” was a storage for Genuine Qi.

Zhang Ruochen had to establish his own practice of Meridians in order to allow the Genuine Qi to flow through his body.

In order to become an actual warrior with the cultivation of Genuine Qi, the first step was to establish the practice of Meridians.

After that was step two, Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels.

Zhang Ruochen took out the little jade bottle of the Marrow-washing Liquid. He sniffed the liquid to make sure it was real and then poured the entire bottle of liquid into his mouth.

The taste of the Marrow-washing Liquid was relatively cool inside his throat. It only lasted for a couple of seconds, followed by a burning sensation.

It felt as if there was a fire burning inside his body.

With a trace of flames, Zhang Ruochen could feel the Meridians merging with his body.

“It’s time!” Zhang Ruochen screamed.

“The first level of the ‘Scripture of Emperor Ming’s Emyrean’.”

For Martial Artists, practicing different exercises would open up different Meridians.

The more advanced the exercises were, the more complicated the Meridians would be. Basically, there would be even more surprises when the exercises became more intricate.

There were a total of 36 Meridians in the “Scripture of Emperor Ming’s Emyrean”.

Certainly, Zhang Ruochen did not need to build all of the Meridians for the time being. What he needed to do was to build one path out of the 36 so he could reach the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage.

As an extraordinary warrior, Zhang Ruochen would not be satisfied with building just one path out of the 36. “The queen and the Eighth Prince all claim that I will need more than three months to reach the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage. Yet, I will prove it to everyone that I am going to complete it tonight and become a real warrior!” he firmly said.

With the experience of cultivating Martial Arts in Zhang Ruochen’s previous life, a strand of Genuine Qi fully broke out of the vessels. Very quickly, half of the first Meridian had been created.

However, there was drastic pain coming from his body. It felt like his Meridian was nearly being torn out. He was scared and he shivered. And, as this was just the weak body of Zhang Ruochen, anything could happen to this feeble body.

If it were to happen to ordinary people, they would not be able to endure it.

Yet, the powerful determination of Zhang Ruochen helped him overcome the pain. Even though he was sweating profusely, he never gave up.

“Just... a little... more...” He mumbled.

Zhang Ruochen was very close to the building the first Meridian. He had to break through!

He had to accomplish it. He had to successfully reach that stage!

That was the spirit of a warrior. Zhang Ruochen flung himself toward his goal, almost crushing all of the Genuine Qi as he moved it toward his Meridian.

“Boom!”

A massive noise descended from Zhang Ruochen’s body, loud enough to make a person deaf. The shock of the noise almost made him faint.

Eventually, the pain went away. Zhang Ruochen could only feel cool blood circulating around the Meridians. He had never felt anything more refreshing than this.

“Haha! I made it! I’m a real warrior now after attaining the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage!” He screamed.

To reach this stage, the Eighth Prince had needed four bottles of Marrow-washing Liquid and spent half a year to achieve it.

Zhang Ruochen only spent a single night and only needed one bottle of the liquid.

The Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage had been accomplished, which meant the cultivation of the Initial Stage of the Yellow Realm.

The Martial Arts Practices were divided into yellow, black, earth, and heaven, corresponding to the Yellow Realm, the Black Realm, the Earth Realm and finally the Heaven Realm.

In each realm, there were seven more states: the Initial Stage, the Mid Stage, the Advanced Stage, Dawn State, the Medium State, the Final State, and last but not least, the Completion.

Four major realms and seven minor states.

The cultivation that Zhang Ruochen had completed within a night was the Initial Stage of the Yellow Realm.

After building the Meridians and drilling the Genuine Qi in the Initial Stage, the Mid Stage, and the Advanced Stage of the Yellow realm, the power in the body would become stronger. Every time that one would elevate to the next realm, their power would greatly increase.

The Eighth Prince had a cultivation in the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm. That explained why he could lift a 300 pound stone 10 feet in the air with a single hand. His fist was probably as strong as a bull.

Most warriors in the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm were able to cultivate a technique called the "Strength of A Bull".

Above the Advanced Stage, there were four realms, which included the Dawn State, the Medium State, the Final State, and the Completion.

After breaking through to the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm, a person then reached the Dawn State of the Yellow Realm, which meant acquiring the technique "Strength of Four Bulls", which was four times more powerful than the previous state.

Therefore, warriors of the Dawn State and the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm were like adults playing with children. Even if one of them fought against 10 people, the warrior in the Dawn State could easily handle them.

The other three minor states, the Medium State, the Final State, and the Completion, were even more terrifying. The warriors who belonged to these three states were very likely to have obtained power that no one could imagine.

The above realms sounded really far away to Zhang Ruochen. But, fighting firmly and steadily, he knew that this was a crucial part of this life. He believed that "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together step by step". If Zhang Ruochen wanted to be a warrior, he would need to cultivate each stage gradually, step by step.

The Eighth Prince had been practicing Martial Arts for eight years and the furthest stage that he had reached was just the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm. He was just an ordinary person.

“The Eighth Prince spent six months to accomplish the Washing Marrow and Breaking out of the Channels stage while I only spent a single night.” Zhang Ruochen was very proud of himself with the progress that he had made so far.

“The Eighth Prince spent eight years practicing the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm. I have to reach my goal in three months! It’s possible for me to accomplish this. With my previous experience, I can see a way.” He thought, setting a target for himself over the next three months.

The Year-end Assessment of the Royal Family would be held in three months’ time. In order to examine the results of cultivation over the past year, every single one of the warriors in the Royal Family, including all the princes, princesses, and relatives, had to attend.

Zhang Ruochen understood that the only way to be respected, receive more resources for cultivation, and to acquire a certain status in the Royal Family was no doubt by proving to everyone in the family that he was capable of being a warrior. He was determined to show them that he was no longer the coward that people used to tease.

Three months!

Over the next three months, Zhang Ruochen was determined to practice the Advanced Stage of the Yellow Realm. Deep in his heart, he promised himself that he would never give up until he had redeemed his mother’s dignity. A mother who had taken care of him since he was born, a mother who had suffered so much pain...